

National Apprenticeship Week Q&A

1. What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job where the employee learns and gains valuable experiences. Alongside on-the-job training, apprentices spend at least 20% of their working hours completing classroom-based learning with a college, university or training provider, which leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

2. What is the theme for this year's National Apprenticeship Week?

The theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2024 is 'Skills For Life', which helps us reflect on how apprenticeships can support develop crucial skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career and for employers to develop a future workforce with readily available skills.

3. Who can apply for an apprenticeship?

Anybody over the age of 16 can apply for an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are often viewed as a route for school/college leavers, however there is no limit, and it is a great opportunity to upskill or start a career in a new field. Some apprenticeships will have a criteria that the candidate must meet - for example, certain GCSE grades.

4. What is an apprenticeship standard?

An apprenticeship standard relates to the job role that the apprentice is training for. The standard has knowledge, skills and behaviours set out and these are tailored to ensure the apprentice is trained and successful in the job role.

5. As an employer, why should I hire an apprentice?

Hiring an apprentice is a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. Moreover, employers who have an annual pay bill of more than £3 million pay into the apprenticeship levy. Any allowance not spent, will not be carried into the following year. Use it or lose it!

6. Can I really get a job in the NHS via an apprenticeship?

Yes! There are a lot more apprenticeships out there than people realise. There are many front-line apprenticeships, such as nursing. However, there are also back-office apprenticeship options such as business administration and management. All apprenticeship standards can be viewed on the Institute for Apprenticeships website.

7. Is an apprenticeship better than going to college or university?

There is no right or wrong answer to this question. Apprenticeships are a more financially viable route as the education is funded by the employer whilst you earn a salary, whereas university is self-funded. Some career options may not have an apprenticeship option, however more and more apprenticeships are being introduced. When considering your next steps in your career, you should consider how you learn best, your financial situation and the field you are wanting to enter!