

A woman with dark hair in a black hoodie is smiling and showing a small, square, perforated object to a man in a blue and white plaid shirt. They are in a workshop or classroom setting with a yellow wall in the background. The man is seen from the back, wearing glasses and a pink string bracelet.

creative  
& cultural  
skills

## A Manager's Guide to Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships  
in England by  
Creative & Cultural Skills

# Contents

- 03**     **An introduction to apprenticeships**
- 05**     **Apprenticeship FAQs**
- 09**     **A best practice approach to apprenticeship recruitment**
- 11**     **Checklist: starting the apprenticeship**
- 15**     **An introduction to performance management**
- 21**     **Further information**

# An introduction to apprenticeships

**The future of the creative industries depends on the way it recruits and nurtures new talent. Apprenticeships are an exciting way to bring on new talent alongside genuine graduate jobs and repay employers with a bigger pool of candidates who will be eager to learn on-the-job.**

**The UK's creative sector is the best in the world, but to ensure that it stays productive and innovative, we must ensure that the next generation can access creative careers – regardless of background or previous educational achievement.**

**If you've just taken on your first apprentice, or are about to, we hope this guide will help you navigate the sometimes complex world of apprenticeships, and give you the basic tools to help your apprentice grow and perform to the best of their ability.**



“I improved in so many ways, it gave me a little boost and made me think positively. In that place everything felt positive, and I looked at things in a different way.”

**Creative Skills Initiative trainee**

# Apprenticeship FAQs

## What are apprenticeships and who is involved in delivering them?

Today an apprenticeship is simply defined as a job with training, but is only recognised as being a formal apprenticeship if aligned to an apprenticeship standard (or framework where these still exist). An apprenticeship consists of three core elements:

- a paid job – provided by an employer
- off the job training – supported by a Registered Apprenticeship Training Provider. This must make up a minimum of 20% of the apprenticeship.
- English and maths – this applies only to those who don't hold recognised qualifications in these subjects at an agreed level

Apprenticeships can only be delivered through a tripartite agreement between an employer, apprenticeship training provider (who in some instances may also be the employer) and an End Point Assessment Organisation. They offer a genuine alternative to academic study and help individuals develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to become competent in an occupation.

### Employer responsibilities

There is a long history and culture of creating unpaid work opportunities in the creative industries, something that we, along with others, continue to campaign to change. This culture has contributed to some misconceptions about what an apprenticeship is and what an employer's obligations are.

This section aims to breakdown some of these misconceptions in order to help employers understand the dos and don'ts of apprenticeships.

### Does an apprentice need to be paid?

Yes, by law all apprentices need to be paid at least National Minimum Wage (NMW).

There is a NMW rate specifically for apprentices, which applies to all apprentices aged 16-19 and those aged 19 and over who are in the first year of their apprenticeship. After this point, apprentices must be paid the appropriate minimum wage for their age, or more. Employers may choose to pay their apprentice more than the minimum wage from the start, something we'd encourage where it's possible for an employer to do so.

### Do I need to treat an apprentice differently to other staff?

No. To you, an apprentice is an employee and must be treated as such. However, there are some specific things that should be remembered:

- If under 18 years of age an apprentice must always be given a 12 hour break between one shift ending and another starting
- young workers (under 18) must not exceed the 8 hour a day or 40 hours per week working rule, as part of the working times regulation. They are entitled to rest breaks of at least 30 minutes if their shift lasts more than four and half hours.
- An apprenticeship may be the first step into the workplace for some, so whilst you have employed them to do a job for you it's important to remember that they are also learning how to do this. We advise Managers to apply patience and understanding here.
- All apprentices must be contracted and paid for a minimum of 30 hours a week in England for at least a year, or the equivalent number of hours over a longer period if undertaking the apprenticeship part time (there are slight variations to this in the Nations).

### Are they entitled to holiday?

Yes, as per your company holiday policy. They are also entitled to any other benefits your company offers to other staff such as childcare vouchers or paid sick leave (subject to the minimum duration of 3 months being worked).

### How old does an apprentice need to be?

An apprentice must be aged 16 or over. 16 year olds will need to have completed their final GCSE year at school before starting an apprenticeship. There is no maximum age limit.

### How long should an apprenticeship last?

The recommended duration of an apprenticeship is now determined by the individual apprenticeship standard your apprentice is working to. This can vary from 12 months to 6 years, or sometimes longer!

However no apprenticeship is allowed to last for less than 12 months. All apprentices must have a contract of employment in place, and be paid for at least 30 hours a week, and be formally engaged with the off-the-job training for the duration. The paid contractual hours must include the minimum 20% off-the-job training.

Where an apprenticeship is undertaken on a part time basis, the employer must extend the length of the employment contract and pro rate the 30 hours a week, so the apprentice is contracted and paid for the equivalent number of minimum hours overall.

### Is there additional paperwork involved in hiring an apprentice?

Yes. The employer must enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with the selected Training Provider – they are responsible for providing you with this agreement and you will be asked to read and sign it. This agreement outlines

the conditions within which each party will support the apprentice. If you're not happy with what's outlined in the agreement you must say so prior to signing it.

You will be asked to complete a workplace health and safety check, which the training provider usually goes through with you in the workplace. They will provide a template for this. As part of this you will also need to provide evidence of public liability insurance, via the relevant certificate. Where this is out of date you will be asked to renew this prior to the apprentice starting.

When the apprentice starts, or just before they do, the training provider will also need to see photo identification for the apprentice and take a photocopy of this, along with copies of any relevant prior qualifications, such as GCSE English and maths. The training provider will confirm what they need to see. If they don't ask about seeing prior qualifications, particularly for English and maths, you may want to prompt them as doing so will help to determine whether the apprentice needs to undertake additional training and/or qualifications.

You may from time to time be asked to contribute to other paperwork relevant to the apprentice's studies, which could for example include providing a written witness testimony confirming that you've seen your apprentice completing a specific task, again the training provider should have templates for you to use.

When supporting an apprentice against a new apprenticeship standard, you will be responsible for deciding when the apprentice is ready to be assessed. You will liaise directly with the selected End Point Assessment Organisation, or you may choose to do this via the Training Provider. Once you've instigated assessment, the apprentice will have a period of time within which they will need to complete assessment – this duration is determined by the respective apprenticeship standard they are working to.

**If someone has a disability and is unable to work for 30 hours a week can they still undertake an apprenticeship?**

Yes. If someone has a disability that prevents them from working the standard minimum duration of 30 hours a week, they can undertake an apprenticeship part time. The duration of the apprenticeship should be extended so the overall contractual hours equate to a minimum of 30 hours a week for 12 months.

**Do I have to employ them at the end of the apprenticeship?**

Employers are encouraged to create apprenticeship opportunities with a view to continuing the apprentice's employment at the end. However there is no legal obligation to do this. We advise that if employers are not in position to employ their apprentice(s) at the end then they should manage this expectation early on and provide support to the apprentice to help them progress and secure future employment upon completion.



Creative & Cultural Skills is proud to have introduced the first apprenticeship frameworks to the creative and cultural industries in 2009. Developed in partnership with industry, they were designed to address a number of skills gaps and shortages our sector was facing at the time, providing an alternative route into a range of occupations. Prior to this, apprenticeships hadn't really existed in our sector and were more commonly associated with manual trades. Since 2009, over 7000 people have undertaken an apprenticeship in our sector with many more expected.

# A best practice approach to apprenticeship recruitment

If you haven't recruited an apprentice before, or a young worker who may be new to the world of work, we encourage employers to look at the way they would ordinarily approach recruitment and question whether that would be the best approach in this instance.

**Creative & Cultural Skills** encourages employers to take the following steps when recruiting apprentices, particularly those at an entry level:

## 8 Steps To Taking On An Apprentice

### 1 Create the job description

Write the job description for the role you actually need someone to do. Apprenticeships are a great way to broaden entry routes into your workforce and potentially attract new talent from within your local community, but they should not be treated like a community engagement project. Apprentices are employees first and foremost, so you are recruiting them to do a real, paid job for you.

### 2 Identify an apprenticeship standard

When you've written the job description please use this to identify the most suitable apprenticeship standard to support it. Details of apprenticeship standards in development/approved for delivery can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-standards>

If you're not sure which apprenticeship standard is most suitable, or are unclear about the information provided, please contact Creative & Cultural Skills for help.

### 3 Match the job description to the apprenticeship standard

When you've identified the most suitable apprenticeship standard, it will indicate at what level the apprenticeship standard is at, and therefore what level of entrant you are actually seeking to employ. At this point we advise that you revisit your job description to assess whether the language and content is suitable for the target entrant. If for example you have actually written a job suitable for an entry level employee (i.e.

someone who may be new to the world of work) then think about the following:

- Are you setting unnecessary and prohibitive pre-requisites for entry? Be realistic about what a candidate actually needs in order for them learn how to do the job you've created –in some cases they may not need any prior experience or training at all.
- Is the language in your job description appropriate? If someone is new to the world of work will they understand some of the terminology you've used? Think about simplifying the content and using plain English.
- Have you explained in the job description or supporting material what your company does? It's easy to assume that everyone knows about the types of organisations in the creative and cultural industries, but our experience is that they don't always. If someone isn't familiar with what a Theatre or Gallery does for example, it doesn't mean they can't become a huge asset to you and your company.

### 4 Find a training provider

Once you've finalised your job description and accompanying advert, you then need to identify a training provider that can help you deliver your apprenticeship. Please note it is now a requirement for training providers to be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers before they can support you to deliver your chosen apprenticeship. You should discuss with the training provider upfront what training they can offer your apprentice so you are satisfied your apprentice will get the underpinning training they need to help them grow and develop in the respective occupation.

## 5 Advertise your apprenticeship

You're now ready to advertise your apprenticeship. You can do this through your training provider, who can post the role on Find an Apprenticeship, a national resource specifically for advertising apprenticeship opportunities.

In addition to this we also suggest considering alternative advertising platforms that can help you reach out to your target entrant. If you're recruiting for an entry level position and want to reach out to young people, we advise posting your job through more local channels and sites that specifically reach out to this demographic. Social Media routes have also proved helpful in reaching out to a wider demographic, and are particularly popular with young people.

Don't forget that national platforms most commonly used by our sector may not be known by those who are new to the world of work.

Advertise your job for a reasonable period of time and create realistic application deadlines, via a process considered suitable to the target entrant. If you're targeting a new entrant then it may not be appropriate to ask candidates to complete an application form that asks about previous work and education history – in this instance perhaps think about how you can extract information from applicants around aptitude, attitude and interests.

## 6 Shortlist your applicants

Shortlisting applicants can be tough, but think about what it is you need and who your apprenticeship opportunity could help to develop. Remember, an apprenticeship should not go to someone who is already doing the job! As with all recruitment processes, it's helpful to give applicant's feedback if they have been unsuccessful, however there is no obligation to do this, especially where there is a high volume of applicants. If you can't offer this we recommend you make this clear upfront.

Creative & Cultural Skills is also keen to encourage employers to think differently about who and how they recruit. Apprenticeships provide the opportunity to reach out to a more diverse

demographic. Try and think about whom the apprenticeship opportunity will be most beneficial to and whose talent, in the broadest sense, you might benefit from. Apprenticeships are a great way to help level the playing field with regards to entry into our workforce.

## 7 Interview apprenticeship applicants

We always recommend that employers interview for apprenticeship opportunities, just as you would any other role. But we also ask you to think about what would help get the best out of candidates, particularly if they are a new entrant. Interviews can be intimidating and asking a new entrant to put together a presentation may be off-putting for someone who hasn't done this before – this isn't a measure of someone's ability simply their inexperience! As their future Line Manager we suggest you are always present at interview, but are accompanied by one or two other colleagues with relevant expertise, this might include a representative from your chosen training provider who can help you assess whether candidates are also well placed to commit to the off-the-job leaning element, as this isn't optional.

If you're creating more than one apprenticeship opportunity at an entry level you may want to think about setting up a recruitment day where applicants undertake relevant tasks that help you assess their aptitude, attitude and interests. This can sometimes be a much more effective way to identify suitable candidates. Creative & Cultural Skills can offer advice and guidance on this approach if needed.

## 8 Make your selection

Once you've made your selection then don't keep candidates waiting! Make the offer to your chosen candidate first as there's always a risk they may turn it down, in which case you may have a second candidate you feel you can offer the apprenticeship to. For those unsuccessful candidates, we do advise some feedback is given if they were interviewed, particularly for someone who is early on in their career. This may help them secure the next apprenticeship opportunity they apply for.

## Checklist: starting the apprenticeship

None of us came into the world knowing how to do a job; each and every one of us has had to learn. Even the most experienced have to learn new things; it would be hard for us and our workplaces to progress otherwise.

If you were to think back to your first day at work it's likely that you felt rather nervous. Lots of us can probably recall the apprehension brought about by making or receiving our first work phone call, sending our first piece of written communication, or even sitting in our very first meeting before we've learnt any of the things that everyone else is so confidently discussing.

We'd really like employers, particularly Line Managers, to remember how important the small things are. We advise employers to put in place a thorough induction for any new apprentice, and for this to include some of the things that are easily taken for granted:

### Step One

Introduce your apprentice to all colleagues and help them understand what everyone's role is. If your organisation is very large and geographically spread then provide an organisational chart and talk the apprentice through the work of each department and where they're based. It might be sensible for you to arrange 1:1 meetings between your apprentice and key personnel so they can better understand where and how their role fits within the wider organisation.

### Step Two

Show your apprentice where the bathrooms are and where they can have their lunch. If you've taken on a school leaver they may not know that they don't have to ask to go to the toilet!

### Step Three

Talk to your apprentice openly about what your workplace considers to be suitable attire, along with etiquette around the use of mobile phones and tablet devices, appropriate use of language, and time keeping expectations.

### Step Four

Take your apprentice through company policies, but don't just ask them to read them. Discuss these openly so you, as their Line Manager, are confident they've understood what's required. Remember, there's lots of language in the workplace that takes time to learn, and you are responsible for helping your apprentice understand what's required of them!

### Step Five

Put in place regular one to one meetings and explain what these are for. They should be used to assess the apprentice's performance, agree future tasks, and provide the opportunity for both the Manager and apprentice to share feedback with each other. Use this time to check that your apprentice is comfortable, happy, and feels able to discuss any concerns.

### Step Six

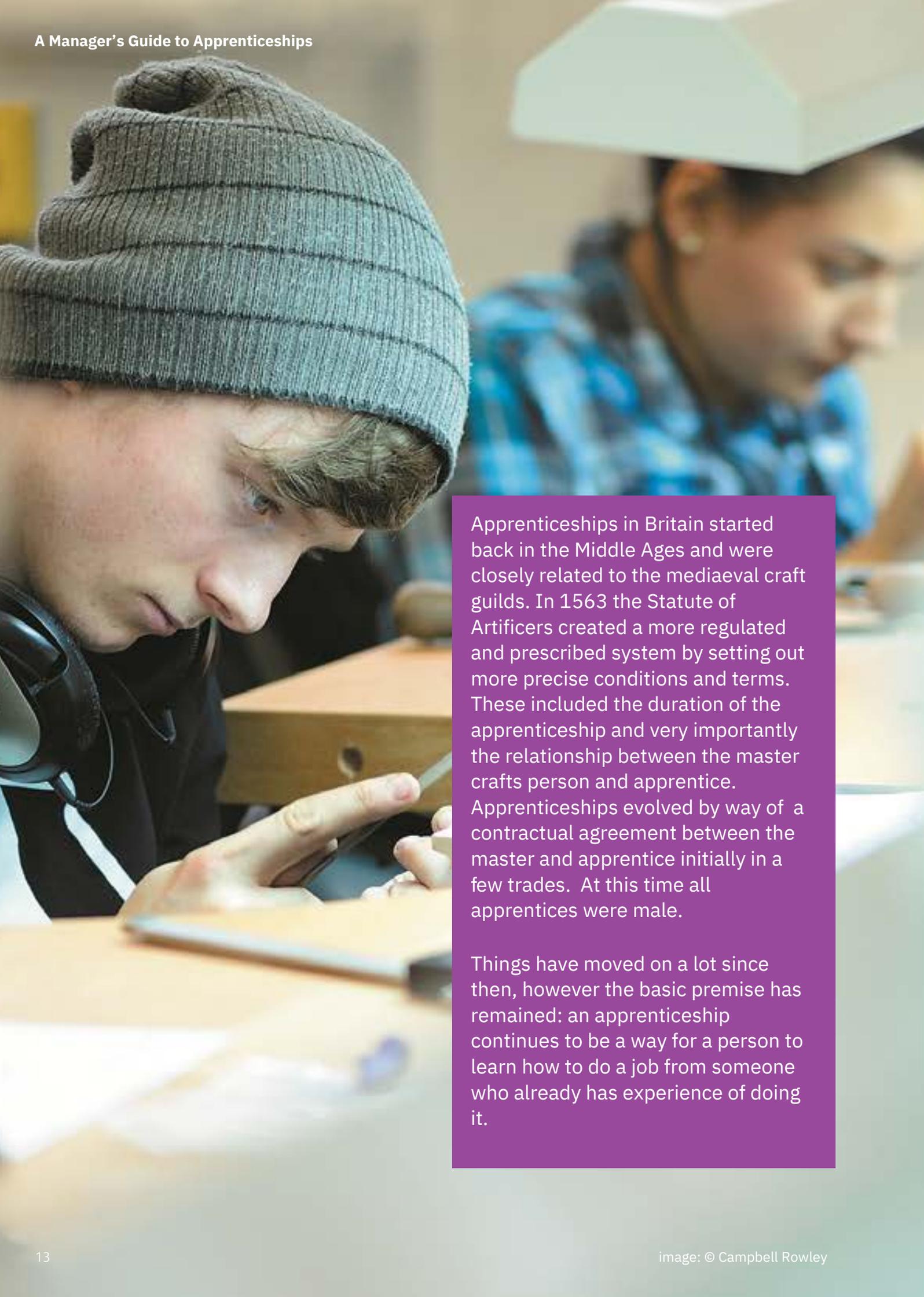
Put in place clear objectives for your apprentice, just as you would any other member of staff. This will help the apprentice understand their role and guide their development.

### Step Seven

We also suggest that you consider putting in place a buddy or mentor for your apprentice (particularly if they are new to work). This way you can concentrate on the apprentice's performance and helping them meet what's required, whilst the mentor or buddy can act as a workplace friend who the apprentice can approach with more informal or day to day questions or concerns.

### Step Eight

Finally, whilst it's important for you to remember that the apprentice is with you learning how to do a job, and you may sometimes need to give firm guidance, it's also important for you to tell your apprentice when they're doing well. It is disheartening for anyone, but particularly a new entrant, to not receive positive feedback. Our steer is that you regularly provide positive feedback, alongside identifying areas to further develop as part of one to one discussions.



Apprenticeships in Britain started back in the Middle Ages and were closely related to the mediaeval craft guilds. In 1563 the Statute of Artificers created a more regulated and prescribed system by setting out more precise conditions and terms. These included the duration of the apprenticeship and very importantly the relationship between the master crafts person and apprentice. Apprenticeships evolved by way of a contractual agreement between the master and apprentice initially in a few trades. At this time all apprentices were male.

Things have moved on a lot since then, however the basic premise has remained: an apprenticeship continues to be a way for a person to learn how to do a job from someone who already has experience of doing it.



“The skills I learnt there were quite specific to the work I was doing which is different to the area I’m working and interested in now, but transferable skills are constantly developing such as confidence and people skills.”

**Creative Employment Programme participant**

# An introduction to performance management

**Managing an apprentice's performance is a continuous process. It involves making sure that their performance contributes to the goals of their teams, the business as a whole, as well as the apprenticeship standard they're working towards demonstrating competence against.**

Good performance management helps an apprentice know:

- what the business is trying to achieve
- their role in helping the business achieve its goals
- the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their role
- the standards of performance required
- how they can develop their performance and contribute to the development of the organisation
- how they are doing
- when there are performance problems and what to do about them.

Managing performance is crucial to the relationship between a manager and their apprentice. It can be a key element of good communication and foster the growth of trust and personal development. Managing performance is central to how well your apprentice will be engaged in their work and how well they will perform.

An engaged apprentice is someone who:

- takes pride in their job and shows loyalty towards their line manager, team or organisation
- goes the extra mile – particularly in areas where the apprentice needs to be creative, responsive or adaptable.

A 2009 report to Government (the Macleod report) *Engaging for Success: enhancing performance through employee engagement*, made a strong case for the link between employee engagement and 'positive outcomes'. It pointed to a number of studies which demonstrate that high levels of engagement lead to 'better financial performance in the private sector' and 'better outcomes in the public sector'. Simply put – if your apprentice is engaged your organisation will do better.

The Macleod report identified four main drivers of employee engagement:

1. leadership which transmits vision and values and how the individual contributes
2. 'engaging managers' – managers who facilitate and empower rather than control and restrict, showing appreciation, respect and commitment to developing and rewarding capabilities
3. an effective way for employees to voice their views and concerns
4. behaviour throughout the organisation which is consistent with stated values leading to trust and integrity.

Good performance management can contribute significantly to all four of these drivers.

## The role of the line manager

Much has moved on since the days of the master crafts person and their apprentice; however the principle behind this still applies. The Line Manager should be experienced and competent in the apprentice's occupational field.

Line Managers are best placed to talk to their apprentice, to listen to their concerns, to counsel and coach them, to check they meet their targets and to ensure they are committed to the business, as well as help guide their learning in relation to the job they've been employed to do. If the line manager is unable to do the latter here they may not be the best person to line manage the apprentice.

The success of a performance management system rests largely on line managers, including when under-performance occurs.

Line managers will need to be confident to handle those 'difficult conversations' and to carry out their role effectively. We advise that all managers of apprentices receive some training by their employer or a third party on:

- how to conduct one-to-one meetings and deal with sensitive or emotive issues
- how to manage discipline, capability and grievance procedures. Your company should have procedures in place to support these things

## Line managers and performance management

There are three aspects to planning an apprentice's performance:

- Objectives which the apprentice is expected to achieve
- Competencies or behaviours – the way in which the apprentice works towards their objectives. An apprentice must demonstrate the behaviours outlined in their apprenticeship standard as well as those set by your company – in most cases these will align.
- Personal development – the development an apprentice needs in order to achieve their objectives and realise their potential. Some of this will be provided through the apprentice's off-the-job training.

## The Line Manager should:

- agree objectives, competencies and development needs with their apprentice so that they contribute to business goals. The contribution to goals should be realistic and suitable for the level at which the apprentice is working. It wouldn't be appropriate for an entry level apprentice, with very little prior work experience, to be given sole responsibility for an area of the business, in this instance they should be working in a supporting or assisting capacity;
- review individual performance against objectives and competencies throughout the year;
- give feedback and discuss amendments to individual objectives as circumstances change;
- agree the most important skills and behaviours necessary to do the job well and agree a personal development plan;
- help the apprentice to achieve objectives through coaching and provide access to training or other development opportunities where possible/practical;
- manage under-performance;
- hold an annual appraisal review with the apprentice, and in collaboration with them write an appraisal report. There should be no surprises for an apprentice at their annual appraisal as any success or concerns should have been openly discussed throughout the year.

Apprentices must be able to understand their objectives and know what they need to do in order to achieve them, so it is advised that these are set through a discussion with the apprentice in the first instance, or you frame the objectives for the apprentice to support discussions. Remember to be patient when doing this as an apprentice may not have set objectives before. It's also important to remember that objectives should be realistic. Objectives should help stretch an apprentice, as they are learning under your guidance, but they mustn't directly or indirectly set them up to fail.

If you have more than one apprentice undertaking similar tasks, it might make sense to set some common objectives, but this should still be done in discussion with each apprentice.

The **'SMART'** acronym is a useful way of getting objectives right. This stands for: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**imebound:

- **Specific** – objectives should state a desired outcome. What does the apprentice need to achieve?
- **Measurable** – how will you and the apprentice know when an objective has been achieved?
- **Achievable** – is the objective something the apprentice is capable of achieving, but is it also challenging/stretching?
- **Relevant** – do the apprentice's objectives relate to those of the team/department/business?
- **Timebound** – when does the objective need to be achieved? Is the timeframe realistic? Remember, you will have contracted your apprentice for a specific period of time to support the recommended duration of the apprenticeship.

### Understanding competencies

Whilst an apprentice needs to demonstrate they have the skill and knowledge to perform competently within the chosen occupation, they will also be assessed against the behaviours that are in the apprenticeship standard, as well as by you their Line Manager against company expectations. The way in which an apprentice achieves their objectives is often as important as the end result. This is where competencies come in. Competencies are the behaviours that apprentices (or any employee) need to perform a job to a high level. They relate to how objectives are met and delivered rather than what the objectives are. This could be anything from working as part of a team, having a positive outlook, or taking a problem solving approach to challenging tasks.

As their Line Manager, it's important that you are also assessing the way in which an apprentice is going about their job and talking openly about this, alongside supporting the completion of agreed tasks. It's important for Line Managers to remember that managing behaviours is an important aspect of performance management, and any under-performance here is equally subject to disciplinary action just as the non-completion of tasks is.

If your organisation doesn't have a competency framework in place this might be something you wish to introduce. Where you don't have a competency framework and don't intend to put one in place we advise using the behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard as your guide.

### Reviewing performance and 1:1s

Reviewing performance is a continuous process and typically has three elements:

- One-to-one regular informal meetings where line managers discuss current work and development. They offer feedback to recognise and celebrate successes and achievements, and to encourage progress and identify any possible problems. We recommend that these are no less frequent than once a month for an apprentice.
- Formal interim reviews where the line manager sits down with the apprentice to discuss progress against their objectives. This is an opportunity for the line manager to celebrate achievements and offer constructive feedback where more needs to be done. There should be at least one interim review before the annual appraisal.
- The annual appraisal review where the work of the year is discussed, formally recorded and feedback is given.

During the course of the year the need for new tasks may arise and priorities may change. Any changes should be recorded on the employee's performance record.

### Keeping a record of progress

The apprentice and line manager should keep a record of achievements and development activities. This need not be an onerous task and will normally involve recording relevant examples which can lead to a wider discussion at review meetings. It should be made clear to apprentices what sort of record and how many examples they should keep. In some cases this could be a simple email that the apprentice sends to the line manager (or vice versa) after each one to one meeting that captures the key things that have been discussed.

## Managing under-performance

Sometimes it can be easy to overlook that under-performance is also a necessary part of line management, because it can be uncomfortable for both the manager and the apprentice. There is also a misconception that apprentices aren't subject to performance management because they're learning. Remember, if you don't help an apprentice understand the dos and don'ts of your business and the job they've been employed to do, then they won't develop the necessary occupational competence they need to progress.

## Support

Support and coaching by managers will help apprentices understand possible options for improving performance and any necessary action that needs to be taken. Under-performance may have a variety of causes and some of them may be outside the apprentice's control. It is therefore important to discuss any problems carefully with an apprentice so that practical solutions can be agreed.

## Having difficult conversations

Regular one to one reviews and support will help minimise under-performance. Nevertheless there may be occasions when, despite adequate support, an apprentice's performance consistently fails to reach the required standard. Where this is the case managers must not duck the issue. Line managers must be prepared and ready to have difficult conversations with their apprentice and will ideally need to be trained to do so. If an organisation does not have the expertise to carry out this sort of training there are a number of external providers. For further information see the Acas website at [www.acas.org.uk/training](http://www.acas.org.uk/training).

## Disciplinary action

Where informal approaches fail you may decide to take more formal action which could eventually result in an apprentice's dismissal, if an apprentice fails to make the necessary improvement, but this should be a last resort. Where this is the case always follow your organisation's disciplinary procedure (or your capability procedure if you have one). If your company does not have a disciplinary procedure in place, regardless of your size or legal constitution, we advise you put one in place as a priority. This will help safeguard both you and the apprentice should disciplinary action be required.

In cases of unsatisfactory performance, once less formal methods have been applied, the first formal stage in many organisations is a note in writing setting out:

- The performance problem.
- The improvement that is required
- The timescale for achieving this improvement. This should be realistic.
- A review date and any support, including any training that the employer will provide to assist the apprentice.

Notes of any disciplinary meeting should be kept and shared with the apprentice.

***Please remember in the case of entry level apprentices, some performance issues may simply be the result of inexperience, so we advise that open dialogue and informal methods to resolve under-performance are always applied in the first instance.***

## Reflecting on your own performance and practice

Under-performance is difficult, not least because managing it will involve at least one difficult conversation. However, line managers may also benefit from asking themselves whether they could have done something differently to help an apprentice perform.

At Creative & Cultural Skills we have seen examples where managers have conducted themselves in a way that is detrimental to the development of an apprentice. Because of this we try and encourage all line managers to reflect on their own performance and approach.

This is something you may wish to do regularly with your own line manager, or you may wish to keep a record for yourself on how you're going about setting tasks and responding to issues: a reflective log is a helpful way for a line manager to look back at how they've approached something – doing so might help to ask whether you could have done something differently.

If you're going to reflect on your own performance perhaps consider doing the following:

- Seek feedback from colleagues, including your apprentice, and listen to what they have to say. When feedback is difficult to hear, try and look at it objectively rather than trying to justify why you may have gone about things as you did. Remember one's intentions may not be obvious in one's actions.
- Seek advice about how you could do things differently. You may find that by adapting your approach to an individual you get better results from them.
- Think about what being a line manager means to you. If it's because you want to help individuals effectively contribute to company ambitions then that's a great starting place. If it's because you want to control others and get them to do what you say then line management may not be for you.

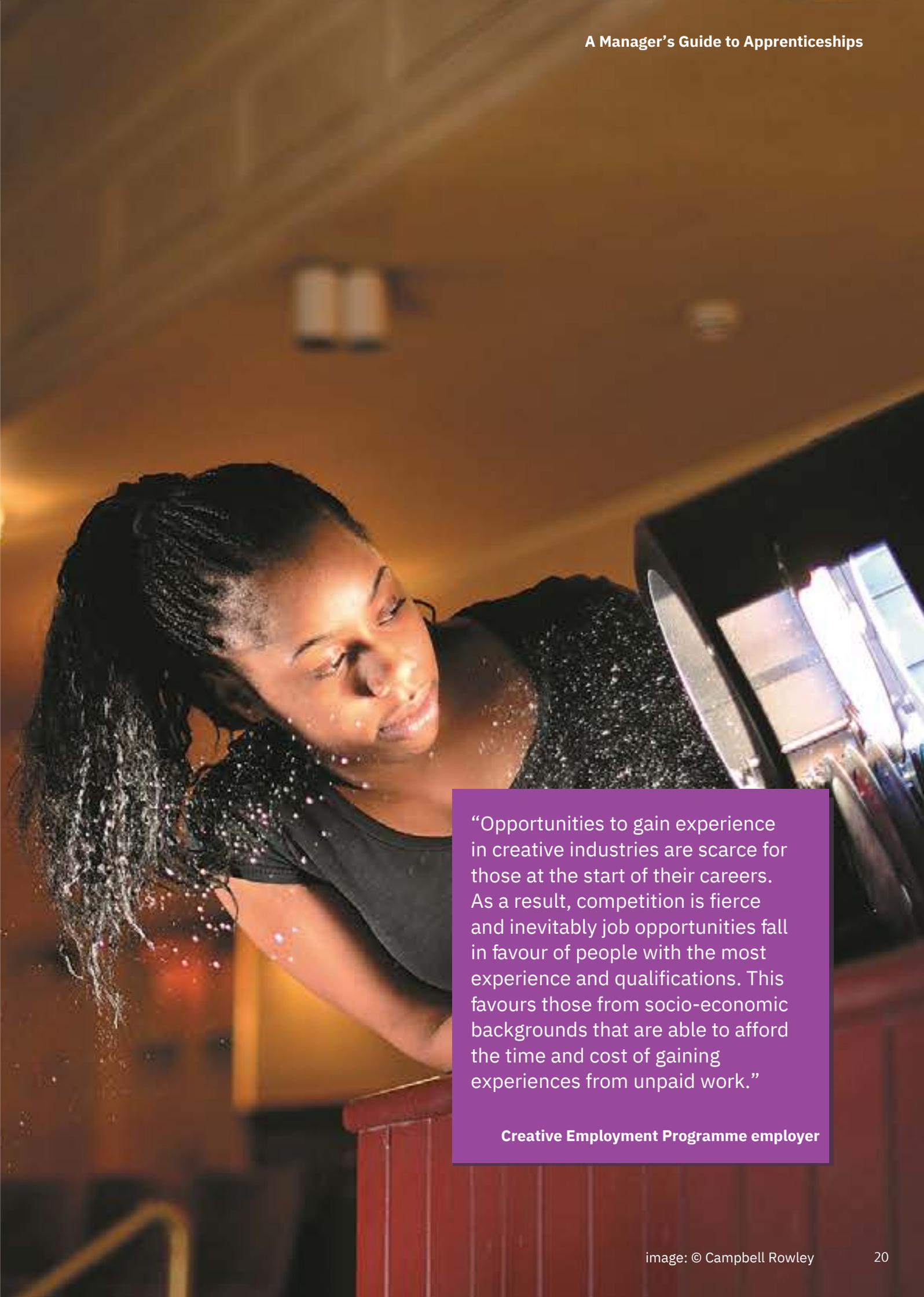
- Remember to be nice to yourself: being a line manager doesn't mean you have to be the all-knowing and there might be people in your team/organisation that have more knowledge and expertise in an area than you. Allow yourself to be comfortable with this and help your apprentice understand who else might be better placed to respond to a specific query, this might also help build team spirit.

## A buddy system

Creative & Cultural Skills has learnt that for some apprentices, particularly those who are new to the world of work, having a workplace buddy or mentor, in addition to a line manager, helps build confidence in the apprentice as they feel they have a 'friend' who they can also learn from and query things with. The role of the buddy/mentor is not to manage/feedback on performance or set tasks, but to provide informal guidance that helps the apprentice feel comfortable.

Earlier in this guide we spoke about how hard one's first days at work can be, but the buddy/mentor can help make an apprentice feel included whilst they're getting to know other colleagues. The support they provide could be as simple as helping the apprentice learn about where they can buy lunch, checking that the apprentice is comfortable with all colleagues (including their line manager), or helping the apprentice understand where they can get work stationary or how to use office equipment. They might also provide more general advice and support around issues that may be impacting on the apprentice and their ability to perform in the workplace.

We recommend that the buddy/mentor tries to find at least 30 minutes each week to check in with the apprentice for a chat, and liaise with the apprentice's line manager about when this takes place. It's also important for the buddy/mentor and line manager to have regular and open communication with each other.



“Opportunities to gain experience in creative industries are scarce for those at the start of their careers. As a result, competition is fierce and inevitably job opportunities fall in favour of people with the most experience and qualifications. This favours those from socio-economic backgrounds that are able to afford the time and cost of gaining experiences from unpaid work.”

**Creative Employment Programme employer**

# Further information

## Contact us

We work to create fair and inclusive opportunities for young people within the creative and cultural sectors. We do this by raising awareness and shaping skills, education and employment best practice. We provoke action and enable learning opportunities that drive change and help to build an inclusive skilled sector.

Creative & Cultural Skills helps to build a sector that is both inclusive and skilled by:

- improving understanding and awareness of the career options across the cultural sector
- working to remove barriers to entry and progression for young people from underrepresented groups and disadvantaged communities
- informing and helping the sector respond to changes in the technical education system
- helping employers see the benefits of an inclusive workforce, in turn feeding new talent into the workforce and supporting the sector to continue on a course of economic growth and meet diversity ambitions
- advocating and campaigning for systemic and policy changes that will improve the opportunities for young people within the sector.

If you would like support and guidance from Creative & Cultural Skills about anything in this guide, or apprenticeships and entry level employment more generally, please don't hesitate to get in touch at: [info@ccskills.org.uk](mailto:info@ccskills.org.uk)

We also have additional resources on our website [ccskills.org.uk](https://ccskills.org.uk)

The Government's list of approved Apprenticeship Training Providers can be found here: <https://roatp.apprenticeships.sfa.bis.gov.uk/download>

## Follow us

- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Email newsletter](#)

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Acas for their contribution to this guide. For further details on the services they provide, including training, please go to: [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

More information on apprenticeships and performance management can be found at the following links:

- [1. Short History of Apprenticeships](#)**
- [2. How to manage performance](#)**



“...I had exactly 100 applications for this position. Overwhelmingly, the problem was a lack of demonstrable industry experience.”

**Creative Employment Programme employer**

**Creative & Cultural Skills**

The Backstage Centre  
High House Production Park  
Vellacott Close  
Purfleet  
Essex  
RM19 1RJ

**T:** 020 7015 1800

**E:** [info@ccskills.org.uk](mailto:info@ccskills.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @ccskills

Creative and Cultural Industries Ltd is registered in England as Charity no. 1105974

Creative and Cultural Industries Ltd is registered in Scotland as Charity no. SCO42165

Images © Briony Campbell and Campbell Rowley

supported by:



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

