



North Tyneside Council

**Employment & Skills Service
Adult Learning Service**

Employer Engagement Policy

Policy Information

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the process followed by the service to engage employers in the promotion and development of apprenticeships and training opportunities. It provides a commitment to engage employers in the development of their employees training to ensure that it benefits both employers and employees and leads to progression and development.

Scope

The policy covers the engagement of employers who are looking to recruit apprentices or up skill existing staff through engagement with the Employment and Skills Service, and the ongoing support provided to ensure that apprenticeship programmes and wider training support is delivered successfully.

Roles and Responsibilities

Programme Manager

It is the Programme Managers responsibility to ensure all employers have access to this policy and that it is published on the organisation's website. It is also the manager's responsibility to ensure all employees of the service implement this policy.

Business Development Team

The Business Development team are responsible for ensuring employers are aware of the support available and market new opportunities in line with their requirements. The team provide an ongoing contact point for employers.

Assessors/Tutors

Assessors are responsible for involving employers (or their representatives) in progress reviews and maintaining good working relationships with apprentices and workplace mentors. They are also responsible for referring any additional recruitment needs to the Business Development team.

Procedures

The Service will engage and work in partnership with employers through:

Marketing & Employer Communication

The service will market its offer to potential partner employers through our website with a focussed employer page, social media platforms and publicity events such as localised Jobs Fairs, Get up and Go apprenticeship fair, Find Apprenticeship Training

website, Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and employer publicity material.

National branding is used and updated to increase interest in annual events such as National Apprenticeship Week, which the service leads on coordination activities with key partners across the borough of North Tyneside. The service also ensures it maintains a presence at local employer forums to help understand local labour demand requirements.

The Business Development Team operates a strategic accounts management system to meet key regional employers on a regular basis to discuss their needs and that of their supply chains and key partners. Issues relating to apprenticeships, training and workforce development needs are fed directly through to the Employment and Skills Service.

The service provides a dedicated contact point for employment and skills within the organisation delivering information, advice and guidance and ongoing support at all levels from Senior Management to frontline delivery to ensure that all are up to date with changes and developments in this area.

Joint marketing campaigns are undertaken with the North Tyneside Business Forum, which has over 1400 members, and other Town Centre Chambers of Trade and Forums to provide information and identify any business needs. We also target and support particular sectors and industries. For example, through employer engagement in the hospitality and catering industry via our Recruit Silverlink Project, which employs a workplace coordinator on a key retail and leisure park.

Work is carried out in schools to raise awareness of apprenticeship opportunities through our dedicated Careers Education and Information, Advice and Guidance Service (Connexions). In addition to this, the organisation has a joint marketing strategy and promotion of apprenticeship opportunities within the Council itself through the North Tyneside Apprenticeship Academy.

Our Service Offer

The Business Development team supports employers to ensure they are aware of new training and development opportunities for their employees. This is carried out through face to face visits, specific social media campaigns, marketing leaflets, website updates, bulletins on new upcoming standards available, changes to legislation or new incentives.

The team offers a training needs analysis service, which works with employers to identify their current and future workforce requirements and matches new opportunities to apprenticeship frameworks or standards available, when this is appropriate.



The service provides bespoke support tailored to an employer's needs covering all areas of the recruitment and selection process. This includes:

- Writing a job description
- Identifying and advising on the appropriate apprenticeship standard or framework
- Advertising apprenticeships through social media and the National Apprenticeship Service.
- Shortlisting and sifting support to identify suitable candidates including access to our Apprentice Talent Pool
- Assessment centre to prepare shortlisted candidates for interview
- Practical activity to assess suitability for post and identify interpersonal skills. Includes initial assessment to ensure apprenticeship route is correct.
- Support during interview to identify the most suitable candidate.

An Employer Handbook has been developed that supports employers with the complete Apprenticeship process including taking on and working with an apprentice.

Assessors work with mentors who support apprentices in the work place offering mentoring training to ensure the mentors are skilled to carry out the support. Assessors work closely with the mentor and employer to identify the key aspects of the job role ensuring that the most suitable apprenticeship programme is implemented.

Assessors work with employers to ensure they are in agreement with the requirements of apprenticeships including the 20% off the job requirement and the previous knowledge and skills of apprentice. This discussion also includes optional unit choices to ensure the needs of the business are met.

Once this has been decided a bespoke programme is developed in partnership with the employer. The assessor maintains regular contact with the employer and arranges progress reviews every eight weeks with learners and their line managers. Smart targets and performance indicators measure and monitor success and lead to an improving trend.

Coaching and mentoring support is available to all apprentices through our dedicated Learning Mentor Service which supports a range of additional support needs. Once the apprenticeship nears completion an end review takes place to identify new opportunities and evaluate further training needs for both the apprentice and employer.

Additional employability support and careers advice is also provided at this point, if required, to ensure that apprentices progress to suitable job roles if they are not to be retained by the original employer.

Employer Feedback

Following recruitment, three way progress reviews of learner achievement are part of the ongoing quality assurance activity and also provide opportunities for employer feedback. Employers' opinions are collected via face to face meetings, telephone, surveys and electronic contact and are canvassed to improve the offer. We use the responses received to review and inform continuous improvement of the training provision and additional services provided.

A National employer survey is completed annually and advertised on the Course Directory to inform employers.

Cyclical reviews are carried with contract review meetings that take place regularly to assess progress of individuals and groups and action plan any issues that may arise.

Management Processes

The Programme Manager ensures that high quality assessors and trainers are employed through robust recruitment and selection and in house training and development processes.

The organisation acts promptly to respond to and encourage feedback and/or complaints in order to improve services. We use this information to continually evolve and improve our training offer and implement teaching and learning strategies which motivate, stimulate and encourage apprentices'. The training delivery also ensures it meets the 20% off the job requirement whilst being flexible in its approach and ensuring each programme is bespoke and meets the needs of employers.

The team are kept up to date with all aspects of delivery such as legislative requirements, External Quality Assurance processes, Sector Skills guidance and new qualification frameworks/standards and use this information to communicate with employers to inform their decisions. Regular team meetings are held to share and cascade this information.

The Programme and Senior Manager carry out annual work place observations on assessors to monitor the quality of provision. This also includes canvassing views of the employer and apprentice to identify and implement improvement actions required.

The Programme Manager implements the Common Inspection Framework for Further Education and Skills to maintain quality under Ofsted guidelines. The Manager engages with an appropriate end point assessment centre and carries out due diligence in partnership with the employer to ensure it offers a robust service.

The manager carries out performance reviews and observations of assessors and teaching staff to ensure they are delivering good quality training and assessment.

Feedback from employers through our complaints procedure, employer survey results and National Survey results are shared at termly Performance Management meetings to scrutinise actions required.

The Service's Internal Quality Assurance processes ensure quality of delivery. The Lead IQA carries out any investigations into malpractice or maladministration against the assessment process.

The Senior Manager for Employment and Skills carries out a fact finding exercise and investigates any concerns or complaints that cannot be resolved according to the service complaints policy.

The service also works closely with other providers and authorities to share best practice and current implementation of legislative requirements and funding rules.

Business Enquiries

General communications are directly through the Business Support team who triage enquiries and forward to the appropriate team member to follow up in a timely fashion.

Enquiries and queries are handled promptly and efficiently, reviewing standards of customer service regularly using our IAG qualified Business Support Team. The Business Support team hold and maintain a data base of employer contacts.

Constant training updates are delivered to the Business Support team to ensure they are up to date with campaigns or new delivery processes to ensure they are informed to answer employer queries.