
Employer Handbook

Apprenticeships

August 2024

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Who We Are

The JGA Group is a well-established and fast-growing apprenticeship, training, and career management organisation. We have more than 400 apprentices on programme, well above average achievement and distinction rates, excellent satisfaction rates, and achieved "Good" in our latest Ofsted inspection.

Apprentices and line managers are people, not numbers, we do our best to give everyone a high-quality apprenticeship experience.

We are multi-award winners having received West London Business Best Education & Training Provider 2023, AAC Creative and Design Apprenticeship Provider of the Year 2023 and the 2021 Queen's Award for Enterprise: Promoting Opportunity.

What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a paid job where your employee learns and gains valuable experiences. This involves their being on a training programme that usually lasts 15+ months (including the [assessment period](#)).

The apprentice must spend at least six hours each week on tasks which contribute towards the apprenticeship. We will work with you to create training for your apprentice which marries your need for a productive employee with the specification of the course. Some of this time is spent on guided teaching sessions with an expert tutor/coach.

Apprentices are entitled to the same benefits and have the same rights as other employees. They receive:

- a salary, paid at the same time as everyone else
- the same number of holidays as other employees on similar contracts
- the same incentives and perks
- the same entitlement to paid sick leave

Each apprenticeship is a practical course that helps your employee learn about their profession. They will combine their activity with us with real-world experience in the workplace to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Why Should I Add an Apprentice to my Team?

Hiring an apprentice is a productive and cost-effective way to grow the skills within your business. Their training closely matches the role, the needs of the immediate team and of the business as a whole, enabling you to expand and upskill your workforce.

You can hire someone new or upskill a promising existing employee. And, as an employer, you can get government funding to pay for all or most of their training.

Apprentices can be at different levels, from school leavers to university graduates, to people who want to further their careers or change direction completely.

[Figures from apprenticeships.gov.uk](#) state:

- 86% of employers said apprenticeships helped them develop skills relevant to their organisation
- 78% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve productivity
- 74% of employers said apprenticeships helped them improve the quality of their product or service

As of Summer 2024, [there are more than 700 apprenticeship standards approved for delivery by the Institute for Apprenticeships](#). They exist in many professions, and the likelihood is if you are looking to recruit or provide training for a member of staff there exists a standard which covers that job role.

We offer apprenticeships in sales, marketing, and communications as well as specialist government professions. [A full list of standards and levels is available on our website.](#)

Funding and Incentives

The cost to you for an apprentice differs depending on the particular apprenticeship. Where the money comes from depends on the size of your organisation.

If you pay the apprenticeship levy

Businesses with a payroll over £3m per year currently contribute to an apprenticeship levy. The levy is mandatory and is charged at 0.5% of your annual pay bill.

If you are a levy-paying employer, you need to register for an Apprenticeship Service account so you can manage your apprenticeship funds online. The government tops up your levy account by an additional 10%.

25% of your levy funds can also be transferred or 'gifted', to support smaller, non-levy organisations with funding apprenticeships. This is done through your Apprenticeship Service account.

If you do not pay the apprenticeship levy

If your business does not pay the levy, the government will fund the training for apprentices aged between 16 and 21 years (at the start of their apprenticeship). For older apprentices, you need to pay 5% of the total training cost, and the government will pay the remaining 95%. You will pay JGA directly on an agreed schedule.

All organisations

Whether you pay the levy or not, you will then take on all associated costs for the apprentice, who should have the same terms as a normal member of staff with the exception of their wage.

Apprentices must be paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#). There are different rates of pay for apprentices depending on their age and what year of their apprenticeship they've completed.

We strongly advise you to pay better than this. Our experience is that staff paid the bare minimum rarely stay for long and this signals that the apprenticeship is not valuable.

Apprentices should be paid for:

- their normal working hours
- taking part in any training that is part of the apprenticeship
- time spent studying for English and Maths, if needed

More information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice/pay-and-conditions-for-apprentices>.

Current training costs

All apprenticeship standards are listed on the [Institute for Apprenticeships' website](#). These explain the current training costs for all approved standards and are a useful guide to how much the apprenticeship will cost.

If you are ever in doubt, speak to us and we will let you know the cost to your business. This can differ depending on the apprentice's previous experience. This is covered more in the section on Skillscans and [prior learning](#).

Incentives

A £1,000 cash incentive is also available to all employers of any turnover size if a newly recruited apprentice is aged 16-18 or is both aged 25 or below and had an education, health & care plan or used to be in care.

Employers of apprentices under the age of 25 will also no longer be required to pay secondary Class 1 National Insurance contributions. This incentive is a saving up to 13.8% on everything the apprentice earns over £8,840 a year.

There are also occasional incentives from the government for businesses who recruit an apprentice. We will advise you of these when they are announced.

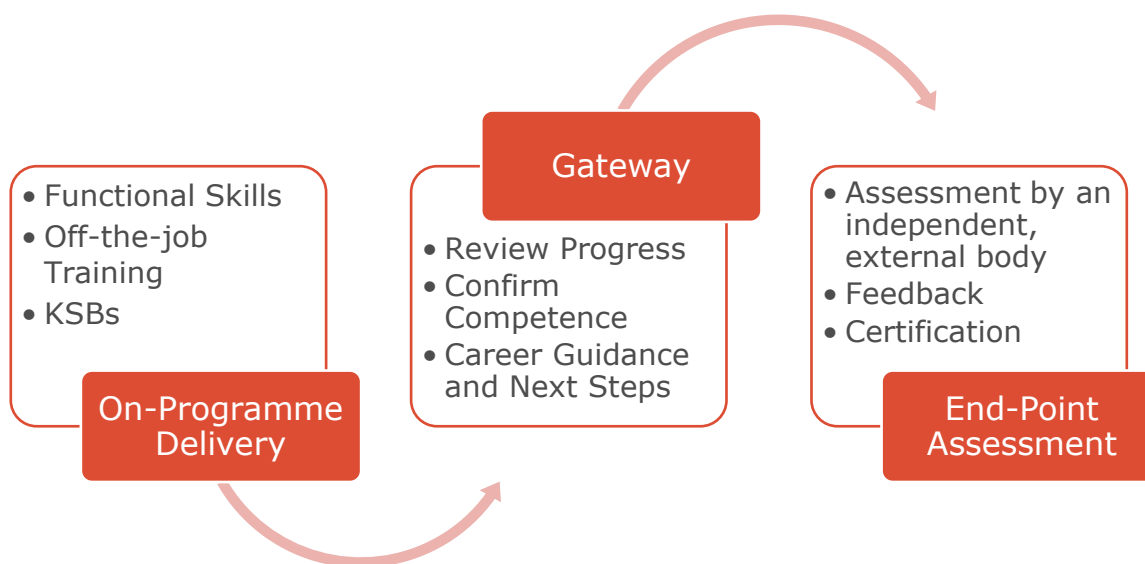
How Does an Apprenticeship Work?

An apprenticeship is made up of three different stages.

We deliver the On-Programme Delivery phase which is made up of teaching and training to support the apprentice's development.

Gateway is used for the apprentice, yourself, and the Skills Coach to confirm readiness and competence against the requirements of the apprenticeship and job role.

Finally, End-Point Assessment is an independent check and test of this competence to confirm the award of the qualification.



Functional Skills (English and Maths)

Apprentices must have achieved at least Level 2 in English and Maths (equivalent to grades A-C or 4-9 in GCSE) by the time their training ends. If they do not have these qualifications at the start of their apprenticeship, they will have to study functional skills alongside their training.

Other reasons that employees may need to study functional skills during their apprenticeship include:

- Not being able to find the original exam certificates
- Achieving English and Maths qualifications with an exam board that is not recognised by the Government

We understand functional skills is often difficult for apprentices and a pain point for employers. So, we have developed provision that is tailored to meet the individual needs of each apprentice and has very high satisfaction rates amongst apprentices and our employer partners. This delivery consists of 10 teaching sessions, each of 1 hour and 30 minutes delivered by a specialist functional skills tutor. These are all delivered remotely but take place during normal working hours.

Off-The-Job Training

Apprentices need to spend around 20% of their time completing learning activities which are not part of their day-to-day job role. This is called off-the-job training.

It is a requirement of the government that this is at least 6 hours a week, but most courses require a bit longer to complete – around 1 day a week. The total hours required are referred to as the planned hours.

Apprentices who started a programme before August 2022 are required to complete a minimum of 20% of their working hours on off-the-job training.

As you would expect, the off-the-job training will include learning resources and activities provided and delivered by JGA, but it can also include learning opportunities that occur naturally within the workplace.

Examples of off-the-job training include:

- Attending a classroom or online seminar as part of their apprenticeship.
- Doing their own research into their subject area, either by watching videos, listening to podcasts, or reading.
- Attending webinars with external companies.
- Work shadowing, mentoring, or visits.

To qualify as off-the-job training, activities must:

- be directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard.
- teach new knowledge, skills, or behaviours.
- take place within the apprentice's normal working hours.

Off-the-job training can take place in the apprentice's usual place of work, at home, or at any other location. Studying for an English or Maths functional skills qualification does not count as off-the-job training.

We will advise and guide the apprentices through the process of logging off-the-job training and help them map their training to their apprenticeship standard, ensuring that everything they do is counted towards their qualification.

This is recorded in an online portfolio system called OneFile, which shows the apprentice their progress against the planned off-the-job hours they need to complete.

KSBs

All apprenticeship standards outline the knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) that a person in that relevant occupation will be expected to demonstrate. An apprenticeship, therefore, will upskill an apprentice over the duration of the On-Programme Delivery to be competent and confident with demonstrating these KSBs. The apprentice must be able to demonstrate all of the KSBs by the end of the programme in order to achieve the apprenticeship.

We develop training programmes that will impart knowledge, teach skills, and help apprentices develop behaviours that will benefit them throughout their careers. They should have the opportunity to work on and demonstrate the KSBs in their job role in order for an apprenticeship to be successful. Some apprenticeship standards also have occupational duties that outline the tasks the apprentice should undertake to ensure the KSBs are applied in their role.

End Point Assessment

When an apprentice has demonstrated all of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that are associated with their standard, they will be ready for End-Point Assessment.

At this time, we hand the apprentice over to an independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) which has the job of assessing the apprentice's level of competence and assigns them a grade, usually distinction, pass, merit or fail.

In order to achieve a rounded view of the apprentice, End Point Assessment usually involves two or three methods, each of which contributes to the final grade. For example, an exam or multiple-choice test, followed up by a work-based project, and then a professional discussion about what they have learned during their apprenticeship.

We work with and coach apprentices to be more comfortable writing reports and delivering presentations so that they are not as daunted at End-Point Assessment. Mock interviews check whether the apprentice is ready before they go to End-Point Assessment.

Some of the common assessment methods include:

Observation

This will involve the independent assessor observing the apprentice completing their normal duties in the workplace. The observation will also feature questioning that may take place during and following the observation.

Knowledge Test

Tests are included to predominantly assess an apprentice's knowledge. This may be in the form of multiple choice, written response or a mixture of both.

Professional Discussion

A professional discussion is a two-way discussion between the assessor and the apprentice. It aims to assess the apprentice's in-depth understanding of their work through a formal conversation. Often underpinned by the evidence in the portfolio, the apprentice will proactively contribute to the discussion to confirm their competency across the KSBs.

Interview

In this assessment method, the apprentice will respond to set questions that will assess competence against the KSBs. The assessor leads the interview to enable a structured assessment.

Presentation and Questioning

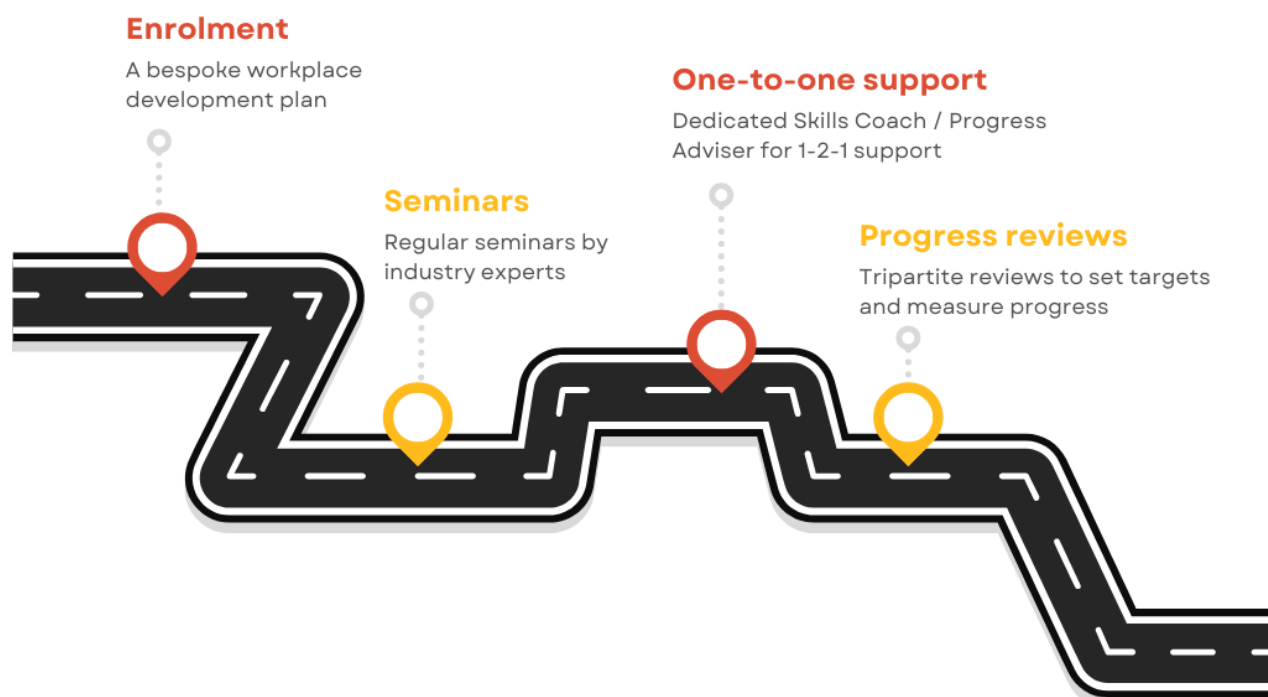
The apprentice will produce and deliver a presentation to the independent assessor on a particular topic. The presentation will then be followed by some questions for the apprentice to answer.

Project

With a project, the apprentice completes a significant and defined piece of work. As part of this, they may also be required to produce a report or presentation to be submitted alongside the work products. The project may be a simulated exercise or could be a workplace project that meets the needs of the business. It may then be followed by questioning, discussion, or interview, depending on the standard.

How do we Deliver our Apprenticeships?

The Learner Journey



Our Delivery Method

We deliver our apprenticeships remotely using Microsoft Teams or Zoom. This means apprentices no longer have to spend their own or their employer's time and money travelling to centres. This also allows the apprentices to network with peers from across the country in one digital classroom.

Typically, apprenticeships include 10 days of seminars which take place at regular intervals. Depending on the standard this could be:

- once every two months
- once a month
- twice a month

All courses are structured so that there is work for apprentices to complete before and after each seminar. The work is uploaded to the OneFile eportfolio system and marked by tutors who return their feedback.

Apprentices have regular 1-2-1 meetings with their designated skills coach. The line manager is invited to take part for the first few minutes. The coach will work with the apprentice to develop job skills and to prepare for End-Point Assessment.

Once a quarter the apprentice and their line manager will attend a formal progress review with the skills coach (or where appropriate, a dedicated progress adviser). This is a chance to keep everyone up to date with the apprentice's progress and address any issues or concerns there may be.

Prior Learning and Skill Scans

When enrolling onto one of our apprenticeships, we establish the prior learning and experience of the apprentice. Through a Skill Scan, we can understand the apprentice's starting position to ensure the apprenticeship is tailored to meet individual training needs.

All apprentices complete these self-assessments so that we can check they are going to study at the right level for their experience. If a learner already has a reasonable level of knowledge in some of the KSBs they may be able to bypass some assessment elements. If this is the case, then the training costs for that apprentice could be lower.

Workplace Development Plan

At the start of the apprenticeship, we will work with the line manager and apprentice to produce a workplace development plan. This document is unique to each apprentice and includes information on how they will make progress towards the KSBs in the workplace.

These can include:

- shadowing other teams or members of staff
- undertaking placements in other departments
- a recognition of additional skills they will need to develop to succeed at work
- bespoke on-the-job training that you as an employer may require eg the use of a unique IT system

The workplace development plan is reviewed regularly by the skills coach and learner to check progress. At each quarterly review, learners set SMART targets for their learning objectives too. These are reviewed at each meeting.

Eportfolio

Throughout their apprenticeship, apprentices build a portfolio of evidence and log their time in an online eportfolio system called OneFile. OneFile allows them to upload evidence from their workplace to confirm that they have achieved KSBs.

OneFile is used to set tasks and track progress throughout the apprenticeship. It is also used to access virtual learning resources and recordings of seminars. This eportfolio is also used to demonstrate that the apprentice is ready to start the EPA process.

Apprentice also use OneFile to update their learning journal sharing the activities they have completed that have supported them gaining new knowledge and skills. It is these journal entries that track off-the-job learning automatically. Tripartite progress reviews are also recorded on the system to measure the progress made each quarter and set new targets.

Line Managers are given accounts to OneFile so they can monitor the progress of their apprentice(s) and view the quarterly progress reviews.

Help on the system can be found at: <https://www.jga-group.com/quick-start-guide-to-onefile-for-line-managers/>.

Responsibilities

Employer Responsibilities

As an employer, you have several responsibilities:

- Pay the apprentice at least the minimum wage
- Give them time for training or study during their working week (apprenticeships must be completed during working hours)
- Provide the apprentice with the same conditions as other employees

All apprentices must be employed in job roles that allow them to evidence the KSBs in their specific apprenticeship standard. If the learner's job role changes, or they are given additional or different responsibilities, you must notify us as soon as possible so that we can check they are still eligible.

Employing an apprentice is no different to employing any other member of staff. They are entitled to the same number of holidays, the same level of sick pay, and the same rules apply around redundancy.

You will need to [create an Apprenticeship Service Account](#) to manage funding and recruit apprentices.

You must sign an apprenticeship agreement with your apprentice and a training plan with your apprentice and JGA, as the training provider. We will provide templates for these documents.

We can help and offer advice if there are any issues with the apprenticeship process.

See also: <https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice>

Line Manager Responsibilities

The apprentice's line manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the apprentice is given enough time in the workplace to complete their apprenticeship. This should be the planned hours agreed during enrolment to meet the off-the-job learning requirements. This is usually circa. 20% of an apprentice's working week. The planned hours are in OneFile and also recorded in the Apprenticeship Agreement and Training Plan. The line manager must also make sure that the apprentice is carrying out tasks that relate to the apprenticeship standard.

Every three months the line manager needs to attend a quarterly review with the learner and their skills coach (or learner progress advisor, if that is a different person). They should be prepared to provide feedback on the learner's progress in their apprenticeship. Following completion of the review, the line manager will need to log into OneFile to view and approve the progress review form.

Traits of a great apprentice line manager:

- Involve – involve your apprentice in the work of the team
- Empower – allow and enable your apprentice to learn by doing and taking ownership
- Feedback – recognise their capabilities and provide feedback, and be able to discuss areas for improvement to enable them to continuously develop
- Listen – allow and enable your apprentices time and space to voice their views and concerns
- Role model – act and demonstrate great behaviours to your apprentice and staff
- Support – provide support and encouragement but also know how and where to make referrals if required for additional support
- Time – ensure you provide time for the apprentice to learn. An apprenticeship may be the first step into the workplace for some, so whilst they are employed to do a job it's important to remember that they are also learning how to do the job
- Development – provide access to development opportunities where possible and practical

Apprentice Responsibilities

We expect all our apprentices to take responsibility for their training and development. An apprenticeship is different to school or college: apprentices are working in genuine roles with responsibilities. It is up to them to learn how to manage their time, attend all sessions, and submit work within given time frames.

It is the apprentice's responsibility to catch up on work if they are absent from delivery sessions for any reason. It is also up to them to let their tutor or skills coach know if they have any issues with the work or attendance.

We ask all apprentices to think about their training the same way they think about their workplace. If they wouldn't turn up late for work, then they should not be turning up late for scheduled training sessions or meetings.

Every three months, the apprentice needs to attend a quarterly review with their line manager and skills coach (or learner progress advisor, if that is a different person). Following completion of the review, the apprentice will need to log into OneFile to electronically sign the progress review to confirm authenticity and accuracy. To support apprentices in meeting their responsibilities and requirements of the apprenticeship, they have access to the learner zone and an apprentice handbook which provides support and guidance on every aspect of their apprenticeship. They also have access to the code of conduct for more information on their responsibilities as a JGA apprentice.

Tutor/Coach/Progress Advisor Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the tutor and coach to prepare each learner for End-Point Assessment. They will work with apprentices throughout their training period to ensure they are ready to progress to gateway.

This includes delivering training, holding monthly coaching sessions, and creating bespoke training plans for each apprentice that is tailored to their job role. It is their responsibility to ensure that learners have completed all their work, and provided evidence for all of the standard's KSBs, before they meet their assessors at the end of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices also meet with a learner progress adviser who will provide additional support (where needed) and monitor the progress of apprentices. They will lead on the progress reviews, meeting with the apprentice and line manager every three months.

Some members of staff cover more than one role.

Training Provider Responsibilities

As a training provider, it is our responsibility to ensure that training and skills coach sessions are held regularly and that all tutors and coaches are experienced in their respective fields. We hold in-house standardisation sessions throughout the year to make sure that all staff members understand the latest apprenticeship rules and notify them of any upcoming changes to the standards.

We choose and partner with suitable end point assessment organisations for each standard. Our responsibility is to maintain these relationships and ensure that the links between apprentice and EPAO are made in time for the assessment process to start.

It is also our responsibility to keep you informed of your apprentice's progress and notify you in a timely manner if there are any changes to staffing or the teaching programme.

Learner Support

We are committed to creating fantastic learning and work experiences and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our apprentices.

This is achieved through 1-2-1 and small group support and an inclusive learning environment which supports all of our learners to move their careers forward, regardless of educational or other disadvantages.

We have access to government funding to help those who need a little extra support whether it be physical challenges, an element of neuro diversity (such as dyslexia) or other barriers, even in some cases, help with childcare costs.

We provide support for learners in a number of different ways, depending on their needs. The learner zone also provides advice and guidance to apprentices for their respective apprenticeship standard. This includes support regarding End-Point Assessment, building a portfolio of evidence and pastoral support.

Genius Within

Genius Within is a social enterprise with the mission of helping neurominorities unlock their talents. They support students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, autism, ADHD, and other neurodiverse conditions. Their assessments help learners identify their areas of strength and recognise how to perform to their best at work and in their studies.

Employers, tutors, and skills coaches and apprentices themselves can make referrals to Genius Within. Sometimes apprentices need help managing mental health issues, such as anxiety, and other times they may be referred for a diagnosis so that we can apply for adjustments such as additional time from an end-point assessment organisation.

Support Connect

Support Connect aims to help apprentices and their trainer or employer succeed with any specific learning differences or difficulties. They help everyone to understand these differences and put a plan in place with methods and techniques to facilitate the best possible learning experience. This could include support with IT and specialist software.

Referrals must be made by the Progress Advisor or Skills Coach who can arrange a screener that will identify any potential challenges and establish contact with an expert workplace psychologist.

Learner Support Plans

If an apprentice has additional learning needs, then we will work with them and you to create a support plan. This summarises their needs and the adjustments that are necessary in the classroom and the workplace to ensure they have the best chance of success.

Support plans may be temporary - for example to support an apprentice who has a short-term disability such as a broken arm - or for the duration of their apprenticeship.

As part of the support plan, we may also make reasonable adjustments such as:

- Changing the structure or delivery of the programme
- Making physical changes to the workplace or learning resources
- Changing equipment such as providing special keyboards or monitor overlays
- Making referrals to Genius Within or Support Connect
- Additional or more frequent sessions with their Tutor or Skills Coach
- Enabling additional time on tests or the End Point Assessment

Career Development

As part of their apprenticeship, all apprentices have access to dedicated careers advice. This may come from their skills coach or tutor - both of whom will be experienced industry professionals - or from JGA's specialist career advisors.

While in an ideal world an apprenticeship would lead to a permanent job with their employer, the reality is that, for a multitude of reasons, this isn't always the case. Sometimes the employer isn't in a position to make a role permanent, and sometimes the apprentice themselves chooses to look elsewhere towards the end of their training.

Regardless of the situation, we will support apprentices with career development. This can include creating short-term and long-term training plans so that they are learning skills that will help them secure new roles, and it can also include CV writing and help preparing for interviews.

We offer a careers consultancy service providing impartial and constructive information, advice and guidance.

Policies

Learner Safety

We work to protect apprentices at risk from abuse, neglect, significant harm or radicalisation. Staff recognise and accept responsibility to develop awareness of the risks and issues involved in safeguarding. We introduce these concepts as part of our courses, so our learners can better understand their rights, responsibilities and how to identify issues for themselves, their friends and loved ones.

All apprentices are encouraged to speak to their tutor, or skills coach or progress advisor if they feel they are not safe or are not being treated fairly. They can also contact our dedicated safeguarding officer, Paula Wakelin, by emailing safeguarding@jga-group.co.uk or calling 020 8426 2666.

More support, guidance and advice is available on the safeguarding section on the [learner zone](#).

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to creating a culture of equality and diversity. We aim to be truly representative of all sections of society and ensure that each employee and learner feels respected.

Our apprentices are encouraged to do their very best. Education, employment, training and progression opportunities are equally available to all. We will not allow discrimination and unfair treatment against anyone because of protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender, religion, race or sexual orientation.

We aim to foster a positive environment that promotes dignity and respect. No bullying or harassment are tolerated. More details are available in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#).

Complaints

At JGA, we try to get things right every time but there is always room for improvement. If you have any complaints or suggestions, we want to hear from you. First of all, if you have a complaint or concern you should speak to your apprentice's skills coach or progress advisor. If you feel unable to do this or are not satisfied with their response, you can make a formal complaint.

When you complain please provide us with as much information as possible to aid our investigation (e.g., date, time, location, names of people involved, the nature of the problem).

It is possible to submit complaints anonymously. However, if you feel able to provide your contact details this will permit us to ask you for more detail if needed and

respond to you more effectively. The process for making a formal complaint and the response you can expect is laid out in [the JGA Complaints procedure](#).

Other Policies

As an accredited training provider, we have a range of policies covering bullying and harassment, equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, safeguarding, and more. You can access our full list of policies on [our website](#).

The main ones are highlighted below:

- [Bullying and harassment](#)
- [Equality, diversity and inclusion](#)
- [Disability statement](#)
- [Health and safety](#)
- [Modern slavery](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Whistle blowing](#)