



[Home](#) > [ESFA: business update](#)



Education & Skills
Funding Agency



Skills Funding
Agency

1. Apprenticeship Levy

Action

Over the last few years the government has embarked on a programme to increase the benefits that apprenticeships bring to all organisations. Reformed apprenticeships are more rigorous, better structured, independently assessed and more clearly aligned to your needs for skills to boost your organisation.

To support these changes a UK-wide [apprenticeship levy](#) came into force on 6 April 2017.

Our online apprenticeship service, which we launched in February this year, already has many employers signed up to start using their money to invest in apprenticeships.

Once you've [declared your levy](#), you will see the balance in your apprenticeship service account by the end of May 2017. But first, you need to ensure that you've set up your account on the apprenticeship service. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes – the [register to manage your apprenticeship funds page](#)

tells you everything you need.

On the apprenticeship service you can:

- search for apprenticeships and see details of the approved providers who can deliver that training through [find apprenticeship training](#)
- sign an agreement for each of your organisations that will contract with training providers
- add apprentices and set up payments to training providers - here are some [common questions from employers](#) about this part of the service
- soon view your English percentage in your account

The funds available to spend on apprenticeships depend on the percentage of your pay bill that's paid to employees who live in England. HMRC works out the English percentage for each PAYE scheme by dividing the total year-to-date pay bill of employees who live in England by the total year-to-date pay bill of all employees.

Sign up to our blog and follow @SFAdigital on Twitter for updates and useful advice on getting ready for the levy. We are putting helpful hints and tips on the blog as we learn where employers have questions. We will also be publishing a series of videos over the next few weeks to walk through the next few features that you will be able to use, including viewing the levy balance and payment activity in your account.

2. Procurement for apprenticeship training in smaller employers

Inform

We have announced a pause to the [current procurement for apprenticeship training provision](#) for non-levy-paying employers. This will allow us to review our approach to ensure that we achieve the right balance between stability of supply and promoting competition and choice for employers. The procurement was significantly oversubscribed. It is therefore important that we fully consider how best to achieve these outcomes in a way that achieves the best value for employers and apprentices as we move to a fully employer-led system.

In order to maintain stability in the system we will be extending existing contracts held by all current providers until the end of December 2017. To maintain our quality standards, current providers with extended contracts will be able to undertake new starts on those contracts provided they are on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. We will notify providers of specific arrangements shortly so that amended contracts are in place ahead of 1 May.

3. National Apprenticeship Week – round up

Inform

National Apprenticeship Week 2017 celebrated apprenticeships and their benefits to individuals, businesses and the economy and was a resounding success. 530 activities and events took place including a launch event at Barclays with the Secretary of State Justine Greening.

Preliminary media evaluation shows that there has been over 2000 pieces of coverage including articles in The Telegraph, The Mirror, The Sun, The Metro, The 'I', and The Evening Standard.

Apprenticeships was a talking point all week, with almost 16,000 tweets mentioning National Apprenticeship Week, the most ever.

Thank you to all the employers who supported National Apprenticeship Week 2017.

3. National Apprenticeship Awards 2017

Action

The search is on to find England's top apprenticeship employers and apprentices and to recognise those individuals who have made a significant contribution to apprenticeships.

Now in its 14th year, the National Apprenticeship Awards 2017 is open for entries.

To support applications, a series of [webinars](#) will be delivered on the following dates:

- 26 April, 2 - 3pm
- 3 May, 10.30 - 11.30am
- 11 May, 2 - 3pm

[Apply online for the awards](#). Employer and apprentice guidance documents are available to download from the [awards application site](#). The application window for entries closes on Friday 26 May 2017 at 5pm.

4. Employer guide to apprenticeships

Inform

A concise [employer guide to apprenticeships](#) has been published on GOV.UK. This guide gives a succinct overview of apprenticeships and is particularly useful for those employers considering apprentices for the first time.

In addition, further apprenticeships documents have been updated and are now available on GOV.UK:

- [How do I employ an apprentice? \(A6 postcard\)](#)
- [Higher and Degree apprenticeship fact sheet](#)
- [A parent's guide to apprenticeships](#)
- [The complete Which? University guide to higher and degree apprenticeships](#)

The following documents are aimed at young people considering an apprenticeship:

- [A guide to apprenticeships](#)
- [A to Z of apprenticeships](#)

5. Minimum wage rates change

Remind

For apprentices, the minimum wage rate changed from £3.40 per hour to £3.50 per hour on 1st April 2017.

By law, all workers must be paid at least £7.50 an hour if they are aged 25 and over, or the National Minimum Wage rate relevant to their age if they are younger. Find out more about wage rates by visiting GOV.UK.

[Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, deaths, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

Departments and policy

[How government works](#)

[Departments](#)

[Worldwide](#)

[Policies](#)

[Publications](#)

[Announcements](#)

[Help](#) [Cookies](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

Built by the [Government Digital Service](#)

OGI

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright