

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



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Contents

1. [National Apprenticeship Awards 2018](#)
2. [Apprenticeship service update](#)
3. [Apprenticeship quality](#)
4. [National Contact Centre support for employers](#)
5. [Social media](#)

1. National Apprenticeship Awards 2018

Action

The National Apprenticeship Awards 2018 are open for entries from now, until 25th May. With a new look and feel for 2018, and a simplified application process, it's a great opportunity to showcase apprenticeships in your business. The award categories open to apprentice employers and apprentices include:

Employer of the Year categories:

- SME of the Year: 1 – 249 employees
- Large Employer of the Year: 250 – 4,999 employees
- Macro Employer of the Year: 5,000+ employees

Apprentice of the Year categories:

- Intermediate Level (level 2)
- Advanced Level (level 3)
- Higher or Degree Level (level 4 or higher)

Apprenticeship Champion of the Year

Recognises individuals who go 'above and beyond' to champion apprenticeships.

A new special award for 2018 is the Recruitment Excellence Award. The winner will be selected from Employer of the Year award entries, and will be given to an organisation that has recruited a diverse and high quality apprenticeship workforce.

A new award category, the Rising Star Award will recognise apprentices that have made impressive progress in their career to date, and have the potential to go even further. Apprentices will be nominated for this award by their employer, and the selection of the national winner will include a public vote. Another new award for 2018 is the Special Recognition Award, which will be awarded to an individual who has made a special contribution to the promotion and delivery of apprenticeships. The winner of this category will be selected by the National Apprenticeship Service.

For more information on the awards, visit: appawards.co.uk.

2. Apprenticeship service update

Inform/action

Transferring apprenticeship service funds to another employer

From this month employers who pay the apprenticeship levy will have the option to fund apprentices in another organisation by making a transfer. Transfers are being introduced to give levy-paying employers more flexibility in how they spend their apprenticeship service funds and will help larger employers to support smaller employers in taking on apprentices. For the first phase, employers who have unused funds in their apprenticeship account will be able to transfer some of those funds to one other employer. The number of employers that an organisation can transfer funds to will increase over time and after user feedback from the first phase.

Key information

- levy-paying employers who use the apprenticeship service will be able to see their transfer allowance at the end of April
- they will be able to make a transfer to one other organisation from May
- the receiving organisation will be able to start adding apprentices from May
- for these new apprenticeships, training providers can then be paid from June
- funds will be transferred monthly for the duration of the apprenticeship
- a new transfers estimator tool will help employers plan the apprenticeships they could fund with a transfer

For more details please view a [3-minute video](#), [GOV.UK web page](#) and a [blog on transfers](#). We're making additional support materials available for employers on our YouTube playlist '[using the apprenticeship service](#)'.

We've also updated the [apprenticeship funding rules for 2017 to 2018](#), which now include the rules for making and receiving transfers.

If you need support please call our helpline on 08000 150 600 or email helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk.

3. Apprenticeship quality

Inform

The [apprenticeship reforms](#), which give employers a real stake in the apprenticeship system, are designed to make sure that all apprenticeships are of the highest quality and deliver the right skills and training for everyone. Quality is at the heart of the changes made to the apprenticeship system, with the aim to fundamentally reform what apprenticeships are, and the long-term opportunities they can provide.

Reforms, including the change from frameworks to standards, internationally benchmarking what an apprenticeship is and ensuring apprentices spend at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training have been important in driving up quality. The role of the employer and training provider is to decide how the off the-job training is delivered whilst ensuring on-the-job training helps an apprentice develop the specific skills for the workplace

You can find more information on the employer responsibilities in apprenticeship delivery in our [employer guide to apprenticeships](#) on GOV.UK.

4. National Contact Centre support for employers

Inform/action

The National Apprenticeship Service Business Support Team offers free, impartial advice and support to employers of all sizes looking to recruit or upskill existing staff through an apprenticeship.

Support includes working with employers looking to recruit an apprentice for the first time or those expanding their apprenticeship and traineeship workforce, and helping employers to find the right training providers to deliver the training.

To access support, search for apprenticeships on GOV.UK or call 08000 150 600. To find out more about how employers are using apprenticeships to benefit their business, visit our [Hire an Apprentice](#) playlist on [YouTube](#).

5. Social media

Inform/action

We communicate with employers and individuals via different social media channels. These include [National Apprenticeship Service](#) on LinkedIn. We have over 16,000 followers who are regularly accessing apprenticeships news and resources. We are also on Twitter - [@Apprenticeships](#) – where we tweet daily to over 60,000 followers. We share updates, news and retweet followers content to our growing community.

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