

Apprenticeships

A short guide for union safety representatives



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This publication was produced in partnership with the Trade Union Congress (TUC). The purpose of the booklet is to raise awareness amongst union safety representatives about Apprenticeships and highlight the opportunity that they have to support apprentices in the workplace. In this way, safety representatives can help to ensure that apprentices learn and work in a safe, healthy and supportive environment.

Apprenticeships

Summary

Apprenticeships are training programmes undertaken in the workplace, giving young people the opportunity to earn money while developing valuable skills and qualifications. Apprenticeship programmes are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and are delivered by independent learning providers and further education colleges. Union safety representatives can play an

essential role in supporting apprentices and ensuring that they have a safe and healthy working environment during their Apprenticeships. The workplace can be a dangerous place, in which tragic and fatal accidents sometimes occur. Young people are particularly vulnerable in a working environment and have specific health and safety requirements.

July 2005



Apprenticeships

Introduction

Over a quarter of a million young people are involved in Apprenticeship programmes. These programmes offer more flexibility than previously, with different entry levels: for example, young Apprenticeships for the 14–16 age group: a pre-Apprenticeship route for those young people who may have lacked formal learning opportunities, and the opening up of Apprenticeships to adults.

Apprenticeships provide the opportunity for learners to “earn and learn” in a wide range of occupations and sectors. Through a combination of Government-funded training and workplace experience, young people can develop high-quality skills and qualifications.

Apprenticeships also place learners in a work environment, which can prove dangerous. Unfortunately, some young people on Apprenticeship programmes have lost their lives while undertaking work based learner training. All these deaths were avoidable. In many cases there was inadequate supervision and a lack of risk assessment.



Apprenticeships

Promoting Apprenticeships

There are a growing number of Apprenticeships being offered within the workplace, and the TUC has supported this development. Unions can and do play an important role in Apprenticeships, by promoting them to both employers and members. We should encourage the use of Apprenticeships because:

- Apprenticeships give opportunities to young people and bring new people into an industry



Apprenticeships

The Role of TUC Safety Representatives

- health and safety is part of the induction training, and that it is appropriate for the kind of work that the apprentice will be doing
- supervisors are trained and competent to supervise a young person, and are given the time to do so
- health and safety is an integral part of the training that the apprentices receive
- the employer monitors the training being given at regular intervals
- all injuries and work-related illnesses of apprentices are recorded and analysed separately



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- the college or provider regularly monitors the training.

In addition, safety representatives can play a useful role in supporting and mentoring apprentices.

No young people should be placed in a situation where they risk serious injury, damaged health or even death. Union involvement can help make Apprenticeship schemes safer and help reduce the number of fatal tragedies that we have seen.



Apprenticeships

Funding and Delivering Apprenticeship Programmes

Apprenticeship programmes are funded by the LSC. Learning providers, which are either independent providers or further education colleges, play an important role in the delivery of Apprenticeships.

This role can include: agreeing a training plan with the apprentice; recruiting apprentices, or supporting existing staff onto Apprenticeships; managing

assessments; ensuring national quality standards are met; and delivering teaching and learning. Independent providers and further education colleges are contracted to do this through the LSC.



Apprenticeships

Contact Details

For more information, contact the LSC or Sector Skills Development Agency or your nearest TUC Learning Services Coordinator. Contact details are given below.

Learning and Skills Council

Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
www.lsc.gov.uk
www.apprenticeships.org.uk
www.safelearner.info
T 0845 019 4170

Sector Skills Development Agency

Callflex Business Park
Golden Smithies Lane
Wath-upon-Dearne
South Yorkshire
S63 7ER
www.ssda.org.uk
T 01709 765 444

TUC Learning Services

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Apprenticeships

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Apprenticeships

Notes

Apprenticeships

Promoting Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships can provide progression routes to higher-level skills and qualifications
- taking on apprentices can facilitate a training culture in an organisation, which can be of benefit to everyone
- the training that apprentices receive should include training on health and safety, and safe working methods
- union support for apprentices can lead to improvements to the scheme and ensure that apprentices are paid a fair wage
- apprentices can bring in a new generation of members and help build the union.



The Role of TUC Safety Representatives

Union representatives can help support apprentices in the workplace and help ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Safety representatives should be working with stewards and union learning representatives to ensure that health and safety is core to any Apprenticeship scheme. This means making sure that:

- apprentices are part of a learning agreement between the union and employer, covering training and skills opportunities
- the union is involved in any initial discussions with the provider or college before the scheme is introduced into the workplace
- the employer has done a full and sufficient risk assessment on all aspects of the proposed work of the apprentices before they start, and that these take into account the lack of experience and lack of awareness about possible risks





Learning and Skills Council National Office

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websites: www.lsc.gov.uk
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