

THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

Dear Members

Welcome to a New Year with new opportunities and chances to celebrate the achievements of our apprentices, mentors and employers. January is often a time when people think of renewal, perhaps undertaking some personal development, starting a hobby or joining a gym. You may find our article on New Year's resolutions handy if you're looking to make some changes. If you are thinking of your professional development, drop us a line first, we're here to help.

My recent experience of the Apprenticeship Levy and the recent reforms have been largely positive. The Digital Account is actually pretty easy to use and those companies getting to grips with it have done so marvellously. Levy companies are taking their time to decide on the best approach for spending funds from their account and our many non-levy customers have adjusted well to the co-funded arrangements that we put in place.

Inside we recap on RIDDOR, explore the new Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager Standard and list up and coming added value training events for members including our 2018 trip to Parliament.



Matt Garvey
Managing Director



SAVE THE DATE...

Wednesday 25th April 2018. WBTC Rising Stars Awards & Apprentice Graduation. Arlington Arts Centre near Newbury. 2 - 4pm.

Graduates will be those apprentices who completed their programme since April 2017 who expect to achieve before the end of March 2018.

Don't worry if you're not sure, we'll be in touch very soon. Our project manager this year is Heather White and her email is heather@wbtc-uk.com

We'll be opening nominations for our Rising Stars Awards on January 29th, in the following categories:

- **Large Employer of the Year**
- **Medium Employer of the Year**
- **Small Employer of the Year**
- **Micro Employer of the Year**
- **Mentor of the Year**
- **Great Start Learner of the Year**
- **Adult Apprentice of the Year (aged 19+)**
- **Apprentice of the Year (aged 16-18)**

A RECAP ON THE MANY WBTC MEMBER BENEFITS

We're starting a new year so here is a recap of your member benefits with WBTC:

- 1 SME companies have access to a free 'health check' on their HR practices when it comes to apprenticeships. A fully qualified and independent HR consultant will undertake this and help you with compliance and good practice.
- 2 All companies benefit from a free NEBOSH qualified Health & Safety consultant visit. This is also renewed periodically. This can give you either guidance if you need it or the confidence in knowing that your processes are all OK.
- 3 Added value training workshops. Members can send ANY of their staff on our day and half day workshops. We run at least one per week in a wide range of soft skill and management disciplines.
- 4 Investment in Training Awards. This is a longstanding employer award programme. An Investment in Training Award sets employers apart from competitors in the sphere of their own staff development.
- 5 Apprentice Graduation & Rising Stars Awards. Our high profile annual celebration enables your apprentices the chance to graduate in front of family and friends. The awards section goes on to champion the very best employers, mentors and learners.
- 6 Enrichment activities from racing tall ships to guided tours of parliament are open to members too - a chance for extra personal development.
- 7 Access to additional funding like our Skills Support for the Workforce provides bespoke bitesize skill development totally free of charge.

When you combine these added value services with our outstanding apprentice achievement rates (15% above the national average) and satisfaction rating from employers & learners then it makes for a powerful partner in your training and development plans.

THE WIDE RANGE OF WBTC APPRENTICESHIPS

You can search Apprenticeship Standards that are available on the Institute for Apprenticeships website by **clicking here** or alternatively you can find a list of Standards that are available for delivery and the relevant price bands **here**.

Here are apprenticeships that WBTC run independently:

- Business Administrator Standard
- Customer Service Practitioner Standard
- Operations/Departmental Manager Standard
- Supply Chain Warehouse Operative Standard
- Team Leader Supervisor Standard

Here are apprenticeships that we run in partnership with other providers:

- Assistant Accountant Standard
- Engineering Technician Standard & Framework
- Furniture Manufacturer Standard
- Housing Manager Standard
- Installation Electrician/Maintenance Electrician Standard
- IT/Telecoms Framework
- Plumbing & Domestic Heating Technician Standard
- Professional Accounting Technician Standard
- Senior Housing Manager Standard

We're still also offering some frameworks in Air Conditioning and Motor Vehicle occupations.

If you are interested in an apprenticeship that is NOT on our list, still give us a call and we'll help you.



PROMOTE YOUR ORGANISATION THROUGH THE EARWIG

Please feel free to send any promotions or good news about your organisation to The Earwig and it will get a feature for free. It could be a new service you are offering, great work with your employees or a charity event you are hosting. Email me via matt@wbtc-uk.com



WELL DONE TO NYIMA AKA OF JAMES COWPER KRESTON

...I would highly recommend this to anyone considering whether or not to do an apprenticeship.

Our congratulations go to Nyima, who just recently completed his Advanced Apprenticeship in Accounting. To illustrate the transformative power of apprenticeships, Nyima said *"This fantastic apprenticeship opportunity has allowed me to cultivate my interpersonal skills and has taught me how to feel comfortable when liaising with clients out on audit and with colleagues when working. I'd say that the one thing I learnt most from this apprenticeship is how to communicate with the people around me. Although things may often seem relatively simple and straight forward, it can often be very confusing when putting these little things into practice. For instance, I have written many emails to my friends and family prior to this audit, but the concept of writing an email to my manager, or even a client when I first began this audit was daunting. However, over time through experience I have learned when it is actually alright to be slightly informal and when it is important to maintain a high level of professionalism.*

Further still, I have really enjoyed the opportunity to travel around England visiting a wide range of different companies and charities and being given the responsibility to complete different elements of an audit. As a result of this apprenticeship, I have gained a reputable Level 3 AAT qualification alongside practical accounting experience and knowledge which I will carry throughout my accounting career without the hassle of any student debt!

I would highly recommend this to anyone considering whether or not to do an apprenticeship - it is the best decision I have made so far! AAT qualifications, fantastic friendly work colleagues and managers, motivational and encouraging trainers/assessors, hands on experience - what more could you ask for? Lastly, through the use of frequent WBTC training sessions, I was also able to improve my basic English and Maths skills which I was then able to transfer into the office in my everyday work."



EMPLOYERS' FUNDING FOR APPRENTICESHIPS... WHAT NEXT?

2017 was a year of massive upheaval, especially for employers who started using their digital accounts. **This link** explains what is going to happen throughout 2018 and 2019. The main milestones being:

Spring 2018

Levy paying employers with a digital account will be able to transfer funds to other levy paying customers. This may enable very large companies to support their supply chain. For example, XYZ Enterprises may have an annual levy account of £200,000 that they struggle to spend. They have a supplier of manufactured goods called A1 Ltd with a small levy account of £10,000. XYZ Enterprises could transfer for example £50,000 of levy funds to ABC Ltd to enable them to train staff and increase their capacity leading to faster turnaround on the orders that XYZ Enterprises make. It's a win-win.

Spring 2019

All employers migrate over to a digital account. At the moment, those 98% of employers who do not pay the levy access their funding indirectly through their chosen training provider. In 2019, every employer will create a digital account into which the government will deposit funding for the training and assessment of apprentices.

TOUR THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT WITH WBTC

Join us on Thursday 29th March on our 4th trip to the Palace of Westminster. The Houses of Parliament are perhaps the greatest example of the Perpendicular Gothic style anywhere in the world and a symbol of Fundamental British Values at large. We'll have an experienced guide taking us through the history, architecture, politics and art of this amazing palace. By the time you're back home you'll be able to tell an Elizabeth Tower from a Norman Porch.

This enrichment activity is **free of charge for all our members**. Transport is provided along with some refreshments but participants will need to bring their own lunch. Get in touch if you would like to join us on the trip. Matt@wbtc-uk.com



WBTC SHORTLISTED FOR PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

WBTC are delighted and excited to have been shortlisted for The Times Educational Supplement annual FE Awards for the Training Provider of the Year Award.

The TES FE Awards is in its third year bringing together excellent colleges and providers from around the country. While these awards may be an excuse for mutual backslapping, I do see the value in raising the work of apprenticeship providers. Apprenticeships are a three-way partnership between employer, learner and provider. So when I attend these awards I will be representing our members because without them we couldn't achieve a thing here at WBTC. **Find out more about the awards by clicking here.**



ARE ENERGY DRINKS A PROBLEM?

We notice the propensity for energy drinks in some of our younger learners. Is this something that employers notice too and is it a problem? Celebrity Chef Jamie Oliver thinks so and he has called on the Government to ban selling energy drinks to children, citing a suspected correlation between consumption and poor scholastic performance.

The celebrity chef and campaigner, who has pioneered a longstanding effort to combat diet-related disease in children, is backing calls by the National Education Union to introduce an age limit of 16 on all sales.

Mr Oliver said the Government should adhere to the guidance that already exists on many cans stating energy drinks are not suitable for children.

"If the energy drink industry is literally telling us their products are 'not recommended for children' on the cans, why can kids as young as ten buy them whenever they want?" he said.

As many as 69 per cent of teenagers and 24 per cent of children under ten consume energy drinks in the UK, according to a study by the European Food Safety Authority. (Source: Yahoo News)

"This consumption is compromising our kids, and our teachers, too - we have to do something about it. We urgently need the government to step up and put age restrictions on the sale of energy drinks to all under 16s."

SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY NEW YEAR, TRADITIONAL VALUES

So, here we are, the new year and you've got through all the turkey sandwiches you can eat. Attention now turns to resolutions for the New Year. A poll, last year, was conducted to find the most common New Year's resolutions that British people made, and this is how the top ten looked:

- 1 Exercise more (38 per cent)
- 2 Lose weight (33 per cent)
- 3 Eat more healthily (32 per cent)
- 4 Take a more active approach to health (15 per cent)
- 5 Learn new skill or hobby (15 per cent)
- 6 Spend more time on personal wellbeing (12 per cent)
- 7 Spend more time with family and friends (12 per cent)
- 8 Drink less alcohol (12 per cent)
- 9 Stop smoking (9 per cent)
- 10 Other (1 per cent)

What these ten show us, in some respects, is how closely our goals reflect our British Values. The overriding theme seems to be attention to matters of health. Good health, of course, means we can succeed in so many areas of life such as work and recreation. This, in turn, reinforces our individual liberty and a strong work ethic, which supports our national economy.

It could also be said, that to take care of our health is as much to do with our mutual respect for others as it is selfish gain. After all, you have got to be in good condition yourself to be able to support others around you in your work or personal life. And, if you take habits like smoking and drinking as examples, these are seen in some people's eyes as routes to anti-social behaviour.

Learning a new skill or taking up a hobby also made the list. It is reassuring to see that people are preserving the urge for self-development. It is through learning new skills that we can not only be more productive as individuals, but also more giving to society. The British have always been traditionally entrepreneurial and inventive. Much of our economy and democracy are built on these traditions of skill and creativity, that some argue are on the decline in this age of the 'service-driven' economy.

So, all in all, let's hope a positive year lays ahead for all in what we value, and good luck sticking to any goals you have set!

A Disability Confident employer will generally offer an interview to any applicant that declares they have a disability and meets the minimum criteria for the job as defined by the employer.

It is important to note that in certain recruitment situations such as high-volume, seasonal and high-peak times, the employer may wish to limit the overall numbers of interviews offered to both disabled people and non-disabled people.



For more details please visit the Disability Confident page on GOV.UK.

If you would like advice and guidance on supporting or recruiting employees with a disability, please feel free to contact me direct, martyn@wbtc-uk.com



THE SKILLS PARTNER PROGRAMME

This is a new initiative especially for employers who want to have a say in the skills agenda.

The Skills Partner programme was launched at the Skills Summit on 30 November 2017, an event supported by the CBI that saw senior business leaders from more than 100 employers engage with government on the creation of a world class skills education system.

Our Skills Partner employers have committed to working with government to create a strong skills programme that gives every individual the opportunity to succeed - whatever their background - and employers the skills they need to prosper.

The Skills Partner Statement of Action sets out how government and Skills Partner employers have committed to working together to create a strong skills programme, and has been signed by all Skills Partner employers.

You can find more information by clicking here.



LAST CALL FOR SMALL & MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES TO BENEFIT FROM 100% FUNDING

As we start out in 2018 many business owners will be thinking about their plans and goals for the new year. This could mean plans for expansion, built on increasing market share, or an improvement in productivity, to maximise the return on costs. These plans will almost certainly be reliant on having skilled, competent and motivated staff. A good business plan will include what and how the workforce development needs will be addressed.

The WBTC offer of the European Social Funded, Skills for the Workforce programme is now entering its last 6 months. To benefit from this offer, Businesses with less than 250 employees, operating in Berkshire have access to fully-funded training for employees aged over 16 (and resident in the UK/EU). Training is delivered on a flexible, modular basis, specifically tailored to the needs of the individual business and its employees. Businesses wanting to access this opportunity need to contact us by February 2018 to arrange a Training Needs Assessment, if we are to access this funding for the needs identified.

In 2017, 25 employers and 91 employees have engaged in this programme with WBTC. Among them, Atkins and Potts, a family business producing award-winning exceptional quality food since 2005, is using the project to support the development of staff throughout the company www.atkinsandpotts.co.uk

Nicola Young, Owner/Director welcomed the support of the project and commented *"This project has come at just the right time for our business. It is providing the skills for a Lean Management approach across the business. We are using the programme to enable us to implement the change needed to support growth. The project is also providing staff with skills in warehousing and logistics that fits with our take on of a new warehouse. Looking ahead, the project has included training a member of staff as an assessor of vocational competence in the work place to enable us to provide effective support for taking on Apprentices."* Nicola added, *"WBTC is using the ESF project to provide training that is worth circa £25,000, a significant saving on*

the costs of improving our business performance and will produce significant improvements in our future returns".

Other local companies, such as Mixing Solutions Ltd, Bone Lane Newbury are also engaged in the project and are putting 21 staff through an extensive Management Development and Customer Services programme.

To take advantage of this fast diminishing opportunity contact Rachel@wbtc-uk.com or Jon@wbtc-uk.com



Nicola Young, receiving her 'WBTC Mentor of the Year' award in 2017



HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS

REPORTING OF INJURIES, DISEASES AND DANGEROUS OCCURENCES REGULATIONS

RIDDOR puts duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses). As part of our apprenticeship contract with employers WBTC must be notified of an incident falling under RIDDOR too. This is because, should an investigation take place, the training provider is also involved and we must evidence our role in keeping the apprentice safe.

While injury and disease are easy to understand concepts, some employers are left unsure of the term dangerous occurrence. **RIDDOR clearly defines the scope of dangerous occurrences here.** It includes work areas such as electrical, lifting equipment, explosives and collapse of scaffolding to name but a few. Employers are under a statutory obligation to comply with RIDDOR as part of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. Failure to do so carries penalties. For offences committed on and after the 12th March 2015 the maximum penalty in the magistrates' court is an unlimited fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or both. In the Crown Court, the maximum penalty is an unlimited fine or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both. **For more information on RIDDOR click here.**



If an apprentice is injured at work or experiences a so called 'near miss' then please let us at WBTC know. Remember we have access to a NEBOSH qualified consultant who may be able to assist you with risk assessments and action plans.

FOCUS ON NEW STANDARDS

In this edition we take a look at one of the more senior Apprenticeship Standards - The Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager.

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk) has cited leadership and management skills as a priority sector to underpin the regional economy. Businesses rely on great leadership to guide them through periods of growth, change and events such as mergers. Poor leadership can result in poor performance, high staff turnover and increased costs. It therefore pays to ensure that you have the best possible leadership in your organisation.

OPERATIONS/DEPARTMENTAL MANAGER STANDARD

This is a new level 5 standard targeted at middle-senior managers on all work settings. This programme is for those leaders who have responsibility not just for staff, but also for projects, budgets and resources. The term operational or departmental is a good descriptor of the target audience.

WBTC MODEL OF DELIVERY

The Operations/Departmental Manager Standard has no mandatory qualifications. However, WBTC has teamed up with the Institution of Leadership & Management to create a professional programme that does lead to formal qualifications. We've done this because we find ambitious managers and leaders demand accreditation as part of their formal development.

The WBTC programme therefore consist of:

- ILM Level 5 Diploma for Leaders & Managers
- NCFE Advanced Award in Skills and Behaviours in the Working Environment
- Level 2 Functional Skills in maths (if required)
- Level 2 Functional Skills In English (if required)

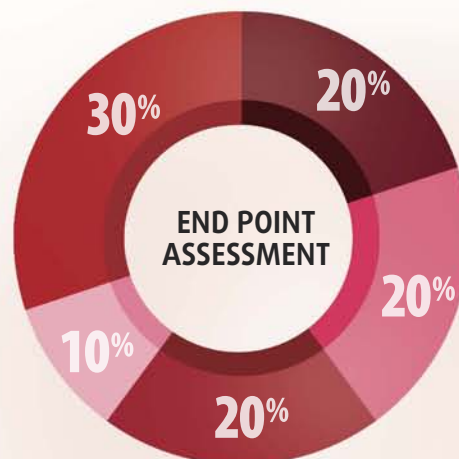
Training workshops to underpin the ILM Level 5 Diploma include:

- Leading People
- Managing People
- Building Relationships
- Communication
- Operational Management
- Project Management
- Finance
- Self-Awareness
- Management of Self
- Problem Solving and Decision Making



END POINT ASSESSMENT

As with other standards this programme has an End Point Assessment which is attempted once all learning aims have been completed. The EPA for this standard includes:



STRUCTURED COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEW (20%)

Knowledge and application of learning relating to the managers role.

CPD LOG/PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION (10%)

Evidence of CPD, Continual Professional Development activities and how learning was applied to the role and workplace.

WORK BASED PROJECT, PRESENTATION & Q&A SESSION (20%)

The employer and training provider will work together with the apprentice to agree a project that is achievable within the employer's business constraints whilst meeting the needs of the standard.

SCENARIO BASED KNOWLEDGE TEST (30%)

- Knowledge of leading people
- Managing people
- Building relationships
- Communication
- Operational management
- Project management
- Finance

ASSESSMENT OF PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE (20%)

Application of knowledge and demonstration of skills and behaviours relating to:

- Leading people
- Managing people
- Building relationships
- Communication
- Operational management
- Project management
- Finance

...and other disciplines



FUNDING

The price cap for this Operational/Departmental Manager Standard is £9,000 and WBTC's price is £7000 plus a small awarding body fee.

Non-Levy customers will pay our tariff of £17.50 per week until the apprentice completes their programme.

WORKSHOPS, COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

Most of the training workshops below are free of charge to WBTC members which means apprentices, work place mentors or any other staff can attend. To book please use the email address against each event. Spaces go fast so please let us know ASAP if you wish to make a reservation.

We operate a £35 no-show fee for anyone who doesn't attend without notice on any free of charge course. This will be invoiced care of the employer. WBTC have enhanced the confirmation process as follows

- We'll confirm your attendance by email and send a meeting request that you can import to your outlook or webmail calendar.
- We'll confirm your space with your employer and **call** you 2-3 days prior to the event.

FEBRUARY

COACHING AND MENTORING

This session is aimed at managers, team leaders, peer-to-peer mentors and those guiding an apprentice or trainee at work. It explores the skills of mentoring and the different techniques that are effective when passing on skills. You'll investigate different learning styles, effective feedback techniques and how to measure progress. It is perfect for anyone who passes on their skills and expertise to others and especially helpful for those with management roles or aspiration.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Monday 12th February 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members



TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

Automated menus, being on hold for ages, unhelpful staff are some of the things that drive us nuts on the telephone! There's nothing worse than bad service especially when you're a paying customer with a query or complaint. This session explores getting great customer service results over the telephone. It investigates professional techniques to impress your clients so that they have nothing but good things to say about your service. This session also looks at how to help confused, angry or upset customers to resolve their concerns.

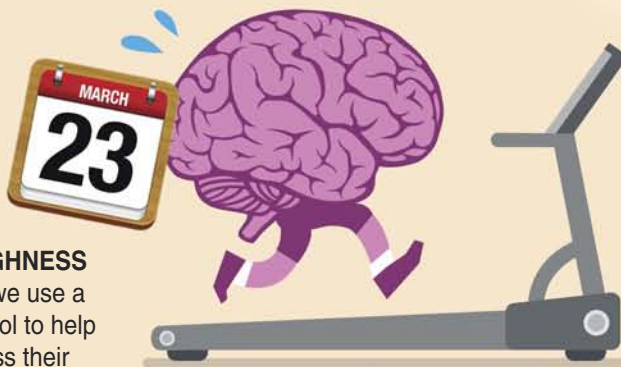
Venue: WBTC
Date: Thursday 15th February 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **Free for WBTC members**
£100 for non members



Remember, if you are an employer that has an apprentice, is on one of our qualifications or hosts a work experience student then you are a member. This will entitle you to subsidised or FREE access to our one-day workshops and enrichment activities.

Momentum is really building among our members and workshops are now filling up fast!

MARCH



MENTAL TOUGHNESS

In this session we use a psychometric tool to help delegates assess their mental toughness. What is it that gets you down at work and makes it difficult to get through the day. This session looks at techniques to identify those trigger points and how to cope with them. It will explore good practice in mental toughness and it is especially useful for those in management positions.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 23rd March 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £150 for non members

WBTC

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