

# THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

## Dear Members

This edition is all about celebration as we dedicate time to highlight employers in our Investment in Training Awards, our latest Learner of the Quarter and the forthcoming Apprentice Graduation and Rising Stars Awards 2018.

Nominations are now open for our Rising Stars Awards so we would love to hear amazing stories from our members.



Matt Garvey  
Managing Director

## INVESTMENT IN TRAINING AWARDS 2018

In December the results of our latest awards were published along with those recipients of our certificates of Commendation, Merit and Excellence. The diversity of apprenticeship employers is writ large, covering accountancy, manufacturing, technology and media going to show that excellence in training transcends company size or industry sector.

It has been fantastic to see some new employers entering the 'excellent' club by attaining our highest accolade, the certificate of excellence. They join some long standing exemplars of amazing apprenticeship and work experience opportunities. Below is a selection of photos and quotes from a few of our recent award winning employers.



### ◀ BENCHMARK FURNITURE

Benchmark have a fantastic record in the Investment in Training Awards. Steve Cooper said: ***"Yet again we are delighted to have been recognised for our outstanding apprenticeship programme here at Benchmark. We are proud that our apprenticeship training dates back to the 1980s and we have accumulated the knowledge and skills to bring out the best in our trainees. Over that time the rules about apprenticeships may have changed but our commitment to the highest quality craft skills has not."***

*Pictured left to right are: Reece Manning, Alex Simpson, Kelvyn Dennis, Steve Cooper, Mathew Rawlings, Rowan Dobson, Kyle Green, Sam Brown & Marcus Slade.*



### ◀ INTELLIGENT GROUP SOLUTIONS

Well done to Intelligent Group Solutions who have achieved their first Certificate of Excellence. *Pictured left to right are: Lee Mitchell, Stephen Velvick (apprentice), Ciara McGuire (apprentice), Alex Lett (apprentice), Sharon Perkins, Josh Burgess (apprentice), Sabrina Hobson (apprentice) and Julian Dwight.*



### ▲ PHABRIX

Phabrix, who won Small Employer of the Year 2017 in our Rising Stars Awards topped it off with a Certificate of Excellence. Managing Director Phillip Adams said ***"I am delighted for the team here at Phabrix on our first Certificate of Excellence in the WBTC Investment in Training Awards. We have enjoyed a terrific partnership with WBTC..."i>***

### EJBC BUSINESS CONSULTANTS ▶

EJBC Business Consultants in Newbury are a very small business offering excellent apprenticeships.

*Pictured left to right are: Charlotte Pockock (apprentice), Emma Thomas, Joe Hall (apprentice) and Alison Fish (apprentice).*



## APPRENTICE GRADUATION & RISING STARS AWARDS 2018

Our annual awards are scheduled for Wednesday 25th April and are once again being held at the Arlington Arts Centre near Newbury. Starting at 2pm, this prestigious event will once again be showcasing and rewarding the best local employers and their most deserving employees. Nominations are now open in our Rising Stars Awards in the following categories, make sure you visit our website and make your nominations early (deadline is March 9th).

- Large Employer of the Year - *sponsored by Newbury Weekly News*
- Medium Employer of the Year - *sponsored by Basingstoke College*
- Small Employer of the Year - *sponsored by Manley Summers*
- Micro Employer of the Year - *sponsored by Bayer Plc*
- Mentor of the Year - *sponsored by Benchmark Furniture*
- Great Start Learner of the Year - *sponsored by James Cowper Kreston*
- Apprentice of the Year (aged 19+) - *sponsored by SPX Flow*
- Apprentice of the Year (aged 16-18) - *sponsored by Sovereign Housing*

Judges are looking for inspirational stories of employers, learners and mentors who have made a positive difference in the world of apprenticeships and/or work experience. We encourage family, friends, colleagues to go on line and tell us their stories. You can nominate yourself and please provide as much detail as possible as to why the nominee should win their category.

*The Apprentice of the Year categories are only open to those who have completed an apprenticeship between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.*

### GRADUATION ROBES

Thanks to the support of our sponsors we are delighted to announce that your graduation robes will be provided free of charge again!

- Intermediate Apprentices will graduate in Black Gown, Cap & Purple Stole
- Advanced Apprentices will graduate in Black Gown, Cap & Gold Stole
- Higher Apprentices will graduate in Black Gown, Cap (with gold tassel) and Purple & Gold Stole

For full details of the event **please click here**. If you would like to make a nomination, but require some assistance then please get in touch with Heather White: [heather@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:heather@wbtc-uk.com)



### FAQ'S

**How do I confirm my attendance as a graduate?**

Please confirm with Heather White by emailing [heather@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:heather@wbtc-uk.com)

**How do I book my graduation robes?**

We just need your height and whether you have a large, medium or small sized head. Email Heather with these details.

**Can I bring a guest?**

Yes. We encourage graduates to bring a guest. We can't always promise that you can bring two guests but let us know if you'd like to and we'll see if there is room.

**Will my employer be invited?**

In addition to your guest we always invite your employer too.

**What time should I arrive?**

We provide formal photography prior to the event where you'll be able to have your graduation photo taken. To allow time for this please arrive between 12-1pm.

**Do we cater for any specific additional needs?**

Absolutely yes! This is a totally inclusive event. If you need any assistance in attending or participating then please let us know so that we can help. Email [heather@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:heather@wbtc-uk.com)

**I'm one of many graduates from the same company, are there special arrangements?**

We're expecting a larger than usual number of graduates from Sovereign Housing and James Cowper Kreston this year. We'll send individual invites but please also liaise with your managers so that attendance can be co-ordinated.

**Is it easy to park at Arlington Arts?**

Yes, there is plenty of space.

**Do I have to pay for anything?**

The event, the graduation robes and your photographs are all paid for thanks to our amazing sponsors. Sadly we can't extend to a free bar though.



## WELL DONE TO ALEXANDRA TEXIERIA OUR LATEST LEARNER OF THE QUARTER

Kudos to Alex who works at West Berkshire Council on being our first Learner of the Quarter in 2018. Alex's Training Consultant is Andrea Wood and here is what she had to say.

*'I am nominating Alexandra for Learner of the Quarter for her continued determination and dedication towards learning and self-developed even though she has had many obstacles along the way. Alexandra is an adult learner returning to studying and she successfully completed her Business Administration Intermediate Apprenticeship before progressing onto her Advanced Apprenticeship in Business Administration. Alex's aim is to progress to an ILM Management programme as her role has developed and Alexandra now manages the Administrators in the Health and Social Care team.*

*Along the way Alex has overcome many hurdles in her studies. She has had to take lots of time off work to fly home to Portugal to support her family through a difficult time. Despite this Alex has still kept up with her studies and showed real determination. Her maths functional skills has also been a challenging component for her. However, Alex has never shown anything but commitment and dedication to achieving her goals."*



## LOCAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARD

Are you aged 18-25 and fancy some adventure? Your local Rotary Club is currently looking for nominations for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award taking place on 21st through to the 28th July 2018.

### WHAT IS RYLA ?

It is a Rotary International programme for young people. It offers young people one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives by taking part in developing qualities of leadership, team working, initiative and problem solving at the start of their careers. The programme develops a more complete personality and the new found confidence and skills are brought back into the workplace and community.

### HOW DOES RYLA WORK?

The course is for young people at the start of their working life. Participating Rotary Clubs select local representatives as its nominees. Clubs ensure that the young people chosen come from a diverse background and are considered to have leadership and development potential.

It is open to anyone aged 18-25 in England. Our thanks goes to Graeme Leech of Newbury Rotary who said he is happy to take initial enquiries and then put you in touch with your local representative. You can contact him on [Graeme.leech@newburyrotary.org](mailto:Graeme.leech@newburyrotary.org)



## A NOTE ON THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) comes into effect in May. WBTC currently collects, stores and uses data on apprentices, learners and employers. We use this for funding purposes, to ensure apprentices get their qualifications, to resolve safeguarding issues and to provide a good service. We also use data for marketing and publicity purposes including here in The Earwig.

Like many organisations we'll be updating our practices in line with the regulations and contacting our members accordingly. We may be issuing updated contracts and agreements with you and/or seeking further permission to keep you on mailing lists for marketing. Please note, we only intend to market the following:

1. Potential applicants for apprentice vacancies
2. Our added value courses for members
3. Details of awards and graduation ceremonies
4. Information that we feel employers will find useful in their operations

We also use Mailchimp providing each contact the chance to unsubscribe. If you have any questions about how we use data then please contact me on [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)



## SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY



# HARASSMENT AND BULLYING OF YOUR STAFF BY CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS

**High profile scandals on sexual harassment in Hollywood, the theatre and Parliament have thrown light on the working environments that some employees suffer. With bullying, intimidation and sexual harassment appearing rife in some walks of life, the government is asking if it is time for a new law to protect victims.**

The recent expose of the working conditions of 'hostesses' contracted to work for an all-male private party at the so-called 'Presidents Club' has brought into stark relief the erroneous concept of harassment as an occupational hazard. Whereas in previous years such behaviour was tolerated the tide appears to be turning.

Many employers are clear about their responsibility to their staff when it comes to providing a safe working environment. Most will have a policy in place that refers to the context of bullying or harassment between employees i.e. a manager towards their team member. However, what about harassment or bullying by a client towards an employee? How many policies, procedures or cultures are equipped to protect their staff from customers?

At the Presidents Club, the harassment was directed towards hired staff from paying guests rather than other employees. This culture appears to have been underpinned by staff signing Non Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) to head off any complaints. When a customer abuses an employee it creates a dilemma for the employer who relies on the client for income. So, imagine one of your sales people being harassed or bullied by an important client, perhaps a client worth thousands of pounds. How many companies would feel confident in dealing with this in a professional, ethical and legal way? It is easy to imagine a conflict between the employer who wants to protect their staff but also wishes to retain the customer and a lucrative business relationship.

Under the Health & Safety Act 1974 employee welfare is the responsibility of the employer. Failure to execute this responsibility could lead to legal action. Consequently it is worth checking policies to consider what action would be taken where an employee felt harassed or bullied by a customer. Who would deal with the investigation, how would the client be treated and how could conflicts of interest be eliminated? Do you feel adequately protected and equipped for this important safeguarding issue?

At WBTC we cannot provide legal guidance but businesses could seek advice from a HR consultant like Katie Aldridge (Katie.Aldridge@hrdept.co.uk) or a similar qualified expert. Checking that your processes are robust and relevant could protect your business, your staff and your customers.

Remember that all of our customers with 249 or fewer staff can benefit from a free 'Apprentice HR health check' from Katie. For more information contact her direct or get in touch with us, Rachel@wbtc-uk.com

**Here is a link** to an interesting article on the topic of workplace harassment and bullying.

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



## HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS

### HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR WORK EXPERIENCE

Here at WBTC our successful Traineeship programme hinges on the support of employer work placements. Sometimes, however, employers are uncertain of their Health & Safety obligations. Veering on the side of caution they choose not to offer work placements for fear they don't have the right risk assessments in place.

In this article we explore a school who took a rather zealous view of risk assessments and even demanded that parents cough-up cash before their child could undertake a placement.

The HSE has stepped into a row between parents, a Devon secondary school and its local Education Business Partnership after parents were asked to pay £33 for "compulsory health and safety checks" to allow students to carry out work experience placements.

The school was in fact passing on charges it had to pay to Education Business Partnership South West (EBP SW), an organisation that brokers relationships between businesses and schools and carries out "health and safety checks" on schools' behalf.

Even if the student was entering a workplace with moderate risks, the HSE said that the employer's generic risk assessment, as long as it covered young people as part of its scope, would be sufficient to comply with the law.

You can **read the full article by clicking here.**

At WBTC we will pay for any risk assessment that is required. For higher risk environments we will send a NEBOSH qualified consultant to support employers. This is our added value service to thank employers for offering work placements.



## THE NEWBURY CIVIC AWARDS

**This will be of interest to any employer or individual based in or having a presence in Newbury, Berkshire. Newbury Town Council is launching its annual civic awards to recognise the huge contribution volunteers make to the local community.**

The Mayor of Newbury is launching three awards this year:

- **The Newbury Town Civic Award** (now in its 21st year)
- **The Young Persons Civic Award** (sponsored by Swift Group)
- **The Newbury Town Business Civic Award**

Speaking ahead of the launch, Mayor of Newbury, Cllr David Fenn, said: *"Often, little things like collecting prescriptions or cutting an elderly neighbour's lawn are overlooked, but this can make a huge difference to someone's life."*

Nomination forms are available via the Newbury Town Council website, where forms can now be electronically submitted. Paper copies are also available for collection from The Town Hall, or by telephoning the Council on 01635 35486. <https://www.newbury.gov.uk/>

The Mayor continued: *"This year, I'm pleased to announce we're also launching a new award aimed at Newbury's businesses. We now need you to tell us who deserves to be recognised for making a significant contribution to our community."*

The closing date for nominations is Friday 9 March and the Mayor will present winners with their awards at the Annual Town meeting on the evening of Monday 19 March.

Newbury Town Council would like to thank Adrian Smith of the Swift Group for their continued support.



## LEVY PAYERS MATCHMAKING

From April 2018 employers who pay the apprenticeship levy will be able to transfer apprenticeship funds to other organisations. Employers who want to transfer funds can find employers who want to receive a transfer in a number of ways, for example:

- work with an employer in your supply chain
- get in touch with employers in your industry
- get in touch with an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA)
- work with regional partners

Employers can transfer a maximum of 10% of annual funds. This is worked out from the total amount of levy declared, with the English % applied, plus the 10% government top-up payment.

Here at WBTC we thought we could matchmake employers who have 'excess levy funds' with those who need it. This would ensure that funding not being used went to a good home and promotes apprenticeships within the WBTC membership.

Full details of how the transfer works can be viewed [here](#).

WBTC is happy to play the role of intermediary to get these relationships up and running and even use the Earwig as a noticeboard for funds available provided that the funding is for the benefit of WBTC members. For more information email [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)

# FOCUS ON NEW STANDARDS

## AWARD IN SKILLS & BEHAVIOURS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

In this edition we take a look at our Award in Skills & Behaviours in the Working Environment accredited by NCFE. This overview provides information and guidance on how this award cross-references into the apprenticeship standards that we offer. At WBTC, we have chosen to separately accredit skills & behaviours because they are so important to employers. Time management, customer service, business communication and telephone techniques often cut across company size and sector. Getting these skills and behaviours right and to a high standard not only helps in an apprenticeship but underpins sound business.

### NCFE AWARD IN SKILLS & BEHAVIOURS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

This is a new award invented by WBTC in conjunction with awarding body NCFE. It can only be delivered with the approval of WBTC and NCFE. It currently comes at two levels;

#### Intermediate Award

For apprentices on Level 2 & Level 3 programmes

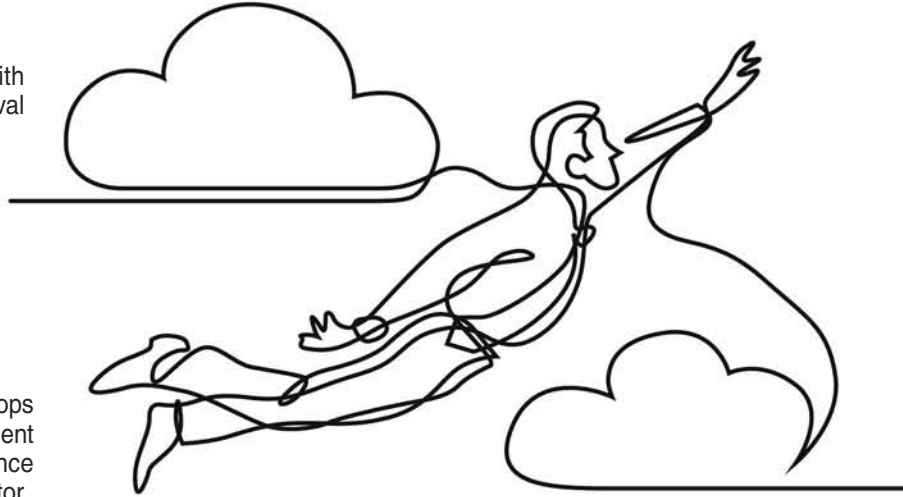
#### Advanced Award

For apprentices on Level 4 & 5 programmes

### WBTC MODEL OF DELIVERY

We currently deliver training through full and half day workshops at WBTC. Candidates are then required to meet the assessment criteria for each module through workbased evidence supplemented by testimony from their line manager or mentor.

Both the Intermediate & Advanced awards are made up for 10 modules. In order to achieve a full certificate, learners must successfully complete the 4 Mandatory Units and 3 Optional Units. However, for those who want additional stretch and challenge they can complete 8 or more modules.



### ADVANCED AWARD MODULES

#### Mandatory Units

1	Advanced Organisational Communication
2	Team Dynamics
3	Mental Toughness & Professional Development
4	Efficient & Effective Working Practices

#### Optional Units (select 3)

5	Advanced Principles of Business
6	Transformational Coaching & Mentoring
7	Managing Quality Projects
8	A visionary Approach to Customer Service
9	Change Management & Organisational Design
10	Managing Risk & Implementing Decisions

### INTERMEDIATE AWARD MODULES

#### Mandatory Units

1	Find Solutions to Difficult Situations
2	Effective Business Communication
3	Efficient and Effective Working Practices within a Team
4	Personal & Professional Development

#### Optional Units (select 3)

5	Deliver Effective Customer Service
6	Time Management
7	Coaching & Mentoring
8	Provide Outstanding Customer Service on the Telephone
9	Develop an Understanding of Culture, Ethics & Sustainability
10	Understand the Main Principles of Business

### COSTS

This award is built into the apprenticeship standards that we offer and it is included in the price. For those who would like to undertake this award independently of the apprenticeship it is £100 per module plus a small awarding body fee.

## 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.

### 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



### APRIL

#### TIME MANAGEMENT

Procrastination is the thief of time! To-do lists, prioritisation, those little time thieves. This session looks at productivity in the workplace and making the most of every minutes. You'll learn the difference between important and urgent, how to deal with interruptions, your temptations that lead you to 'waste time' and some good practice in organising your day. This fun, interactive and valuable session is one of our most popular.

Venue: WBTC  
Date: Friday 6th April 09:30 - 12:30  
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!

#### PROVIDE OUTSTANDING TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

Let's create a great impression for our customers. Most 'first contact' is over the phone and it creates the first impression of your business.

This session looks at all aspects of telephone technique from an initial confident greeting to handling calls with angry, confused or upset customers. It is ideal for anyone who uses the phone for either external customers or dealing internally with colleagues.

Everyone is a customer!

Venue: WBTC  
Date: Friday 20th April  
09:30 - 16:30  
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members**  
£100 for non members



# WBTC

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