

# THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

## Dear Members

Just days remain until our 2018 Rising Stars Awards when we'll see apprentices graduate and others celebrate in the eight award categories. This edition reveals the finalists who'll be featuring in the ceremony on Wednesday 25th April 2018 at Arlington Arts Centre. Also in this edition we review the latest apprenticeship achievement rate tables and explore rules surrounding drinking-water at work.



Matt Garvey, Managing Director

## NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP ACHIEVEMENT RATES - 2016/17

Late in March the government published the 2016-17 Apprentice Achievement Rate Tables. This annual event not only provides the latest national average but also gives employers and learners access to data by college and provider. For a while now the national average has languished at 67%, a poor reflection of the skills need in the UK. In 2016-17 this rate increased to 67.7% - an apologetic improvement of just 0.7%. To be frank, it is a negligible improvement and we may as well call the rates 'stagnant' because they have been in the region of 67-68% for four years.

Why is there no improvement? There is insufficient leadership when it comes to quality outcomes. The focus has been on 'bums on seats' and enrolling 3 million new apprentices. At the same time the percentage of apprentices completing their programme has not budged. The sector's leadership have been so invested in the Reform of Apprenticeships, the Apprenticeship Levy and Standards that they have failed to address outcomes for learners. At a college or provider level there is also insufficient motivation among some to improve their achievement rates. Ofsted happily grading some as 'Good' even when their achievement rate is below 67%. The ESFA takes slow or little

action against providers with poor achievement rates and as a consequence over 34,000 apprentices studied with colleges/providers whose achievement rate was 50% or below in 2016-17.

The solution? Close the poorly performing colleges and providers and move their employers and learners to better institutions. There are 55 colleges, providers and employers with achievement rates at 50% or below. It would be easier than you think to terminate their contracts and move their apprentices to better colleges and providers. You can see the good and the bad institutions by [clicking this link](#).

We're delighted to be over 80% again when it comes to achievements at WBTC. In fact we have been over 80% since 2013 meaning that a WBTC apprentice has at least a 14% better chance of achieving. The consistent level of excellence reassures both learners and employers that their investment of time, effort and money will be returned. The table compares us to local and national providers active in the Berkshire/Hampshire area and I'd encourage all employers to check the apprenticeship achievement rates of their chosen training partner.

INSTITUTION NAME	COHORT SIZE	APPRENTICE ACHIEVEMENT RATE		
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM	710	82.5	85.0	81.6
NEWBURY COLLEGE	70	83.0	75.0	77.6
QA LIMITED	1,530	86.2	70.2	77.6
BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	590	79.7	78.6	75.7
BASINGSTOKE ITEC	80	84.7	85.7	74.1
KEY TRAINING LIMITED	1,700	66.5	66.8	71.9
ASPIRE ACHIEVE ADVANCE LIMITED	1,930	82.0	65.1	71.2
ACTIVATE LEARNING	770	71.6	68.4	70.5
NEW COLLEGE SWINDON	450	77.3	74.6	65.8
SPARSHOLT COLLEGE	490	70.3	74.9	62.7
QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT	2,560	73.9	63.6	62.2

## APPRENTICE GRADUATION & RISING STARS AWARDS 2018

### THE FINALISTS

Well done to the finalists in this years Rising Stars Awards 2018. We're so pleased to see a great diversity of employer, mentor and learner demonstrating the egalitarian and inclusive nature of work based learning. Every finalist is a worthy winner and we'll unveil the actual winners on the day at Arlington Arts Centre on Wednesday 25th April.

For twitter, please use #wbtcawards18

*Pictured: The winners from our 2017 awards*



#### Mentor of the Year

*Sponsored by Benchmark Furniture*

Rob Holmes (Swift Logistics Solutions Ltd)  
Eddie Stevens (The Grey Matter Group)  
Sheena Sukumaran (Sutherland Health Ltd)

#### Great Start Learner of the Year

*Sponsored by James Cowper Kreston*

Samuel Aldridge  
Jessica Bray  
Isabelle Read

#### Apprentice of the Year (aged 19+)

*Sponsored by SPX Flow*

Max Haley (Prism ID)  
Phoebe Hobson (Phabrix Ltd)  
Sarah Oakley (Boomerang Creative)

#### Apprentice of the Year (aged 16-18)

*Sponsored by Sovereign Housing*

George North (The Grey Matter Group)  
Charlotte Pocock (EJBC Chartered Accountants)  
Briony Smith (West Berkshire Council)

#### Large Employer of the Year

*Sponsored by Newbury Weekly News*

Bayer plc  
James Cowper Kreston  
Wilkins Kennedy LLP

#### Medium Employer of the Year

*Sponsored by Basingstoke College*

Atkins & Potts Ltd  
Intelligent Retail Ltd  
Kennet School

#### Small Employer of the Year

*Sponsored by Manley Summers*

Benchmark  
EJBC Chartered Accountants  
The Grey Matter Group

#### Micro Employer of the Year

*Sponsored by Bayer Plc*

Boomerang Creative  
Protect & Invest Ltd  
Sutherland Health Ltd

## THE WBTC LEVY MATCHING SERVICE



The last edition of The Earwig highlighted that employers paying the Apprenticeship Levy can transfer up to 10% of their annual funds to other levy paying customers. WBTC is on hand to help matchmake our members so that enterprises with unspent funds can help and support other employers who may have a need to undertake staff development. **Full details can be viewed here.**

Some ideas we have been exploring include transfers to local academy schools to help with the development of their workforce or linking up with public sector levy payers who have increasing demand.

A large levy payer may wish to support businesses in their supply chain and thus benefit from increased capacity. WBTC is on hand to support you through the process.

For advice and guidance email [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)



## PARLIAMENT TRIP

Our annual trip to The Palace of Westminster took place in March. Despite 6 hours stuck in traffic we're incredibly grateful to the authorities at Parliament who allowed the tour to take place. As well as the guided tour of the building, our members also sat in on debates. The first was a debate in The House of Commons on autism and the second was in The House of Lords on Brexit. Well done to the following members who participated,

Halimatou Diallo  
Jonathan Godding  
Jonathan Meek  
Nikki Boyd  
Mary Froom  
Naomi Mildenhall  
Mel Alexander  
Rodrigo Ferreira  
Jamal Watson  
Mel Hind  
Debbie Gargon  
Brian Adams  
Amy Butler  
Joe McCarthy

Hailey Cox  
Wayne Churcher  
Ali Puttock  
Evie Blackman  
George North  
Danielle Harris  
Olivia Taylor  
Virginia Leonard  
Isabelle Read  
Alex Hart  
Laura Marlow  
Sharon Ogden  
Elaine Shone  
Jack Johnson



## WBTC & BCoT ENGINEERING SUMMIT

WBTC & Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT) have delivered engineering apprenticeships together for well over 20 years. Achievement rates are over 90% and we combine excellent added value services with great training facilities. It is an example of how two strong providers can collaborate for the benefit of employers. This year we will be offering the new Engineering Apprenticeship Standard. This represents a complete revitalisation of the engineering suite of apprenticeship training and responds to employer demands for a programme that is:

- More bespoke
- Stretching & challenging
- Validated by a final End Point Assessment

In preparation for this, WBTC & BCoT are hosting an Engineering Summit on **17th May 2018** at 200 Longwater Avenue in Green Park Business Park, Reading. Running from 10am til 12 noon, with lunch provided afterwards, the summit will include:

- A presentation on the content and delivery of the new Engineering Standard
- The benefits of moving from the Apprenticeship Framework to the new Standard
- An update on funding, timescales and training venues
- The unique benefits of engineering apprenticeships with WBTC/BCoT

This event is **FREE OF CHARGE**. However, as with our other added value services we will administer a late cancellation/no-show penalty of £50 per person. There is plenty of free parking available.

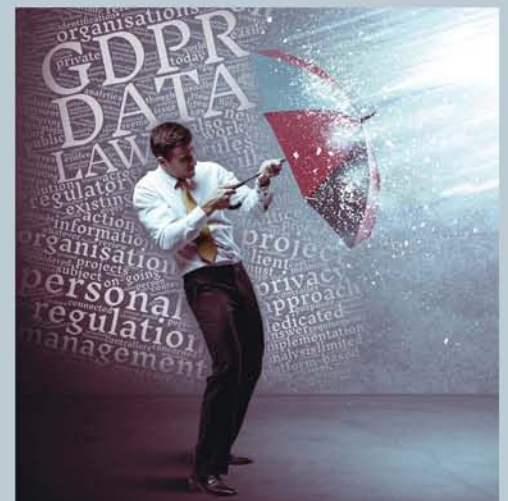
To attend or for more information, please email [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)

## 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 EU CITIZENS' RIGHTS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER BREXIT

From this April, EU citizens in the UK will start to see digital adverts helping EU citizens to 'Stay Informed'. They will point people towards official sources of information on GOV.UK about how the UK's withdrawal from the EU affects EU citizens.



The activity is part of an ongoing effort by the UK Government to build awareness about an agreement in December between the UK Government and European Union to protect EU citizens' rights, which will enable them to continue to live their lives as now. The agreement also covers family members.

EU citizens will need to go through a simple, digital application process which will confirm their status in the UK for as long as they want to stay. The UK government will begin that process later this year to get everyone through in good time.



Information campaigns such as this can help dispel myths and provide clarity on the rights and responsibilities around living in the UK. With our local economy enjoying a large workforce of EU citizens many of our members will want to support their staff in understanding the impact of Brexit. **More information can be found here.**

If you would like advice and guidance on any of the issues raised in this column then contact me via [martyn@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:martyn@wbtc-uk.com)

## HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS DRINKING WATER AT WORK

It's important to stay hydrated at work and this means drinking water. Imagine one of those hot drowsy days when you just want to nod off. You may not drink enough water or you may resort to a caffeinated beverage. However, coffee and tea actually contribute to dehydration so six cups a day isn't helping even if it keeps you awake.

By drinking plenty of water we keep our body and brains hydrated. When we don't consume enough water we can see performance dip. When a person stops drinking water or doesn't drink enough, they can become dehydrated. Symptoms of dehydration include dry and sticky mouth, sunken eyes, not producing enough tears and lethargy, according to the National Institutes of Health. We all know that feeling when you don't have enough energy or interest and it could be down to your body's reaction to insufficient drinking water. The European Food Safety Authority recommends 2.5 litres per day for men and 2 litres for women.

There are regulations on the provision of drinking water in the workplace as part of staff welfare. The law requires that you provide drinking water and ensure that:

- it is free from contamination and is preferably from the public water supply
- bottled water dispensers are acceptable as a secondary supply
- it is easily accessible by all employees
- there are adequate supplies taking into consideration the temperature of the working environment and types of work activity
- cups or a drinking fountain are provided.



Drinking water does not have to be marked unless there is a significant risk of people drinking non-drinking water.

It is in everyone's interest to keep colleagues hydrated. It complies with the law and is more likely to keep productivity high. You can't make someone drink water. However, by having accessible drinking water you can provide the opportunity for staff to stay hydrated and to stay alert.

You can find **more information 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.**



## 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 of your 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 remind you prior to the event.

### APRIL

#### EMERGENCY FIRST AID AT WORK

This fully accredited qualification will endow the delegate with the role of 'first aider' at work. It can also be used as a refresher.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Friday 27th April / Friday 8th June  
09:30 - 16:30  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members**  
£149 for non members



### MAY

#### ENGINEERING EMPLOYER SUMMIT

Free for all to attend with brunch provided. Please note a charge of £50 will be administered for late cancellation or no show.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Thursday 17th May  
10:00 - 13:00  
Venue: Green Park, 200 Longwater Avenue, Reading  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for all to attend**



### JUNE

#### EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

This popular module focuses on professional letter writing and emails for a business environment. Attendees will explore good practice and how to avoid looking like an amateur when it comes to commercial correspondence with colleagues, customers and suppliers.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Friday 1st June - 09:30 - 16:00  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC Members**  
£100 for Non Members



#### EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Bad customer service can destroy the reputation of any organisation. This session explores how all staff can make a positive impression on their customers and raise the effectiveness of the whole organisation. It will explore topics such as professional image, dealing with problems, body language and helping angry/confused customers. This session is particularly useful for customer facing staff who interact face-to-face with clients.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Friday 22nd June - 09:30 - 16:00  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC Members** £100 for Non Members



### JULY

#### TIME MANAGEMENT

Do you ever feel there aren't enough hours in the day? Do you cope well with distractions or do you wish you could find yourself in a quiet room so that you can get on with work? This session explores ways in which our time is stolen or lost and how we can win it back to become more effective. It will explore the difference between important and urgent and delegates will be able to identify those scenarios that waste time.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Friday 6th July - 09:30 - 12:30  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £100 for non members



#### BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL LEVEL 2 AWARD IN HEALTH & SAFETY

This is an approved qualification equipping delegates with enhanced knowledge on health & safety, it also strengthens employers' procedures for health & safety. The more staff who have this knowledge, the safer the environment. This award covers the process for carrying out a risk assessment, how risk assessments can be used to reduce accidents and ill-health, the risk control hierarchy, risk controls for common workplace hazards and arrangements for emergencies and first aid.

Venue: WBTC  
Dates: Friday 20th July - 09:30 - 16:00  
Contact: [matt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:matt@wbtc-uk.com)  
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members



# WBTC

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