

THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

Dear Members

September is a very busy time in the world of apprenticeships. Not only are many school/college leavers beginning new jobs but we also see apprentices from last year or 2016 progressing to higher level qualifications.

Recruitment of new apprentices this summer has been strong with cohorts starting at Bayer Plc, Kennet School, Sovereign, Publica Group and Thames Valley Police to name a few. Local small-medium sized employers have also had strong demand for new apprentices providing excellent career opportunities in and around Berkshire. Recruitment season, as we call it, stays busy until around November so my colleagues Rachel and Maria are still helping to find and place apprentice applicants. If you need any advice or guidance then please drop them a line via rachel@wbtc-uk.com or maria@wbtc-uk.com

In this month's Earwig we bring further updates to Digital Accounts used by Levy-Paying employers. There is a feature on our latest Learner of the Quarter and we celebrate WBTC's performance in the 2018 Learner Satisfaction Survey.



Matt Garvey, Managing Director

FULLY FUNDED INSTITUTE OF LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR SMES



WBTC, via the European Social Fund, has received an extension of funding. We want to continue training aspiring or existing managers to achieve their Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) accreditations. We had a great take-up prior to July with many local small-medium enterprises training their supervisory staff.

Who is eligible:

Companies with 249 or fewer employers

Based in Berkshire

Our target market are employers linked to design, manufacturing, finance and digital aligned sectors. This could be accountancy, IT/Telecoms, digital marketing, engineering, construction and other priority sectors. Furthermore, leadership and management generally is a key priority for the Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

This funding runs out in six months time so don't delay, contact Jon Thompson on jon@wbtc-uk.com to benefit from this.

This project is commissioned by TVB LEP, led by The Windsor Forest Group and funded by the European Social fund. The ESF will expire when the UK exits the European Union.



DIGITAL ACCOUNT ROLL-OUT GETS DELAYED

The Education & Skills Funding Agency has announced that the plan to move all employers to digital accounts next April has been delayed by 12 months. With over 97% of employers in scope for this transition the magnitude of the IT demands made this an ambitious target to say the least.

In my mind this is a sensible decision because apprenticeship starts have already seen a sharp decline following the introduction of digital accounts for those employers paying the Apprenticeship Levy. I was deeply concerned how a further layer of complexity for SMEs might impact on demand.

What does it mean in practice? For WBTC employers it means business as usual and you'll continue to access and pay for your WBTC apprentice services as you do now. We'll keep you updated in 2019 - 2020 should matters change.

You can read more on this story by [clicking here](#).



NEW 'PROJECTION' FEATURE FOR APPRENTICESHIP LEVY PAYING EMPLOYERS



The ESFA has added a new feature to digital accounts that helps employers see funding projections for four years. This will enable account holders to plan the spend of their Apprenticeship Levy and avoid any nasty surprises along the way.

This is particularly helpful at the completion stage of an apprenticeship when the provider is paid 20% of the agreed price. This is released when the apprentice(s) start their End Point Assessment on a Standard or, if they are on a Framework, when they fully complete the programme.

RESTRICTIONS LIFTED ON TRANSFER OF APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE FUNDS

The temporary restriction on how many employers a levy-payer can transfer apprenticeship service funds to will be lifted next month. For more information visit www.gov.uk From early July, levy-paying employers will be allowed to transfer up to a maximum of 10% of their apprenticeship service annual funds to as many employers as they choose.

By making a transfer to pay for an apprentice's training and assessment, employers can support other employers who may not have considered hiring an apprentice before. Please let your employer contacts know about this new flexibility in the apprenticeship levy.

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



WBTC IS TOP FOR APPRENTICE SATISFACTION

In July the results of the National Learner Satisfaction Survey were released. This huge exercise asked thousands of apprentices and learners about the quality of their college or training provider. Questions ranged from subjects such as the quality of training to the way in which learners were treated by staff. Under the brand of FE Choices, the survey is considered a reliable barometer of learners' happiness.

We increasingly rely on user experience when selecting products or services and apprenticeships are no different. These satisfaction scores represent feedback from hundreds of thousands of apprentices and consequently provide a robust analysis of how a provider or college is performing.

The survey had 341,627 respondents, representing 19 per cent of all learners, from across 923 colleges and training providers. It took place between October 2017 and May 2018. A national average score of 86.2% for all colleges and providers helps users put the scores into context.

An apprenticeship is a significant programme of development ranging from level 2 to degree level which can last 4 or more years. I therefore believe that most individuals will want to choose a provider that has a high satisfaction rating; a place of study where they will be well supported, valued and respected. These tables provide a clear comparison between those providers who are looking after their students and those who are not. I am delighted that WBTC is the leading local provider for learner satisfaction with a 94% rating which is well above the national average. This goes alongside WBTC's number one status for apprenticeship achievements locally as well. In my mind it is no surprise that apprentice achievement and apprentice happiness go hand in hand. The reason for WBTC's success is that we work in partnership with some amazing employers to offer fantastic, enriching and transformative apprenticeship opportunities.

The table shown compares some locally active colleges and providers in the 2018 Learner Satisfaction Survey.

The sheer range in satisfaction is astounding with some big name providers faring poorly. These tables will shine a light for individuals and employers who may now shop around for a better experience. Having said that, learner satisfaction is just one component of a really good

apprenticeship provider. Compared with other measures individuals and employers can easily identify the strongest providers who will deliver the best results.

Five benchmarks of quality

- National Apprentice Achievement Rates (average is 67.7%) WBTC 81.7%
- Learner Satisfaction Survey Results (average is 86.2%) WBTC 94%
- Employer Satisfaction Survey Results (due September)
- Apprentice progression rates (not recorded nationally) WBTC 80%
- Ofsted Grade of Outstanding - Good, Requires Improvement, Inadequate. WBTC - Good (2017)

The full tables can be viewed here.

LEARNER SATISFACTION	
Provider	Score
WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM	94.0
BASINGSTOKE ITEC TD	93.0
QUBE QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT LTD	91.7
BRACKNELL AND WOKINGHAM COLLEGE	88.5
BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY	85.3
KEY TRAINING LTD	79.5
ACTIVATE LEARNING	78.0
NEWBURY COLLEGE	77.8
SPARSHOLT COLLEGE	74.2
ASPIRE ACHIEVE ADVANCE LTD	61.1
QA LTD	58.1

(The Learner Satisfaction Survey: learners in scope were those funded through Apprenticeships, 16 to 19 funding, Adult Education Budget funding & Advanced Learning Loans)

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER...

Congratulations to WBTC's Laura Marlow who recently got married to Paul. Laura is our teaching assistant and works very closely with learners to support them through their English and maths qualifications. We all wish Laura and Paul the very best for the future

Well done to our very own Fran Oakes (pictured centre) who represents Berkshire at lawn bowls. Fran and her team-mates are not just Berkshire champions for triples but also for senior fours. What a great achievement. This propelled them to the national finals at Royal Leamington Spa representing Berkshire. Sadly Fran and the team didn't win but it was a great effort to get so far and to represent our county.

Fran has been our friendly receptionist for over 5 years and we bid farewell to her in September as she leaves us to enjoy a much deserved retirement.



LEARNER OF THE QUARTER

Well done to Pawel Kaznowski of Avia Technique in Wokingham who is our latest WBTC Learner of the Quarter. Pawell has completed his ILM Certificate in Leadership & Management funded through the ESF Workskills Programme.

Pawell's Training Consultant, Debbie Gargan wrote the following testimonial

"Pawell (Pav) is a British citizen born in Poland with English as his second language and he recently embarked on the Certificate in Leadership and Management with a dedication and motivation unrivalled in any I have seen so far. ILM do not provide mark sheets with Polish translations so Pav was required to translate the difficult marking criteria from English into Polish before then writing his assignment in English. To my knowledge he has never embarked on previous academic training other than whilst doing his national service in Poland.

Much of the management terminology and theory was not intuitive to Pav and so he had to undertake extensive research to contextualise the knowledge before writing his assignment. It is fair to say that the amount of work on each assignment that he submitted was immense - and even when at times he was required to rewrite it he would happily submit new work. At all times he remained hungry for feedback in order to improve his practice.

Further, I am told that Pav would often stay after work in order to use the PCs and to work on his assignment, and would always submit his work on time and to a high standard, often meeting the high pass mark criteria for which he strived. Pav achieved his ILM Award in Leadership & Management in July and his comments when he learnt of his achievement in attaining the Award were: The knowledge gained during the course is a priceless gift, which has already changed my way of thinking and perceiving in working with people as a team, because a good team of people is a guarantee of prosperity and development."

Well done to Pav and all of us here at WBTC wish him success in his career.



HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS MENIAL TASKS FOR APPRENTICES

Many of us more seasoned workers will subscribe to the idea of starting your career at the bottom and working your way up. This may have involved making the tea, errands and other odd jobs. However, in these more modern times, employers are advised to think carefully before they allocate such chores to staff and especially younger apprentices. The benefit of 'making the tea' is that it is something that adds value to staff wellbeing. However, employers should consider whether the duty has been included in the job description and whether a risk assessment has been completed for a young worker. There is nothing wrong with adding tea making to the job description of an apprentice. Just be sure that the apprentice knows this before they start their role. Also please ensure that you have safety precautions in place. For example, has the apprentice ever made tea before or do they need training? (This is not a joke, believe it or not many young people do not make or drink tea/coffee) Is the kitchen area safe? Has the kettle got a valid PAT label etc. It's best to ensure that these considerations are in place from the outset.

To illustrate the point imagine that 'making the tea' was described on a job description as: **Handling boiling water, moving it from vessel to vessel before transporting it by hand around a building.**

If additional menial tasks are included such as changing light bulbs, cleaning duties etc then the same rules apply. Be honest at the start of the interview process that 'menial chores' will be included. This will prevent new apprentices (and their parents) feeling misled. Then ensure you provide training and risk assess the task. If you want a member of staff to clean an area, for example the kitchen, you'll need to risk assess the products being used i.e. detergents, bleach etc. Provide adequate guidance and PPE and above all ensure you comply with COSHH regulations.

If you want to know more on the way in which tea-making and other menial tasks have changed in the workplace then read this article by **The Telegraph**.

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.



SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY THE WORRYING NEW TREND OF DIGITAL SELF-HARM

The number of children and young people self-harming has risen dramatically in the past 10 years. With Mental Health never far from the front pages, I am sure you will have seen the alarming statistics on mental health problems in young people, particularly young girls. For example, the number of girls aged under 18 who are admitted to hospital for self-poisoning has risen 42% in 10 years.

With recent developments of technology and social media it is not just physical self-harm that is on the rise. There is a shocking new trend amongst young people, one that many adults simply do not understand.

CYBER SELF HARM

Young people have always been creative, finding new and exciting solutions to problems which is just one of the reasons why so many work forces are choosing to take on 16 -18 year olds. But worryingly these creative kids are also finding a new way to self-harm, by trolling themselves online and posting mean comments to themselves.

A recent study in America showed that of 617 students interviewed, 9% had anonymously cyberbullied themselves.

Quite why so many young people are choosing to psychologically torture themselves online is still a mystery, but we do know that children who are emotionally abused or bullied often start to parrot their tormentors words, we hear young people say that they are "useless", "ugly", "fat" or even "worthless".

It is possible that these young people are now using the internet to parrot these thoughts, they may be looking for validation, compliments or simply crying out for help.



Some researchers have suggested that these young people may simply be seeking evidence that someone, somewhere, is at least reading their posts. These young people need to know that someone is looking out for them and someone cares about their wellbeing. So what can we do to help young people experiencing this level of emotional trauma?

The first thing we have to do is to raise our awareness of online self-harm. It may sound strange and beyond our skill but any employer has the ability to listen and respond appropriately. Opening up about our emotions is not easy and it takes a lot of trust, it is important that we react with understanding and respect.

It is also important to remember that there is help available and WBTC can offer support and guidance to those who need someone to talk to. So if you feel that a colleague or apprentice needs help, get in touch.

If you would like further advice and guidance then feel free to contact me via nicola@wbtc-uk.com

Guest contributor Nikki Boyd

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.

SEPTEMBER

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Avoid those death-by-PowerPoint sessions where a presenter drones on and learn to wow and engage your audience. This session will equip you with the confidence to create eye catching, ear catching and involving presentations that capture your audience. It will explore audience engagement, projecting your voice and using presentation aids in an innovative way.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 21st September
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £100 for non members



WORKSHOPS, COURSES AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

SEPTEMBER

FIRST AID CERTIFICATE

This qualifications equips staff with the skills to be a nominated 'First Aider'. This is an incredibly useful skill to help keep customers and staff safe. It is a very popular course so early booking is essential.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 28th September
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members



OCTOBER

EFFICIENT WORKING PRACTICES IN A TEAM

Teamwork makes the dream work! Any business relies on team work and sometimes team dynamics can make working life really difficult. This session explores the concept of teamwork, the stages of team development and the roles and behaviours according to different personality profiles.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 5th October
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members



DELIVER EFFICIENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

In this session you will practice good face-to-face customer service. It will explore why effective communication is important when delivering customer service. Delegates will also investigate the Customer Journey and the competing needs of different customers. Ultimately at the end of this session you'll be able to create a positive impression of yourself and your organisation that leaves the customer happy and satisfied.

Venue: WBTC
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members
Date: Friday 12th October
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com



COACHING AND MENTORING

This session is ideal for anyone who coaches, mentors or leads people. It is also great for someone who aspires to be a mentor. Learners will be encouraged to conduct a coaching session back in the workplace, including peer coaching or reverse mentoring where appropriate. You'll learn about different mentoring techniques and learning styles to aid you when coaching a colleague.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 19th October
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members



PROVIDING OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE ON THE TELEPHONE

You never get a second chance to make a first impression and these days most first impressions are made over the phone. This session will explore good practice on the phone and initial greetings, accurate message taking, problem solving and voice tone/tempo. You'll learn the 10 tips for securing improvements in customer service over the phone as well as how to diffuse situations when callers are angry, aggressive or rude.

Venue: WBTC
Time: 09:30 - 16:00
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members
Date: Friday 26th October
Contact: maria@wbtc-uk.com

WBTC

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