

THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM



Dear Members

Welcome to our February edition of *The Earwig*. In this issue we officially open our call for nominations in the 2019 Rising Stars Awards. This is our 5th annual event to recognise the amazing achievements of WBTC apprentices, employers, mentors and work-experience students. It's held on Wednesday 15th May 2019 at Arlington Arts Centre and you'll find more information below. This edition also features an uplifting case study by Hayley Stacey who recently completed her Advanced Apprenticeship. Plus we feature employers in our Investment in Training Awards.

Matt Garvey
Managing Director



APPRENTICE GRADUATION & AWARDS 2019

APPRENTICE GRADUATES INFORMATION 2019

If you have completed your apprenticeship since April 2018 or are due to complete by 30 April 2019 then you'll be invited to graduate with your peers on Wednesday 15th May 2019 at Arlington Arts Centre. We need some simple information from you.

- Are you attending.
- Which guest(s) you'd like to bring.
- Height & head size for your graduation gowns.

Intermediate Apprentices graduate with a black gown, black cap and purple stole.

Advanced Apprentices graduate with a black gown, black cap and gold stole.

Higher Apprentices graduate with a black gown, black cap with gold tassel and purple & gold stole.

Your graduation gowns are provided free of charge thanks to the generosity of our sponsors.

For further information email Karen Murphy via karenm@wbtc-uk.com



WELL DONE TO...

Congratulations to Hayley Stacey of Kennet School who has achieved her Advanced Apprenticeship in Creative & Digital Media. Hayley has provided a really thoughtful reflection upon her apprenticeship journey for us to share with our WBTC Members.

Hayley said "As a whole, my apprenticeship has boosted my confidence significantly. When I started, I would always ask my Line Manager to attend meetings with me to make sure I was performing adequately: asking the correct questions, giving the correct answers and so forth. Now, I pride myself on being independent; attending multiple meetings and discussions alone, solving problems from the knowledge I have built and assisting others in their day-to-day work, such as resolving IT issues, advising on design pieces and much more.

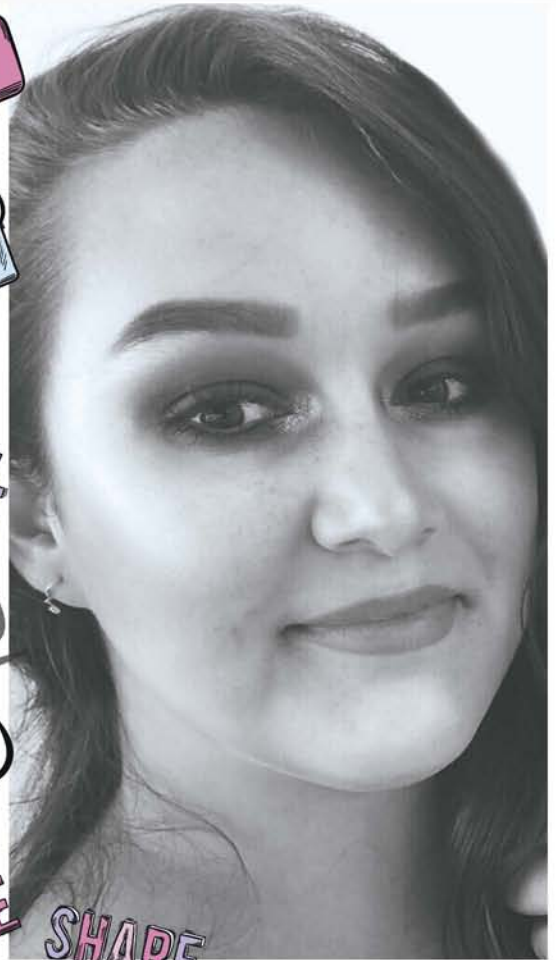
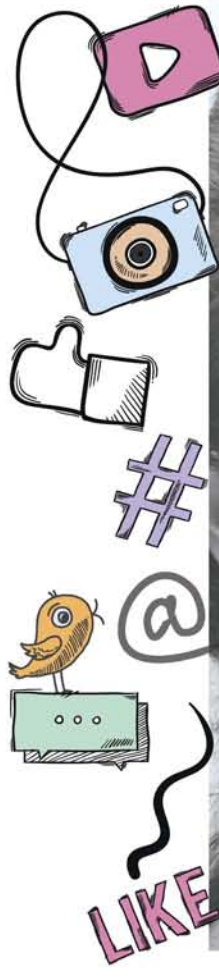
Working in a school means my safeguarding senses need to be switched on at all times, attending a safeguarding course at WBTC with Nikki shed a lot of light on the subject for me and reinforced my natural passion to work towards protecting the welfare and general well-being of children and learners. Whilst I have not had to deal with any major safeguarding issues, I have been thoroughly educated and have mirrored this knowledge when approaching pupils who are upset. I believe this helps my day-to-day work through having a high level of awareness of safeguarding as a whole.

I learnt that you need to grasp every opportunity presented to you. To grow professionally, you need to be brave - ask questions, suggest new ideas, attend meetings by yourself, challenge people (politely, of course)! Within my apprenticeship I was consistently offered opportunities; I attended multiple conferences, training courses and was trusted to work independently on projects, as well as developing my organisation and IT skills - all valuable attributes to have wherever life takes you. Ultimately, I have gained full time employment through being offered a job by the organisation who saw me through my apprenticeship (I must have done something right!).

I have also built up knowledge within my field through studying relevant areas and completing assignments on those topics. At the same time, earning whilst learning - bonus!

If you are thinking of doing an apprenticeship, go for it. But, be prepared - my employer was amazing in giving me time to work on my assignments during work hours but I also dedicated personal time too (which allowed me to submit thorough, well-thought-out assignments). Apprenticeships give you fantastic experience in the working world and the hands-on training gives you a real chance to put your skills into practice whilst gaining more confidence in a working environment. Not only do apprenticeships give learners the opportunity to experience their chosen field, it also makes them more employable to future companies. They'll be able to see that you were able to apply yourself to the demands of a full-time job, whilst also studying to complete the coursework element. The phrase 'earn while you learn' is very much true within an apprenticeship. No student loans, no tuition fees, no debt and the cost of your training covered. What more could you want?

An apprenticeship is very much about teamwork... from my Line Manager at work to the wider colleague network; to the teachers, assessors at Basingstoke College; and not forgetting the support from WBTC. Clearly, I needed to do the work, but having a strong network around you is invaluable. I would like to thank them for encouraging and supporting me throughout my training. I am lucky to have built strong relationships with both my trainer and assessor - an important part to this relationship being I was never afraid to ask for help and advice.



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Since Primary School, I have carried an anxiety with me surrounding mathematics and all the subject entailed. When I began sitting lessons at WBTC I imagined my luck would remain the same and I would sit clueless, unmotivated and frustrated with myself for not understanding topics. But with the help of Martyn's (from WBTC) cool approach, completing homework outside of lessons, making sure to ask if I didn't understand (no matter how silly I thought I sounded) and practicing, I managed to achieve my maths functional skills. The relief and satisfaction I felt when I was told I'd passed was second to none!

I also achieved an ICT qualification. At the beginning of my apprenticeship the idea of having to sit ICT was a complete eye-roller for me; I work with computers every day competently, so why should I sit an exam in the subject?! I thought I would breeze through it - but to my surprise and ignorance, I actually found it quite difficult and realised there was a considerable amount within Excel (in particular) I didn't know. I had to sit the exam a few times, which was frustrating, but ultimately taught me that patience is a virtue and, in order to pass, I needed to adjust my mindset and approach the subject positively. Fortunately, after I'd changed up a gear, I found my work ethic and drive were thriving, resulting in a pass with the generous help and encouragement from Tony at WBTC and my Line Manager."

INVESTMENT IN TRAINING AWARDS

Many congratulations to recipients in our annual awards. We've been busy touring our client base recognising the brilliant work they do in supporting apprenticeships and work experience. Here are a few shots of six employers receiving their Certificates of Excellence.



EJBC CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Left to right: Emily Gray, Emma Thomas (Director), Joe Hall and Ali Fish.



JAMES COWPER KRESTON LLP

Left to right: Richard Dickson, Shakil Salam, Pamela Paine and Rachel McFiggins.



BENCHMARK FURNITURE

Left to right: Mathew Rawlings, Tom Fishlock, Kyle Green, Kelvyn Dennis, Reece Mannings, Sam Brown and Alex Simpson.



KENNET SCHOOL

Left to right: Hayley Stacey, Gemma Piper (Headteacher), Rebecca Elvey & William Edwards.



SUTHERLAND HEALTH LTD

Left to right: Damon Greenfield, Jonathan Godding, Sheena Sukumaran, George Sutherland, Tracey Crook and Archie Dyson.



BGM HEATING & PLUMBING LTD

Trainee Cameron Doswell (left) with owner Barry Eldred.



SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY

KATE ADAMS OF TIME TO TALK IN WEST BERKSHIRE LOOKS AT HOW WE CAN ALL ACHIEVE GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN 2019

It's that time of year when we begin to reflect on our New Year's resolutions. The list of how we could be better, fitter, more successful, happier can be both motivating and depressing at the same time. However, we often overlook our mental health when drawing up these resolutions. It is true that there's a lot of cross over between physical and mental health. For example, sleep plays a vital role in all aspects of health, as does diet. However, good mental health underpins so many areas of our life that looking after this vital aspect can lead to improvements in lots of other areas.

We are taught from an early age that brushing our teeth twice a day prevents tooth decay or that eating five portions of vegetables or fruit a day can build our physical immune system to prevent illness. In much the same way, there are numerous clinically proven ways to build our mental health immunity so why not try a few and see what works for you. Here are just a few simple ideas to get you started.

- GO OUTSIDE**
 Nature is a natural healer and spending time outdoors has been shown to have physical and mental health benefits.
- HAVE FUN!**
 It sounds simple but when was the last time you did something just because it was fun? Everyone's idea of fun is different so find what you enjoy and go for it!
- PRACTICE MINDFULNESS**
 Being able to press the pause button and reset into the present moment can really relieve stress and lower anxiety levels. There are loads of apps available to help get you started so have a search and find the one that's right for you.

- MAKE SOMETHING/DO SOMETHING NEW**
 This can engage our minds and create a sense of achievement that can add to our levels of self-esteem. It could be as simple as baking a cake or as engaging as learning a new language. Find something that fits with your time and budget and more importantly, something you enjoy!
- BE KIND TO OTHERS**
 The warm glow we get from helping others has a lasting effect and can enhance the image we have of ourselves as well as making the world a nicer place.
- BE KIND TO YOURSELF**
 We are often our own worst critics, but we wouldn't talk to our best friends in the same way. Be your own best friend and be nice to yourself.
- ASK FOR HELP!**
 If your mental health is suffering and you don't know what to do, don't be afraid to ask for help.

Time to Talk is a free one-to-one counselling service for 11-25 year olds. Just give us a call on 01635 760331 or email office@t2twb.org and make your mental health a priority this year!



HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS

MANAGING WORK RELATED STRESS

It may come as a surprise to many employers that they have a legal duty to minimise stress for their workers. A stress risk assessment can help employers to fulfil this obligation and furthermore help reduce staff absence from a stress related illness caused at work.

If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down, but it is useful to do this, so you can review it later, for example if something changes. If you have five or more employees, you are required by law to write the risk assessment down.

During 2017-18, 44% of new and long-standing cases of work-related ill health were caused by stress, depression and anxiety. Millions of working days are lost to stress, depression and anxiety as people of all ages struggle to cope with the increasing demands of work and life.

Common physical symptoms of stress include:

- Low energy.
- Headaches.
- Upset stomach, including diarrhea, constipation, and nausea.
- Aches, pains, and tense muscles.
- Chest pain and rapid heartbeat.
- Insomnia.
- Frequent colds and infections.

Sufferers may also find they are fixated with work and find it pushes out other priorities and becomes the main topic of conversation in social settings. Employers, managers and colleagues can work together to look for signs of stress in others and then seek to provide appropriate help and support.

You can find more information by [clicking here](#).



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



HELP US FIND OUR RISING STARS...

Nominations are now open for our annual Rising Stars Awards. This is your chance to nominate an employer, mentor or learner who you think deserves recognition for their efforts and achievements. To make a nomination and for information on the event, [click here](#).

AWARD CATEGORIES

Employers:

- Large Employer of the Year (250+ employees)
- Medium Employer of the Year (50-249 employees)
- Small Employer of the Year (10-49 employees)
- Micro Employer of the Year (9 or fewer employees)
- Workplace Mentor of the Year

Learners:

- Great Start Learner of the Year
- Apprentice of the Year (19+)
- Apprentice of the Year (16-18)

Nominations are only open for a month, so make sure you get your nomination in quickly.



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 by emailing karenf@wbtc-uk.com

We operate a £50 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

MANAGING RISK AND IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS

This session is aimed at team leaders and managers who have to make challenging decisions as part of daily life. You'll explore techniques for assessing and managing risks, contingency planning and implementing decisions. You'll investigate competing leadership and communication styles and how they play a part when decision making.



Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 1st March 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: karenf@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members**
£199 for non members



EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

This workshop looks at written communication, emails and non-verbal communication at work. As well as professional use of English, it will cover common grammatical mistakes that can irritate customers. It will look at composing professional letters and emails to ensure you represent your employer in a positive light. Delegates will also explore non verbal communication such as body language and its impact on customers both internal and external.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 15th March 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: karenf@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members

APRIL

TIME MANAGEMENT

Procrastination is the thief of time. Do you find yourself writing long to-do lists and struggling to get things done? Do interruptions derail your best laid plans? Do you sometimes struggle to differentiate between urgent and important. This very popular session is for all employees regardless of experience or seniority in a business. You'll understand ways to get more from your time to hit those key priorities and make sense of life and work.



Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 4th April 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: karenf@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members

MAY

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

This is an official British Safety Council qualification and ideal for all workplace settings. It can be used for those new to Health & Safety as well as a useful refresher.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 17th May 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: karenf@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members



JUNE

PRESENTATION SKILLS

This popular workshop is aimed at anyone who needs to present information in a formal setting. It could be used by sales people giving presentations, for those who run staff training events, for employees presenting ideas to colleagues or just those who wish to be more confident.



Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 7th June 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: karenf@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members

WBTC

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