

# THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM



## Dear Members

*It's July, and as the academic year draws to a close, it really gets busy in the apprenticeship world. Right now, hundreds of interviews are taking place for the 2019 intake. It's a frenetic period and time-sensitive, so if you're an employer looking for your next apprentice, now is the time to act. Drop my colleague Rachel Eaves a line, [rachel@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:rachel@wbtc-uk.com), and she'll be delighted to help you.*

*Also in this edition, we feature winners in the Learner Achievement Awards in West Berkshire with a WBTC employer, learner and employee all featuring in the prizes. In Safeguarding, we look at new regulations designed to protect under-18s around the viewing of internet porn. Also in this edition is a piece on the effects of cannabis on employees' behaviour and performance at work. The Earwig takes a break for August, so the next edition will be in September. In the meantime, I hope you have a great summer!*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Garvey'.

Matt Garvey, Managing Director

## SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERING THE PUBLICA STANDARD

For the last 16 months, WBTC has been delivering the Publica Standard to the employees in Revenue & Housing at the Publica Group.

This group represented staff who work across the three local authorities of West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold District Council and Forest of Dean Council. Over 220 employees undertook 4 units of the NCFE Award in Skills & Behaviours in the Working Environment. They attended training sessions and completed assessments, with the aim being to raise customers' experience especially when visiting or telephoning the authorities.

Well done to everyone at Publica who has completed the standard and secured their qualifications.



# LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2019

## THE WINNERS

The 17th annual event, hosted by West Berkshire Council, celebrates adult learning in the district. The ceremony at Shaw House was well attended and every winner has an inspirational story. All of us at WBTC were especially delighted that three winners came from our members.

Our long standing customer, **Benchmark**, won the Most Committed Organisation to Learning Award. **Alison Burke** of West Berkshire Council, who has had great success in her apprenticeship at WBTC, won the Adult Apprentice of the Year Award, whilst **Claire Richards**, Director of Curriculum at WBTC, won the Teacher, Tutor and Trainer of the Year Award.



**Benchmark**  
Winners of the Most Committed Organisation to Learning category



**Alison Burke** - Winner in the Adult Apprenticeship category



**Claire Richards**  
Winner in the Teacher, Tutor and Trainer category



## APPRENTICE MINIMUM WAGE

Longstanding customers will be aware that WBTC has a minimum wage among apprentices. This is pegged higher than the national rate reflecting the higher cost of living locally.

For those employers seeking new apprentices OR progressing an existing apprentice to another apprenticeship, after 1st August 2019, the WBTC Apprentice Minimum Wage will change. From 1st August 2019, WBTC will only contract with Employers paying a minimum of £4.75 per hour for Apprentice(s) of any age, in line with the relevant regulations on wage rates for apprentices. (Employers who engaged WBTC prior to this date will be subject to the terms and conditions regarding wages agreed at the time).

The WBTC Apprentice Minimum Wage in 2018-19 was £4.50 per hour. The current national wage rates from April 2019 are below:

25 +	21- 24	18 -20	Under 18	Apprentice
£8.21	£7.70	£6.15	£4.35	£3.90

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



## CHOCOLATE MAKING WORKSHOP

We've decide to try something completely different for an enrichment activity. Rosie's Chocolate Factory near Reading is a great way to learn about chocolate.

During the workshop each participant will make three large chocolate bars, with inclusions of their choice, as well as a chocolate lollipop that features edible transfers. Ideal not just for creative minds, but also any chocoholics out there.

This enrichment activity is free of charge to WBTC Members. Delegates can make their own way to the venue and we'll also put on transport from WBTC. To book email [BDT@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:BDT@wbtc-uk.com)

## SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY

# NEW ONLINE AGE VERIFICATION LAWS

**UK internet users will need to go through an age verification check to prove they are over 18 before accessing online porn, from July 2019, the Government has confirmed.**

The measure, aimed at protecting children from accessing X-rated videos and images, was part of the Digital Economy Act 2017, but still has yet to take effect due to concerns over the technological challenge of implementing the checks.

However, the Government has now announced that the system will come into force from 15 July.

After that date, websites which host pornographic content will have to implement 'robust' age checks on users accessing their content from the UK.

"Websites that refuse to implement the checks face being blocked by UK internet service providers or having their access to payment services withdrawn," says The Guardian.

Although it could affect an estimated 35 million people, surveys have repeatedly shown the vast majority of the British public are unaware of the impending changes.

The Digital Economy Act gives authorities the power to block any website it deems to be adult in nature. It effectively means all adult websites in the UK will be blocked by default, and only accessible via age verification, to prove a user is over 18. The aim of the checks is to better police the internet and prevent children 'stumbling' upon explicit content.

### WHAT DOES THE NEW AGE-VERIFICATION SCHEME ENTAIL?

Under the law, any site deemed to be adult in nature will require users to sign-up to an age-verification programme in order to log in and access the site's content.

This involves handing over identifying information, such as passport, driving license or credit card details.

MindGeek, a company that owns several of the internet's most



popular pornographic websites including Pornhub, RedTube and YouPorn, has developed an AgeID system which is expected to become the standard model for the majority of explicit sites.

From April, when the new system is widely expected to launch, attempting to reach one of these sites from a UK device will bring up an age verification landing page instead.

If you would like further advice and guidance on safeguarding then contact [martyn@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:martyn@wbtc-uk.com)



# DISCOUNTS FOR APPRENTICES!



**NUS Apprentice extra is the discount card for UK Apprentices with loads of discounts in-store and online, helping your hard earned cash stretch a little further!**

There are hundreds of participating retailers, restaurants and online sellers. Discounts are available for fashion, food, driving lessons, flights and many more. Some of the well known participating organisations include:

Alton Towers, Amazon, Apple, ASOS, Co-op, Domino Pizza, Durex, Microsoft Odeon cinema, Prezzo, RED driving school, Soletrader,

It costs £11 and you can start saving immediately. It's open to apprentices of any age and you'll need to apply as a WBTC apprentice.

Visit <https://www.apprenticeextra.co.uk/buy-now.aspx> for more information and to apply.

## HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS

# CANNABIS ABUSE

**Cannabis is a Class B drug proscribed under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Its possession and supply are criminal offences. Despite this, the abuse of cannabis remains a widespread issue. Cannabis, far from being safe, is a powerful drug that has multiple physical and mental side-effects. This is aggravated by the illegal trade in which any quantity of unknown or poisonous substances can be included.**

### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CANNABIS

The most immediate signs of smoking weed are dilation of the blood vessels in the eyes (making them bloodshot), increased heart rate, increased appetite and memory impairment, along with difficulty paying attention or solving problems. But the real reason people abuse the drug is for the euphoria that may last three to six hours. When monitoring for symptoms of weed use, there may be reactions of anxiety, fear or panic, especially if they are new to the drug or taking it in an unsettling location. Hallucinations, paranoia and delusional behaviour can be symptoms of weed use that is very potent, or consumption of a large amount.

### IMPACT AT WORK

An employee misusing cannabis of an evening may judge themselves fit for work the next day. However, cannabis remains in the system for days if not weeks. As a result, an employee may be unfit for work, especially if the work involves using machinery. Even at lower levels, the cannabis may impair their performance, mental capacity and judgement resulting in poor levels of work.

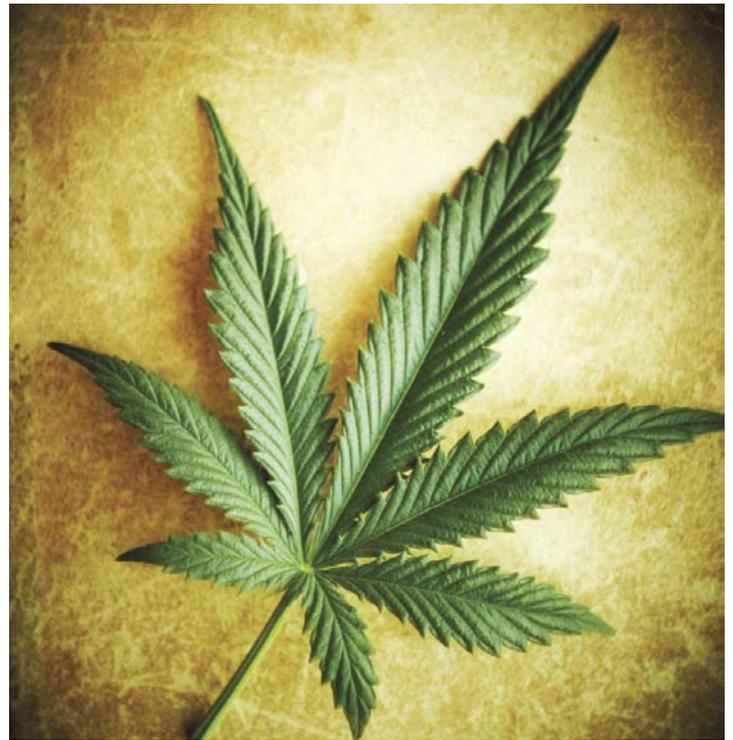
### DOPE HEADS ON MOPEDS

Another consideration is the law surrounding drug-driving offences. This may mean your employee may not be fit to drive a vehicle to get to work if they have used cannabis recently. Cannabis users under influence while driving present a danger to other road users. In New Zealand last year, more people were killed in incidents involving drug-drivers than drink drivers.

### ADDICTION

In their drug-addled brain, cannabis abusers may see their addiction as 'recreational' or even a simple private matter. Sadly the extreme effects of cannabis can have devastating consequences for the user, friends and colleagues. Addiction will lead to extreme changes in attitude and behaviour which could manifest themselves at work. Examples of an addict's behaviour include;

- Frequent, unexplained absences from work or school
- Declining performance at work or in school
- Losing interest in activities or events that were previously significant
- Lying, secrecy or other forms of deception involving whereabouts and/or activities
- Possessing rolling papers, water pipes and other paraphernalia
- Continuing to misuse cannabis even after experiencing negative repercussions due to prior misuse of the drug



- Trying but being incapable of stopping or reducing cannabis use

Cannabis is also considered a 'gateway drug' to other substances that are even more dangerous.

### PENALTIES OF POSSESSION

The penalties for cannabis possession tend to be much lower than those for Class A drugs. Still, the official sentencing guidelines carry a maximum prison sentence of 5 years plus an unlimited fine.

### PENALTIES FOR SUPPLY & PRODUCTION

A dealer could face up to 14 years imprisonment for the supply of Class B drugs. Dealing doesn't have to be gangster-style supply chains. The offence is committed by simply passing drugs from one person to another person.

### CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

What cannabis users may be unaware of is the supply chain of misery that has facilitated their latest high. This illegal trade preys upon vulnerable people in terms of the production and distribution of drugs. School children are even being used as mules to carry drugs across the country. Drug related violence is commonplace in some communities undermining feelings of safety and cohesion. Drug users should understand their vicarious responsibility for the violence and exploitation that is part and parcel of the drugs trade.

### GETTING HELP

If you suspect that an employee is abusing cannabis then they desperately need help. You may need to deal with the issue as an employer in line with your own disciplinary guidelines. Some employers may consider it a case for instant dismissal while others might try to assist the employee. There are a number of helpful websites that they can visit to get off the drugs. Understand that intervention may prevent the user from becoming addicted or even moving onto more powerful Class A drugs. In turn, this could preserve their health, mental well-being and career prospects.

**Click here for more advice.**

## THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE WORM...

**Looking for some of the best apprenticeship talent?  
Pledge your vacancies to us and we'll match you  
with candidates from our Top Apprentice  
Recruitment Day on Saturday July 20th.**



# APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT OPEN WEEKEND - JULY 20TH

Once more WBTC is hosting its Apprentice Recruitment Open Weekend. Every year we see A Level and strong GCSE leavers apply early for apprenticeship opportunities. Employers who are quick will snap up the most motivated applicants and satisfy their needs with a top apprentice.

In order to gain exclusive access to the Top Apprentices, we invite employers to pledge their vacancies. In doing so, they agree to interview the short list of applicants that arise from the **Apprentice Recruitment Open Weekend**. The event itself, on **Saturday 20th July**, is where we carefully match the applicants to our pledged vacancies. An employer can then select from a strong pool of applicants and make a job offer, even if it isn't due to start until September.

It has proven to be a tried and tested formula for local employers seeking talent, in a demanding jobs market. **If you are an employer and you would like to pledge a vacancy** then please call Rachel Eaves on 01635 35975 or email her via [rachel@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:rachel@wbtc-uk.com)

If you are an aspiring top apprentice, or you know one, then to secure a place at our **Apprentice Recruitment Open Weekend** please contact Rachel for details. We have more information on our website [here](#).



## If you think you stand out as an Apprentice, then we know local employers who want to meet you.



We're looking for some special people. Someone like you maybe? If you're expecting to leave school or college with some good results, and want to get noticed by some of the best local employers, we'd like to invite you to our 'Apprentice Recruitment Open Weekend' on Saturday 20th of July, from 10am till 4pm.

We have employers of all types, who have pledged their vacancies and want to attract the best Apprentices. They are only looking for those who really do stand out, and we're here to help them find people like you!

If you are thinking about your future, Apprenticeships make good sense. You get to work with an employer, learning and gaining valuable experience by actually doing the job. At the same time, you'll be working towards industry recognised qualifications and earn a wage.

**If you'd like to be a Top Apprentice** Get in touch asap so, we can tell you more about our Apprentice Recruitment Open Weekend. Simply call 01635 35975, or send an email to [rachel@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:rachel@wbtc-uk.com)

## 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 [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com). Spaces go fast, so please let us know ASAP if you wish to make a reservation. You can find full details of the workshops available, plus dates, on our website here.

At WBTC we operate a £50 no-show fee for anyone who fails to attend without notice on a booked workshop. This will be invoiced care of the employer. To help avoid this WBTC will confirm your attendance by email, confirm your space with your employer and call you 2-3 days prior to the event.

**Remember, if you are an employer that has an apprentice or hosts a work experience student, then you are a WBTC member. This will entitle you to subsidised, or free, access to our one-day workshops and enrichment activities. To book please email [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com) If you are unsure if a course is right for you, then please ask. You can email [claire@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:claire@wbtc-uk.com), who'll be happy to provide more information on content and structure.**

### JULY

#### DELIVERING EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

This workshop is ideal for those who wish to enhance their customer service and telephone skills. It sets out to analyse the 'customer journey' and components of effectiveness when delivering customer service; and to focus on key interpersonal skills required to perform most customer service roles. Attendees will be encouraged to think of ways in which they can exceed their customers' expectations. It will explore the techniques needed to help customers who are angry, confused or upset.

Also included will be the 10 step process that can be used for a variety of call handling situations. This is aimed to help facilitate the effective management of calls with a view to delivering exceptional customer service over the telephone.

Venue: WBTC  
 Date: Friday 26th July 09:30 - 16:00  
 Contact: [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com)  
 Cost: **FREE for WBTC members**  
 £199 for non members



### SEPTEMBER

#### MANAGING RISK & IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS

The clarification of business objectives, specification of problems and the search for and implementation of solutions is an ongoing requirement of most organisations today. Having employees confident in managing risks, and deciding the best courses of action, is therefore becoming increasingly sought after. This workshop is ideal for Line Managers and people in Middle Management positions. It aims to explore theories and case studies involving problem recognition, decision making and risk management, with a view to helping the attendee to develop their critical thinking skills.

Venue: WBTC  
 Dates: Friday 10th September 09:30 - 16:00  
 Contact: [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com)  
 Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members



#### MANAGING PEOPLE FOR PERFORMANCE

This workshop is ideal for Line Managers and people in Middle Management positions, who would like to develop their skills and knowledge in practical ways to manage people in the workplace effectively. The course will provide a good overview of the essential elements involved in managing people, covering a range of areas such as employee motivation and engagement, managing performance, developing talent, managing conversations and understanding key HR best practices related to leading a team of people at work. Participants will have the opportunity to understand some of the best practices in managing people and will be encouraged to reflect on their own practices, and apply the learning back in the workplace.

Venue: WBTC  
 Date: Tuesday 20th September 09:30 - 16:00  
 Contact: [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com)  
 Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members



### OCTOBER

#### SAFEGUARDING (Mandatory for 16-18 year olds)

This is delivered as a mandatory requirement for all our 16-18 year old apprentices and for any other member who may want to attend. It is delivered as a workshop with the opportunity for the attendees to achieve an NCFE Level 1 Award in Safeguarding in the Learning Environment. The aim of this workshop is to provide learners with the knowledge and understanding that everyone has the right to learn, to be safe and to be respected. This, in turn, will enable learners to make sure that they are being provided with a safe and secure learning environment that promotes their health and well-being.

Venue: WBTC  
 Date: Tuesday 8th October 09:30 - 16:00  
 Contact: [bdt@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:bdt@wbtc-uk.com)  
 Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £199 for non members



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