

Real help for business

The Government recognise that these are difficult times for employers. In response, the LSC are focusing on providing real help to ensure that businesses and individuals get the support they need to help them survive the recession and make the most of the new opportunities the upturn will bring. We are working to create opportunities and flexibilities to help support businesses re-skill and up-skill their staff.

In these challenging times, businesses need to keep a tight rein on costs. Yet it is vital that employers continue to invest in skills. Past research shows that businesses that do not train their workforce are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those that do.



Train more, gain more

Train to Gain offers impartial, independent skills advice at no cost to your business. It's an investment in the future of your business and your people. The advice comes from a skills broker, training provider or college working with you on a dedicated, one-to-one basis. They'll help you find the right solution to re-skill and up-skill that can boost your business.

A number of changes have been made to Train to Gain to respond better to employer demands by increasing the flexibility of the service and enabling more businesses to access training to help improve productivity. The new flexibilities will help business weather the economic storm and ensure you are in a better shape to respond when the upturn comes.

All businesses now have access to:

- Quality-assured, impartial and independent advice from skills brokers. This can help businesses who want:
 - Help to identify skills needs at all levels of their business so that they can make the right, informed choices as part of a wider business needs analysis
 - To identify and source high quality, vocational skills training, including Apprenticeships, delivered at a time and place to suit them, from a wide range of high quality colleges and training providers.
- Full funding for:
 - Basic skills support at all levels
 - First full Level 2 qualifications (equivalent to 5 GCSEs) and
 - First Level 3 (equivalent to 2 A-levels) for 19-25 year olds and for people without a first Level 2
 - Some first Level 4 for 19-25 year olds who do not already have a Level 3
 - Some funding for people who already have qualifications at Level 2 and 3 and would like to take another.
- Shared investment between the employer and Government for:
 - English for Speakers of Other Languages qualifications at all levels
 - Level 3 qualifications in certain sector specific areas
 - Apprenticeships. For 16-18 year olds, full training costs are covered for employers. For higher age groups, employers pay part of the cost.

Train to Gain is part of the Solutions for Business portfolio. Solutions for Business is a streamlined portfolio of government funded support products accessible via Business Link.

New enhancements to support small and medium sized private sector businesses or employees in the third sector organisations have also been introduced to:

- Improve business management skills through bite sized courses in essential subjects to increase productivity
- Fund leadership and management training and development, such as coaching and mentoring or working towards a qualification
- Improve overall skills level of staff through fully funded Level 2 qualifications and subsidised Level 3 qualifications, regardless of whether the employee already has a qualification at this level
- Businesses with less than 50 employees can also receive a contribution to wage costs to cover the cost of time off to train.

If the worst should happen and you have to let people go, real help is available for you to support them and give them the best chance of getting another job. From April 2009 newly redundant individuals and those under notice of redundancy will be able to access fully funded support for a range of skills activity that aids progression into sustainable employment – this will be a fully customised offer of 2-8 weeks duration that is not restricted to units or qualifications.

Once the individual re-enters employment then they will be able to access the Train to Gain offer. Individuals who re-enter work through this route will be able to access fully funded repeat level 2s and partially funded repeat level 3s irrespective of the size of the employer they join.

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Leading learning and skills



Real help for businesses now



The proven way to train your workforce

Apprentices can make your organisation more effective, productive and competitive by addressing direct skills gaps. Because apprentices receive relevant training, they can have an immediate effect and make a real and more meaningful contribution to your business. Apprenticeships are designed to help employees reach a high level of competency and performance. There are over 180 different Apprenticeships available across 80 different industry sectors.

Apprenticeships are designed by business, for business. Sector Skills Councils, supported by business representatives from the relevant industry sector, decide on the course content, and most of the training is 'on the job'. The rest can be provided by a local college or specialist training provider, or you could deliver everything yourself.

Throughout an Apprenticeship an employer representative will be able to support and guide you. They will work with you to:

- Help you decide which Apprenticeship is right for you
- Explain the way that an Apprenticeship might work for you and if funding is available
- Recruit an apprentice or support your existing staff move into an Apprenticeship
- Agree a training plan with your apprentice
- Manage the training and evaluation
- Ensure that national quality standards are met and deliver integrated, coherent training.

Funding

The LSC contributes towards the cost of the training. The size of its contribution varies from £1,500 - £3,000 up to £10,000 - £15,000 depending on your industry sector. This is paid directly to the organisation that organises and supports the Apprenticeship, unless you are a large employer with a direct contract with the LSC.

National Apprenticeship Service

Over the past ten years, the numbers of people undertaking an Apprenticeship has more than doubled. Ten years ago only 75,000 people took up Apprenticeship places. Today that number is nearer to 200,000 and by 2020 the Government is committed to ensuring that there are 400,000 Apprenticeships in England, with 250,000 starts and 190,000 completions.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) will be established in April 2009 and will work with employers to bring a significant growth in the number of Apprenticeships on offer. Over 130,000 companies offer apprentice places because they understand the benefits that apprentices bring to their business – increased productivity, improved competitiveness and a committed and competent workforce. The NAS will provide a system where your organisation can advertise apprenticeship vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants through a user-friendly, web based service. The service will bring your organisation together with potential apprentices in a simple, quick and effective way.



Skills Pledge

The Skills Pledge is an opportunity for the leaders of a business or organisation to show publicly and demonstrably the importance they place on investing in the skills of their people. Through signing the skills pledge you are making a public commitment to enable your staff – in whichever way works best for you – to gain the basic skills and competencies that are valuable in supporting business needs and their future employability, and to achieve relevant qualifications to recognise those skills. It's a promise that, through training, you'll work to boost the productivity of your business and realise the potential of your employees.

Further Information

Train to Gain: Call 0800 015 55 45 or visit traintogain.gov.uk

Apprenticeships: Call 0800 015 0600 or visit apprenticeships.org.uk

If you would like an employers perspective on Apprenticeships please contact the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network, a group of employers that promote and support Apprenticeships and employers that offer them. Details can be found at employersforapprentices.gov.uk

Skills Pledge: Call 0800 015 55 45 or visit <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employersSkillsPledge.html>

