

A Simple Guide to Employing an Apprentice

Apprenticeships are available to businesses of all sizes and last between one year and four years. You can recruit a new employee as an apprentice or offer an apprenticeship to an existing employee. BA members will probably want to offer apprenticeships in retailing, but there are also opportunities in business administration, social media & digital marketing or customer service. Traditionally apprenticeships have been offered to younger people, but there is a move to open up opportunities to older workers – spearheaded by ‘Barclays Bolder Apprentices’ which is open to 24 – 65 year olds.

An employer must:

- Provide an induction and on-the-job training
- Pay at least the Apprenticeship National Minimum wage –£3.30 an hour from October 2015 (in the first year of apprenticeship)
- Provide the same benefits available to other employees
- Generally provide at least 30 hours per week of employment
- Have an Apprenticeship Agreement In place between the employer and the apprentice

Most training will be on-the-job, working with a mentor. Off-the-job training will be delivered by an approved training provider and the apprentice must be paid for the time spent attending external training.

In England and Wales

There are three levels of apprenticeship:

Intermediate – equivalent to 5 A* to C GCSEs

Advanced – equivalent to 2 A-levels

[Higher](#) – equivalent to a range of qualifications from HND to degree level

General information for employers is available here for [England](#) and here for [Wales](#) or call The Skills Funding Agency on **08000 150 600** or Careers Wales on **0300 123 38 33**

[Apprentice grants](#) of up to £1,500 are available to employers of 16-24 year old apprentices.

Information about training organisations can be found here for [England](#) and here for [Wales](#)

You can recruit an apprentice directly or you can advertise your vacancy here in [England](#) or here in [Wales](#)

In Scotland

Modern Apprenticeships are open to anyone who has reached Scottish statutory minimum school leaving age. In some sectors over 25s are eligible for funding support. Skills Development Scotland will contribute towards the cost of training. Full information on the Scottish scheme, funding and grants is available [here](#) or call **0800 783 6000** to talk to your local employer engagement adviser.

In Northern Ireland

Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland are work-based and designed around the needs of employers. Recognised training and qualifications are offered to new and existing employees aged 16 and over, across a wide range of apprenticeships. Funding is available. There is limited funding for over-25s. An employer incentive is available for employers whose apprentice successfully completes the Apprenticeships programme. This incentive ranges from £250 to £1,500, depending on the complexity and level of the apprenticeship undertaken. Full details are available [here](#) or call **0800 181 4422**.

In Ireland

Apprenticeships in Ireland are currently limited to crafts trades and so do not include retail, marketing, business etc. Further details can be found [here](#).

Case Study – Anna and Jasmine at Wenlock Books



Anna, why did you decide to take on an apprentice?

I could see that Jasmine was facing a really difficult time; I also felt that as I knew her already, I was best placed to offer her work while she was recovering from her illness. While I couldn't bring myself to pay her the apprenticeship wage of something like £2 something an hour, the £1500 grant helped me to feel I could take on the proper cost of an extra staff member.

What funding/grants were you eligible for?

A grant of £1,500

What are the advantages to your business?

Well - as I said, I kind of thought I was doing Jasmine a favour; in fact, she has completely revitalised my business! Having an apprentice (any apprentice) makes you look at the way you work; check and

update your systems; make sure you are up to date with H&S etc - indeed, it was an opportunity for me to formalise many of our systems - no bad thing, even though my heart sank at the very thought of it (in fact Jasmine did much of this work for me!) but because it's Jasmine, the following things have happened:

- * I now have an energetic and lively 20 year old in the shop for several hours a week
- * we have a strong and growing presence across social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc
- * we take part in national competitions (because Jasmine has the time and energy and enthusiasm to take part)
- * ditto re bookselling initiatives like Indie Book week and Books Are My Bag
- * we have a joined up, branded approach to marketing of events
- * our newsletters are timely, focused and targeted
- * I am very much a book-seller (with not much of a head for business, more of a heart, really!) but Jasmine has a real head for retail, management, numbers, and just 'gets' the way things work!
- * Jasmine is a strategic thinker and planner - she's organised and things get done - she's methodical and organised
- * Jasmine has a wonderful sense of humour and we all - staff, customers, authors, bloggers, enjoy our interactions with her: when she is in the shop, it's like we have more lights on!

Given that Jasmine struggles on a daily basis with mental health issues, tiredness and loss of energy she is nevertheless a whirlwind of the very best kind. I am so thrilled that I was able to take Jasmine on, and I will do my best (though I will hate losing her) to make sure her career in bookselling goes beyond the scope and reach of Wenlock Books. She is already making her mark - she's a real star and one to watch. I feel very, very lucky having her on my team.

Would you consider offering more apprenticeships?

Would I ever have an apprentice again - yes I would! It's a great way to take on staff for a set period of time - if it doesn't completely work out, there's an easy get-out at the end of the term, and as the apprentice is also part of a training scheme there is someone else on hand to discuss any problems with. Having someone new and young and enthusiastic really does wonders for the whole team and guards against that horrible sense of 'been there, done that' that can creep in when you've been on the job for 30 years! You would have to be prepared to take risks, to let the apprentice really have a go at things, and possibly fail, while still taking overall responsibility for everything that happens in your shop, and I think you'd also have to be willing to have your ideas challenged and to be willing to do things differently, but I think that's a really good thing.

Jasmine writes:

In September 2010 I took 2 weeks work experience at Wenlock Books and shortly after, Anna offered me a job working every Saturday afternoon. As I was still in school I picked up my hours over the holiday periods whilst still maintaining my regular Saturday spot, and I was very lucky that Anna allowed me the flexibility to take time off to revise. I'm also incredibly lucky that when I became unwell with severe anxiety and depression in 2012, Anna made arrangements for my shift to be covered and told me that I could return to work as soon as I was able. By August 2014 I was ready to start working again but as I'd just finished my 3rd year of sixth form and only achieved 1 A Level, I felt that I didn't have many options. Anna suggested that I take an apprenticeship with her at Wenlock Books and despite not knowing what that meant, I said yes!

As my mental health is still recovering, I'm only able to manage a part-time apprenticeship which is 16 hours a week for 14 months. As well as 16 hours paid work, I also meet my tutor for an hour

every 3 or 4 weeks at the shop. Together we work through knowledge and skill based modules. These include safety in the workplace, customer service, the selling process, legal aspects of retail, and brand identity. Once I've finished my course I will have gained a Level 2 Certificate in Retail Knowledge and a Level 2 Award Certificate in Retail Skills.

When I'm working, my role is the same as everyone else at Wenlock Books. It's a completely different world when you work in a small business because for a lot of the time there is only one member of staff working. Consequently I'm able to experience every job role and aspect of shop life which is something that I really love. A typical 4 hour shift will include opening up, purchasing items for stock, booking in cards and books, tidying and re-shelving, serving customers, updating social media accounts, contacting customers about their orders, and updating the website.

As well as keeping the shop alive when I'm working on my own, I also work with Anna when she's in the shop. Anna tries really hard to make sure that I experience as much of bookselling life as possible and so I've been able to enjoy so many wonderful opportunities. From selecting cards and speaking to reps, to organising events on my own (Books Are My Bag day in October!); to window displays (we won a trip to the Desmond Elliott Prize 2015 for one of my displays!); to working at regular events and book launches; to having the freedom to try out new ideas, Anna has ensured that I gain as much as I possibly can from being a Wenlock Books apprentice.

One of my favourite roles is being able to add to the Wenlock Books website and earlier this year I started the '6 Questions with' feature, where authors answer the same 6 questions. Authors including Carys Bray, Claire Fuller, James Hannah, Edward Hancox, Louise O'Neill, Non Pratt, and Lisa Williamson have taken part, and as it was so successful that we've been able to include bloggers too with Lucy Powrie as our first guest.

I'm just over half-way through my apprenticeship at Wenlock Books and I am so unbelievably grateful that Anna offered me this opportunity. Every day I am inspired by the people that I work with and the customers that I meet. I hope that I am able to enjoy the rest of my working life as much as I enjoy every moment spent at Wenlock Books.