



## A Line Manager's Guide to Apprenticeships

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V1	11/07/2023	Emma Fenton	New External Guide
V2	19/09/2025	Emma Fenton	Updates to Guidance
V3			

Managing an apprentice or a group of apprentices might be a new experience for you. After all, modern apprenticeships are innovative, fast paced and exciting - that's why we have designed this guide to help you and your learner(s).

Based on feedback and frequently asked questions from Leaders in your position, this guide will go a long way to demystifying apprenticeships. From key facts to delivery information, this guide covers a range of topics, we hope you find it useful.

It goes without saying, but your role is crucial. Effectively managing apprentices is beneficial for you, your organisation and the wider economy. However, you do not have to shoulder the entire responsibility: Davies Learning Solutions are here to support you and your apprentice/s throughout this journey.

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## Your Role as a Line Manager

- When supporting the professional development of apprentices, it's important to remember that your interest and enthusiasm for their development plays a key part to their success on programme.
- Taking an active interest as your apprentices hit new milestones helps to show them that you value the programme and that their development is supporting the wider team
- Your relationship with the Coach is just as important as the relationship between Coach and apprentice. Our Coaches will actively seek to engage with you from the outset of the programme to increase your apprentice's likelihood of engagement and success on programme

Encourage your apprentice to share what they have learned and how this is helping them perform in their role

Provide feedback to the coach on how you feel the apprentice is doing. In turn the coach can update you with their progress

Look for ways in which you can help your apprentice to develop and stretch their capabilities

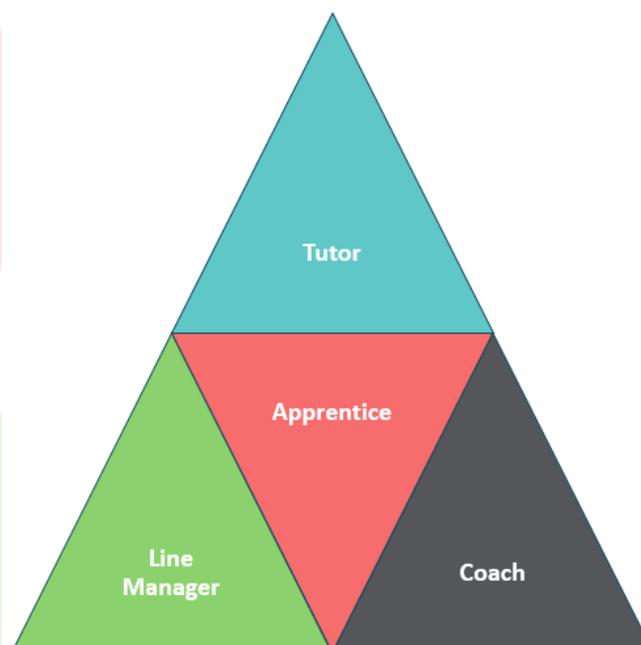
## Who Is Involved?

As an apprentice you should;

- Treat your Coach with **professional respect**
- Fully commit to your learning and development
- Take **ownership** of your learning – keep your OTJ log, complete exams & assignments
- **Seek feedback** and **reflect** on your learning and progress against the learning outcomes

As a Line Manager you should;

- **Support & encourage** the Apprentice
- **Provide access** to workplace experiences
- **Fully support off-the-job learning time**
- Work with the Apprentice and Coach to **track progress**
- **Attend quarterly progress reviews**
- Utilise the **Line Manager Hub** for any guidance needed to support your Apprentice.



To provide the Apprentice with;

- **Technical training**
- **Exam preparation**
- **Support** where necessary to achieve the Professional Qualification
- **Inclusive Learning & Skills Development Tutor support** available where needed for Additional Learning Needs, Functional Skills and apprentices aged 16-18

To provide the Apprentice with;

- **Motivation & drive**
- **Portfolio Guidance**
- **Support** to seek opportunities in the workplace necessary to achieve the learning outcomes

## Onboarding – What is it and What is Your Role?

Onboarding is a screening process that learners must go through prior to starting their programme, to ensure that they are right for the programme and the programme is right for them. Onboarding is broken down into 3 main sections and as a line manager to an apprentice, you will have some crucial involvement in this process.

### Stage One: Eligibility and Suitability

#### Learner Tasks to Complete:

- Activate Aptem account (one of our digital learning platforms)
- Complete Eligibility and Suitability tasks/questionnaires to ensure learners meet the criteria of the programme, and the government funding rules.

**Your Responsibility** – Ensure your learners completes all tasks by their set deadline (7 Days after receiving activation email. This provides enough time to complete all onboarding stages prior to their planned start date.)

### Stage Two: Funding Compliance

#### Learner Tasks to Complete:

- Fill out Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and Extended ILR to ensure the distribution of government funds are being spent in line with government targets
- Sign compliance documents to provide evidence of both agreement of and commitment to the programme

**Your Responsibility** – sign compliance documents on Aptem after your learner has completed their stage 2 tasks.

### Stage Three: First Evidence of Learning

#### Learner Tasks to Complete:

- Mandatory learning activity on Aptem – an activity set by us on the learner's allocated start date, which will have been previously agreed by the learner and signed against by both learner and line manager in the compliance documents

**Your Responsibility** – Ensure your learner completes their activity on the allocated start date. If not completed on the allocated date, learners will have to repeat the second stage of their onboarding journey.

**Skills Radar Call:** This is an informal call with one of our coaches to assess prior knowledge that may be relevant to the programme. **You must attend the skills radar call** and sign the Line Manager review on Aptem so that your apprentice can continue their onboarding process.

## Understanding the Programme

It is important to understand your role as a line manager in your learner's programme. Your ongoing support throughout the entirety of the programme is instrumental to an apprentice's success. The below demonstrates the 3 key elements of an apprenticeship programme.

- Supported by an **industry experienced Coach**
- Demonstrations of **competence** towards **Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours** through **work based evidence**
- Undertake the professional qualification

### On Programme Learning

### Gateway to End Point Assessment

- Gateway is a period of time with **enhanced support** from Coach and Quality Specialist to finalise required documentation prior to End Point Assessment
- Joint agreement of readiness for EPA
- All professional qualification exams and evidence of off the job learning completed at this stage

- EPA is an assessment of a learner's competence in role against the learning outcomes of their standard
- EPA is assessed by an Independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)
- At EPA there are three grades; Pass/Fail/Distinction

### End Point Assessment

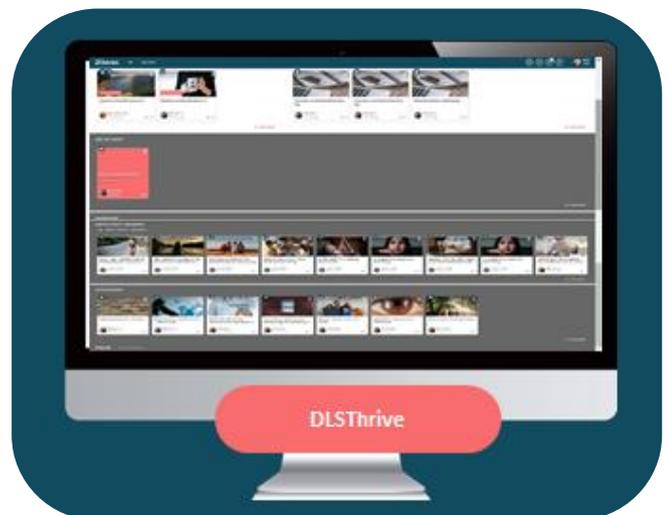
## Digital Learning Platforms

Aptem is our e-Portfolio system and is one of our main digital platforms we use here at DLS. Aptem is used in conjunction with our Digital Learning Experience Platform, DLSThrive. Both platforms are used throughout the onboarding stage and on-programme learning stage of the apprenticeship.



- Aptem helps us to onboard learners as we can use the platform for eligibility and suitability checks. During onboarding, line managers will also receive their own Aptem account to digitally sign compliance documents once the learner has also done so.
- Learners have an Aptem profile where they follow their learning plan whilst on-programme. Their Aptem learning plan holds the components of their programme with accompanying tasks attached.
- Coaches also have access to Aptem, allowing them to view evidence, comments/messages from learners and Off-the-Job hours. Coaches use Aptem to mark learner tasks and approve Off-the-Job activities.
- All learners have a dashboard displaying the progress they have made during their apprenticeship and any outstanding tasks they may have.
- Learners, with support from their coach, will use Aptem to collate a portfolio of evidence for their end point assessment using the tasks and Off-the-Job activities recorded throughout the programme.

- Thrive is a place for apprentices to access all the learning content needed to support the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours associated with their apprenticeship.
- Our Thrive content is expertly designed to be shared with all Davies learners so that it is also able to support their career development beyond the apprenticeship.
- Our Thrive platform carries a range of content to accommodate all learning needs and styles. This includes eLearning, workbooks videos, podcasts and downloadable tasks.
- The professional qualification of the apprenticeship is also supported with revision packs, mock exams and our Ask the Expert feature, which allows learners to ask questions to industry experts.
- Thrive also carries content to support with the wider curriculum. Our dedicated curriculum writers provide fresh content on mental health and wellbeing that is updated daily, as well as running monthly campaigns on a multitude of topics, which allows learners to interact and start open and honest discussions with each other.
- Thrive can be accessed through a learner's desktop, on their mobile device or as an App making our digital platform easily accessible to all Davies learners.

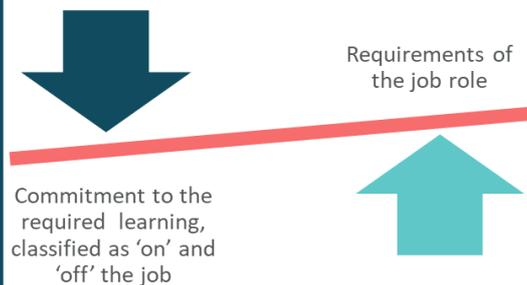


## What is Off-the-Job Learning?

- When completing an apprenticeship, it is requirement apprentices are given working time away from their job to complete work that is relevant to their learning and apprenticeship.
- This time is measured over the **On Programme Learning period** of the apprenticeship and NOT in the end point assessment period. The amount of Off-the-job time that needs to be logged varies from programme to programme. Please speak to the Apprentice's Coach regarding this.

### Requirements of the Job Role

There needs to be a balance between OTJ learning and the requirements of the job role. Apprentices can still develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours through completing activities that are productive to their role and to the organisation



### Off the Job Learning

This is where apprentices develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours through completing activities that provide them with exposure to certain tasks/events that they may not experience in their day-to-day role

#### Examples of Off-the Job activities:

- Live taught webinars/seminars
- Cross-Departmental Shadowing of other business areas
- Self-directed learning through Thrive
- Attending soft skills based workshops
- Assignment Writing
- Facilitating staff training/mentoring

As a Line Manager to an Apprentice, it is your responsibility to assist in identifying Off-the-Job learning opportunities, make sure learners are using their Off-the-job time effectively and encouraging learners to record their hours on Aptem. Recording Off-the-Job learning activities is essential as a learner must demonstrate the relevance of the activity to their apprenticeship and cannot complete their apprenticeship without evidence of completing their mandatory Off-the-Job hours.

## Setting Expectations

- Line Manager Support is crucial to apprentice success and is needed from start to finish including the onboarding process, namely the attendance of your apprentices Skills Radar Call
- Line Managers should support their learners by giving them time to complete work during the working week, signing relevant documentation and providing opportunities to apply knowledge in the workplace
- Include the programme within the learner's work objectives and appraisals
- In some cases, learners may require additional responsibilities/exposure to be able to put their new knowledge into practice. Your co-operation in enabling this is essential and the Coach will liaise with you if this is required
- Inform the Coach if there is any risk that an individual may not complete their course on time (for example, if there are significant changes to their role)
- End Point Assessment (EPA) is a period of activity which aims to pull together all the learning achieved through the course of the programme. As a line manager, you will be involved in the EPA process and will be asked to sign Gateway documents agreeing the learner is ready to undertake the assessment

## Quarterly Reviews

- Davies Learning Solutions undertake quarterly progress review meetings with the Line Manager, the Coach and the Apprentice
- These are tri-party meetings to track progress and any development needs which may be needed in relation to achieving the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours aligned to the relevant Apprenticeship standard
- During any internal appraisals/1-2-1 meetings, you should ask your apprentice to provide an update on their progress being made against their apprenticeship, to ensure there is consistency in objectives and KPI's
- If you have any concerns regarding progress, commitment, or any other general feedback, you are welcomed to share this with the Coach, who can then escalate to one of our delivery managers, if they believe this to be necessary
- You will also be the first point in contact for any escalations or concerns from the Coach or delivery manager regarding your apprentice

## Support for 16–18-year-olds

As a mandatory element of all apprenticeships, we provide specialised support for our Apprentices aged 16-18. We provide a curriculum called the Next Generation Hub, to help young people working in financial services build important skills that will benefit them in both their professional roles and their personal lives, setting them up for success now and in the future, and to provide reassurance to employers and parents that individuals are placed at the heart of our business at Davies.

### This Curriculum Includes

- Bespoke pastoral support for our Apprentices who are under the age of 18 – as required from a Davies safeguarding & Ofsted perspective.
- Fantastic resources that provide information, advice and guidance on topics that are relevant to young people, including:
  - ❑ Workplace Professionalism and Etiquette
  - ❑ Health and Wellbeing
  - ❑ Financial Foundations
  - ❑ Know How
  - ❑ Staying Safe
  - ❑ Be Yourself

Within each of the topic categories, we have informative videos, backed by further learning and support aligned to each topic. For example: within health and wellbeing we cover what is a healthy relationship, and this is further embedded through links to another sexual health and wellbeing resource which breaks the topic down further, with support helplines and areas to contact

Our dedicated tutors, who will provide the overarching pastoral support for our young Apprentices will check in with each individual on a monthly basis. They will provide individualised support, helping to contextualise their learning & signposting them to further reading/content to support their development.

Any Apprentices that fit into the Next Generation Hub age bracket will automatically find their programme includes these important resources.

**If you have questions about the support, we offer Apprentices aged 16-18, please reach out to their Coach. The dedicated tutors will contact the Apprentice at the beginning of their programme.**

## Safeguarding

Davies have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the apprentices/employees and employers. This involves how we will keep you and others safe.

- What we will do if we think you are being harmed, or likely to be harmed
- What you should do if you think somebody else is being harmed
- What we will do if we think you are about to harm someone else
- What we will do to keep you and others safe
- The preventions of all types of harm and is about keeping you safe
- Preventing cyber bullying

### How we will keep you safe:

- All staff who have regular contact with apprentices have been vetted via the Disclosure and Barring Service
- All staff have been appropriately trained and are qualified to deliver the work they do
- We have an internal system for dealing with apprentices at risk
- We work closely with outside agencies who can help in a variety of situations
- There is a designated safeguarding lead and team who can help you in a variety of situations
- You can make use of any form of social media platform or contact details, including surveys to report concerns

### Harm means:

- Anything which is happening to you which is physically or emotionally hurtful
- Examples include bullying, sexual abuse, neglect, physical attack or being forced to do something against your will
- This could be at home, at work, in a training centre, with friends, in the street, online, anywhere

Our Safeguarding Team structure and contacts are available on Thrive®. Please see here for our [Safeguarding and Prevent Handbook](#).

You can also contact our designated Safeguarding officer email [Wayne.Bell@davies-group.com](mailto:Wayne.Bell@davies-group.com) or by phone **07921463849**.

## FAQ's

### ➤ How do I gain access to sign the onboarding documents?

At the time your apprentice is set up on our digital platform Aptem, you will also be set up with an employer account. You should be sent an activation email for Aptem and when a signature or activity is required from you, our onboarding team will send you an email with instructions of what you need to do. If you have not received/ cannot find your activation email when contacted by our onboarding team, please request for the activation email to be re-sent.

### ➤ How are materials and exams funded throughout the apprenticeship?

Davies fund material costs and first exam sittings. Any memberships or re-sits will need to be funded by the employer.

### ➤ I have an apprentice on programme, but it's a really busy period of the time for the team, how can I manage their workload?

We are aware there are peak periods in business activity which may mean there are times when work towards the programme slows. As part of the Government funding rules, there must now be some evidence of learning every 4 weeks throughout the apprenticeship as a minimum. If learning isn't evidenced in that 4-week period, a learner **MUST** be put on a Break In Learning (BIL). Providing there is open communication with the coach, and the 4-week rule is met, a commitment to increase activity once the busy period is over is acceptable to get the learner back on track. However, if this period is expected to be extended, it is important to raise this with your Coach.

### ➤ I'm not able to attend the quarterly review, what should I do?

If this is the case, try to communicate with your Coach prior to the session or arrange a separate meeting to speak with them. It's very important that the Coach has a clear understanding of how you feel your apprentice is progressing, so they can address any areas which may need further improvement/development. Quarterly reviews will also need to be signed off by you in order to acknowledge any queries or concerns that were raised.

## FAQ's Continued

- **I've been asked to complete a witness testimony by the Coach/apprentice, what is this and why is it needed?**

Witness testimonies are a really important part of evidencing competence in learning outcomes. As part of End Point Assessment, the assessment organisation wants to see a range of evidence showcasing the competence of the individual against the learning outcomes. Witness testimonies are a way for Assessors to see evidence of externally validated pieces of work. They are usually collected periodically throughout the programme, but may be requested towards the end, so they can be used at end point assessment. There is usually a template for gathering witness testimonies, if you need support with these or have any questions, the Coach will be able to provide an example testimony and will be happy to help.

- **Where can I find the learning outcomes for my apprentice's programme?**

A breakdown of the Learning Outcomes for your apprentice's programme can be found on the Skills England Website: <https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/>

Simply search for the apprenticeship standard you wish to know more about, and this will provide you with an explanation of the programme and the learning outcomes.