

# → GET AHEAD

A GUIDE FOR LINE MANAGERS OF APPRENTICES



PART OF OUR  
**GETAHEAD**  
SERIES

 Refreshed  
for 2024



# WELCOME

So you're an apprentice's manager...

**As a line manager, you hold a pivotal role in shaping the future success and development of your apprentices. Your mentorship, support, and guidance can significantly influence their professional growth, skill development, and career paths.**

Whether you're new to this role or bring years of experience, this comprehensive guide offers valuable insights and practical strategies to help you with the unique challenges and opportunities that come with managing apprentices.

We recognise that managing apprentices requires a distinct approach compared to other team members. Apprentices can be enthusiastic learners, passionate about their career journeys, and brimming with untapped potential. They may contribute fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a strong desire for growth. As their manager, it's your responsibility to cultivate an environment that nurtures their development and empowers them to thrive.

With the insights and tips found in this guide, you will be equipped to navigate the complexities of managing apprentices and unleash their full potential. Your investment in their development will not only benefit them but also contribute to the success of your team and organisation as a whole.

AoA Partners: Please share this guide with your Line Managers of apprentices but do not distribute externally. To refer potential partners, please email us or share our partnership page [here](#). Thank you for your support.

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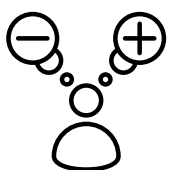
Get Ahead Guide

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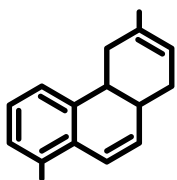
# getting STARTED

## Here are 8 top tips for supporting apprentices:



### 1. Clarify Expectations:

- Set clear expectations for the apprentice's role, responsibilities, and goals.
- Discuss the apprentice's learning objectives and career aspirations.
- Review the Apprenticeship Standards to ensure tasks fulfil the requirements outlined in their apprenticeship standard. Find standards here: [IfATE](#).
- For apprentices with additional needs, including mental health ensure to access support which you can find [here](#).



### 2. Provide a Structured Onboarding:

- Ensure the apprentice receives a comprehensive orientation to the workplace, including safety protocols.
- Introduce them to team members and key colleagues.



### 3. Assign a Mentor or Buddy:

- Appoint an experienced employee to serve as a mentor or buddy to guide the apprentice.
- Encourage regular meetings for guidance and feedback.



### 4. Offer Training and Development:

- Provide access to relevant training programmes, workshops, or courses to support the apprentice's learning journey.
- Encourage attendance at relevant industry events and conferences.
- Ensure you understand [Off-The-Job training requirements](#).
- Maintain a strong relationship with the training provider is crucial for success.



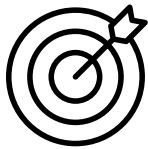
### 5. Provide Regular Feedback:

- Conduct regular check-ins to discuss progress and adjust goals as needed.
- Regularly evaluate the apprentice's overall performance and development.
- Use this information to adjust the learning plan as necessary.

Apprentices tell us that weekly one to ones with their manager can be highly beneficial. A possible structure could involve three learning and development discussions per month, followed by one deep-dive discussion into recurring challenges.

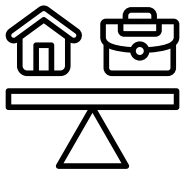


## getting STARTED - Continued.



### 6. Set Realistic Goals:

- Establish achievable milestones and goals to track the apprentice's progress.
- Ensure goals are challenging but not overwhelming.
- Collaborate with the training provider and skills coach to monitor progress and ensure alignment with expected milestones.



### 7. Monitor Work-Life Balance:

- Be mindful of the apprentice's workload and work-life balance.
- Promote a healthy work environment to prevent burnout.



### 8. Prepare for Transition:

- Plan for the apprentice's transition to a full-time role or the next phase of their career.
- Offer guidance on job searches and professional growth.
- Ensure they apply for the [Post-Apprenticeship Recognition Scheme](#) once they have completed to receive formal recognition for the skills gained during their apprenticeship to validate their achievements.
- Where feasible within the company, assist the apprentice in planning for their succession role from early on.

**By following this list, you can help apprentices to thrive in their roles, develop valuable skills, and make meaningful contributions to the organisation while also building a strong talent pipeline for the future.**

#### SIGNPOST THESE

- Any UK apprentice can join AoA Apprentice Meet Up events for free. These in-person socials and are a mix of development and networking which can count towards off-the-job training - [Check out AoA's Latest Events Here](#)
- [CV, applications and interviews guidance on AoA Learn](#)

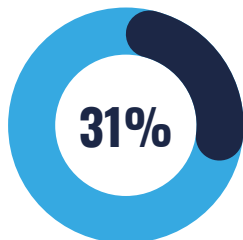


# getting STARTED

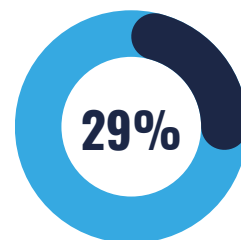
## insights and info

“My manager has supported me through my apprenticeship by allowing me to experience new opportunities and lead on some projects.” - Member

AoA Connect is a networking platform by the Association of Apprentices (AoA) to connect apprentices with various opportunities and support networks. It serves as a hub for apprentices to access resources, share experiences, and engage with fellow apprentices across different industries. Offering a range of features, including webinars, networking events, and access to exclusive apprenticeship opportunities, we also check in with the community to understand apprentices’ wants and needs. Here are a few relevant findings:



members said offering constructive feedback and coaching is the most effective action their line managers could take to support them



members said lack of communication and guidance is the most detrimental way that a line manager can impede progress

## The top 3 things that would make apprenticeships easier to achieve without lowering educational standards are:

- 1 Having a mentor who has been through the same process as me
- 2 More time to complete off-the-job training
- 3 More interesting or engaging content/activities

## Myth Busting

Not all apprentices are school leavers

- 2 Nearly two thirds of our apprentice members are aged 25+
- 3

## Useful resources for partners:

[Onboarding tips for managers](#) For your new employees, onboarding can be an overwhelming experience. Here are some tips to make the transition smooth and less stressful.

Watch this webinar: [Line Managing Apprentices – Virtual Roundtable Discussion](#) with the Association of Apprentices and Grant Thornton

# creating a strong FOUNDATION



Inducting a new cohort of apprentices is an exciting time for both the apprentices and the managers responsible for their development. As a manager, your role is crucial in creating a positive and supportive environment that sets the foundation for their success. By following a few key tips, you can ensure a smooth and effective induction process, helping your apprentices integrate into the team seamlessly and empowering them to thrive in their new roles. By implementing these strategies, you can lay the groundwork for a successful apprenticeship programme and foster a culture of growth and development within your organisation.

- **Involve the Team**

Create a welcoming and motivated team environment.

- **Provide Inductions**

Offer inductions on health & safety, data protection, company values, and more.

- **Set Clear Expectations**

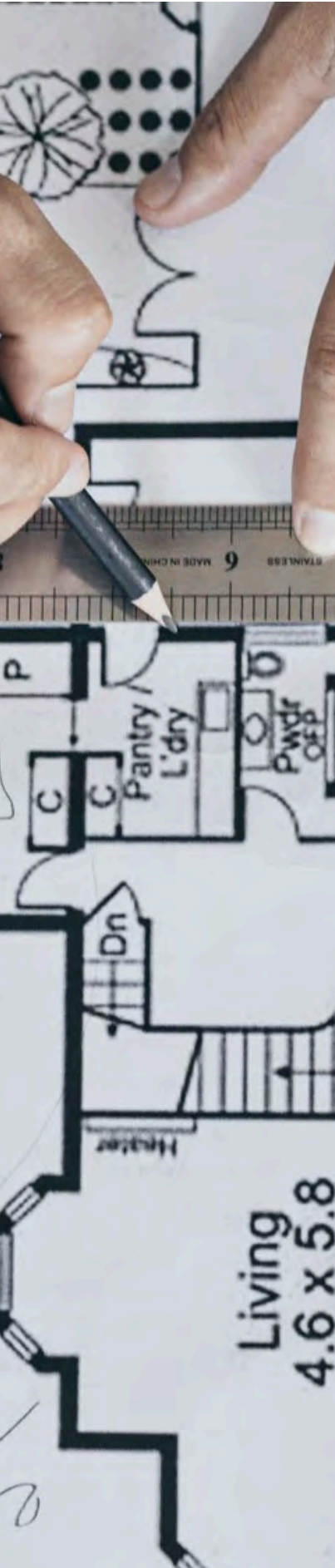
Don't make assumptions about their capabilities. Encourage responsibility.

- **Assign a Mentor**

Consider assigning a trusted staff member as their work-place Mentor or Buddy for support, especially during the induction stage.

tick these off as you go

# MANAGERS' CHECKLIST



## Preparation:

- Set up a workspace for the apprentice and gather necessary equipment and tools.
  - Prepare an email or communication introducing the apprentice to the team.
- 

## Induction:

- Organise a formal induction programme.
  - Introduce the apprentice to their team and other relevant departments.
  - Provide a tour of the workplace, highlighting key areas and facilities.
  - Discuss company culture, values, and expectations.
- 

## Training & Development:

- Familiarise yourself with the training provider's curriculum (how could you match the apprentices' work to their training?).
  - Block out the apprentice's off-the-job training day in the calendar as a meeting-free day.
  - Attend meetings with the trainer every 12 weeks.
  - Ensure the apprentice understands their role and responsibilities.
- 

## Communication:

- Set up regular check-in meetings to discuss progress and address concerns.
  - Ensure open lines of communication between the apprentice, HR, and the training provider.
  - Encourage the apprentice to ask questions and seek clarification when needed.
- 

## Resources & Support:

- Provide access to online resources or training materials.
  - Ensure the apprentice knows where to find company policies and procedures.
  - Offer resources for mental and emotional well-being.
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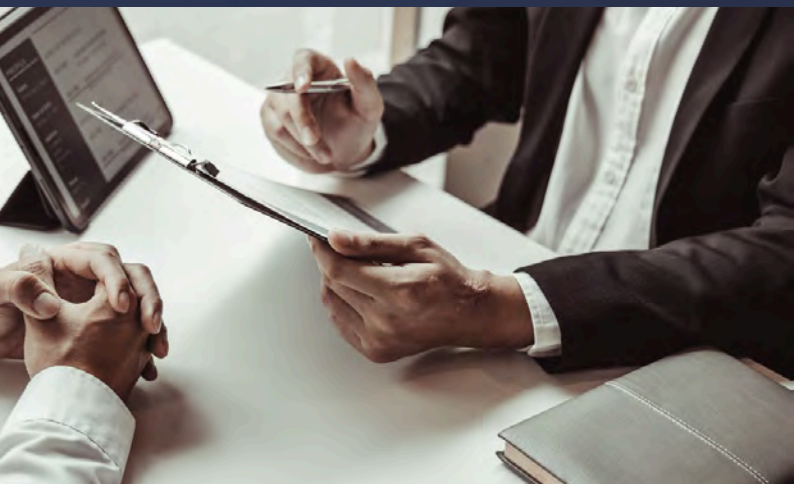
## Feedback & Reviews:

- Schedule the first performance review.
  - Provide constructive feedback regularly.
  - Celebrate small achievements and milestones.
- 

## Integration:

- Encourage team-building activities.
- Involve the apprentice in team meetings and brainstorming sessions.
- Promote a culture of inclusivity and respect.





FRANCES HIGHAM  
RISK MANAGER, CAPITAL DELIVERY

### **What are your top 3 suggestions for effectively managing and supporting apprentices?**

- Understand the apprenticeship – make sure you take time to familiarise yourself with how the apprenticeship is structured, how progress assessed, and what happens at the end point assessment.
- Develop a relationship with the training provider – keep up to date with academic progress and work in partnership to mentor and support apprentices through their learning.
- Tailor your support to your apprentices' individual needs – every apprentice will join with different experiences and different strengths and weaknesses, make sure you take time to understand these so that your support can be tailored accordingly.

### **What resources or training do you signpost to develop soft skills?**

I always encourage our apprentices to use the resources available on the AoA website, we discuss what soft skills they could develop e.g. effective time management and they use AoA to look for resources to support this. As an employer we also provide opportunities for our apprentices to progress their soft skills, e.g. the Future Leaders Programme.

### **How frequently do you provide feedback and what's the best way to structure it?**

We have several approaches to providing feedback: Informal 1-2-1s on a weekly basis - to check in and ensure everything is running smoothly and that our apprentices have access to the people and resources that they need. Regular formal Personal

Development Reviews (PDRs), where we review progress towards personal objectives; we also have a formal quarterly feedback meeting with the training provider to assess both academic and workplace performance and progress towards completing all the necessary components of the apprentice scheme.

### **What are some common challenges apprentices face, and how can managers best support them through these?**

This will largely depend on individual circumstances and prior experience, but for those joining us from an academic setting, the transition from an academic setting to a workplace setting can be a challenge at first, e.g. structure of the working day, effective communication in a corporate setting, etc. These "first day issues" are best supported by ensuring enough time and thought is given to helping develop these skills early in the apprentice programme.

### **How do you ensure that your apprentices feel integrated into the team and company culture?**

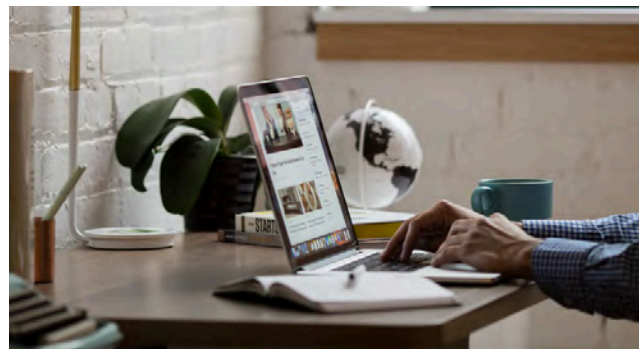
This has been slightly more challenging in a hybrid work environment, but maintaining regular contact, both in person and online is vital, and encouraging our apprentices to participate in team events. Formal company and departmental inductions in the first few weeks also play an important role in helping new apprentices navigate and understand company policies and ways of working, in addition to providing a great opportunity for early networking.

# maximising apprentice

# POTENTIAL

## Understanding Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship standards are industry-specific frameworks that outline the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for a particular job role. These standards serve as a guide for apprentices and their managers, providing a clear roadmap for their development and progression. It is essential for managers to thoroughly understand the apprenticeship standards relevant to their apprentices to effectively support their learning and growth.



### Tip 1: Familiarise Yourself with the Apprenticeship Standard

Take the time to read and familiarise yourself with the specific apprenticeship standard that your apprentice is enrolled in. This will give you a comprehensive understanding of the skills and knowledge they are expected to acquire throughout their apprenticeship. By doing so, you can align their learning and development activities with the requirements outlined in the standard.

### Tip 2: Identify Opportunities for Skill Development

Within the apprenticeship standard, there will be specific skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop. As a manager, it is important to identify opportunities for your apprentices to enhance these skills within their day-to-day work. This could involve assigning them tasks or projects that allow them to practise and apply the skills outlined in the standard.

### Tip 3: Encourage Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst your team members, including your apprentices. Provide opportunities for them to work together on projects or participate in team activities that promote learning and sharing of ideas. This collaborative environment can foster creativity and innovation, benefitting both the apprentices and the team as a whole.

### Tip 4: Support Off-the-Job Learning

Off-the-job learning is a crucial component of apprenticeships, allowing apprentices to gain broader knowledge and experience beyond their day-to-day tasks. Support your apprentices in accessing the necessary resources and learning opportunities required for off-the-job learning. This could include providing access to relevant training programmes, workshops, or online courses.

As a manager of apprentices, you have a significant role to play in supporting the growth and development of your apprentices. By understanding apprenticeship standards, creating a supportive learning environment, and building strong relationships, you can maximise the potential of your apprentices and contribute to their long-term success. Remember, the Association of Apprentices is here to support you and your apprentices throughout their journey. Together, we can create a bright future for the next generation of skilled professionals.

See [Apprenticeship Standards](#) on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's website

# hints and tips for line managers new to MANAGING APPRENTICES

I am a Performance Manager to multiple audit apprentices and KPMG audit school leavers. I started my career at KPMG in 2015 on the Durham School Leaver scheme, fresh out of school at 18 years old. My course consisted of working in the audit department at KPMG Birmingham, studying accountancy at Durham University and completing my ACA qualification over a five-year period.

I therefore have experienced first hand the adventure of navigating the professional workplace for the first time, as well as simultaneously completing university exams and ACA exams. This has given me a passion to provide the best support to my apprentices going through the same journey while at KPMG.



**Bethan Harris, Audit Manager and  
Performance Manager,  
KPMG Audit Birmingham**

## 1. Understand the apprenticeship

Understanding the apprentice's course is essential for creating a supportive and productive learning environment that benefits both the apprentice and organisation. It also allows you to offer relevant advice and assistance when needed. The first questions to ask should be:

- How many exams will you take?
- When will your exams be?
- What are your off-the-job requirements?
- What additional requirements are there to complete outside your exams and work? For example, reflective statements, essays, presentations, check-ins, etc.

## 2. Identify your role

An effective line manager can help their apprentices excel and succeed, but this can only happen if you know what your role is from the outset. It is important to:

- Understand what interactions you will be required to have, per the apprenticeship, with the apprentice and the apprenticeship provider so that the apprentice meets all their learning goals.
- Confirm what you will need to approve and sign-off over the course of the apprenticeship so the apprentice doesn't miss any deadlines.
- Talk to your peers who were apprentices and ask their advice so that you are equipped with the right knowledge to guide the apprentice through their course.

- Put in monthly catch-ups where you talk about wellbeing, apprenticeship requirements, upcoming exams, work commitments, etc.
- Put their exam results in your diary so you are there to offer congratulations or advice on next steps if it's not the outcome they wanted.

## 3. Set them up for success

For many apprentices, this may be their first experience of the working world. Combined with having to complete coursework and exams at the same time, it can be overwhelming. Anticipating deadlines or potential barriers can help them stay on track. For example:

- Ensure they are giving themselves time to complete the exams, work, off-the-job requirements, and other aspects (e.g., reflective statements, essays, presentations, and check-ins).
- Confirm their workplace understands their commitments and builds this into resource planning.
- Ensure they are always on track to meet the off-the-job requirements, so they don't fall behind.
- Put their exam dates in your diary to make sure you are providing reassurance and guidance at a crucial time.

# hints and tips for line managers new to MANAGING APPRENTICES

continued.

## 4. Know how to help when things go wrong

It's not always plain sailing for some apprentices, and a manager can offer most value when things don't go to plan. If things do go wrong, it's important to reassure the apprentice and give them confidence by providing the following information:

- Understand the process for exam fails and requirement misses so they know what they must do next.
- Communicate to them that when they adjust their pathway, it may mean they are no longer aligned with their usual peer group, which can leave them feeling isolated, and give advice on how to deal with that.

## 5. Put yourself in their shoes

Apprentices are unique in the workplace. As such, it's important to consider:

- They may feel and operate differently from colleagues and may need slight accommodations.
- They may feel lonely or cut off from other non-apprentice colleagues.
- They should be talking to their peers and fellow apprentices, so they have a support system and a feeling of teamwork. This is especially useful as the apprentices remind each other of upcoming deadlines.

## 6. Connect them to their networks

Connecting apprentices with their networks is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it provides apprentices with access to a wealth of knowledge and experience from professionals in their field. This exposure helps them learn best practices, gain insights into industry trends, and develop a deeper understanding of their chosen career path. Once connected, encourage them to:

- Understand internal and external opportunities available to them as apprentices.
- Get involved in roles that allow them to work with other apprentices and even act as role models to other apprentices.
- To talk about their experiences so they can educate their wider colleagues.
- Visit their school to advertise the apprenticeship routes available so that more school leavers feel empowered to choose this employment route.

## 7. Get to know them as an individual

Apprenticeships can be tough, as navigating work, exams, and additional requirements are difficult. Everyone will cope with this differently, and a one-box-fits-all approach will not work. Therefore, it is up to their manager to:

- Learn what makes them feel nervous, where they feel the most pressure, but also what they feel is their strength and what aspects they most enjoy so they can get the most out of their experience.
- Ask what pressures they may have outside the apprenticeship and how this might interact with the apprenticeship requirements so that additional support or guidance can be provided.

top tips for apprentice

# REVIEWS

**Reviews play a critical role in the development and success of apprentices. As a manager, your active participation in reviews with their training provider can greatly enhance the learning experience for your apprentices.**

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 STAY ENGAGED

Attending apprentice reviews demonstrates your commitment to their growth and development. By participating in these meetings, you can gain insights into their progress, challenges, and areas for improvement. Ideally, aim to join your apprentice's reviews every 12 weeks to maintain regular communication and monitor their progress. This involvement shows your investment in their success and creates a supportive environment.

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 PROVIDE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

One of the most valuable contributions you can make during reviews is offering constructive feedback. Share your observations and insights on the apprentice's performance, skills, and attitude. Highlight their achievements and acknowledge their efforts while also providing guidance on areas where they can improve. Remember to focus on specific examples and actionable suggestions to facilitate their growth. Constructive feedback helps apprentices understand expectations, develop self-awareness, and strive for continuous improvement.

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 CELEBRATE SUCCESS

Taking an active interest in your apprentice's long-term development is crucial. Celebrating their achievements not only boosts their morale but also reinforces their commitment to their apprenticeship.

# case study

## Apprenticeships with **amazon**



Rich Brooks, Senior Software Development  
Manager at IMDb, an Amazon Subsidiary

## MANAGER ADVICE FOR SUCCESSFUL APPRENTICESHIPS

**I work as a Software Development Manager at IMDb/Amazon. In 2019 we launched our first degree-level Software Development apprenticeship. I managed 2 Software Development Engineer Apprentices through their 4-year degree apprenticeship. They successfully completed their apprenticeships in August 2023 and are now working full time as Software Development Engineers.**

**Here are 6 guiding rules which I think helped their success.**

### **Rule 1: No Tea Making**

In 2019 one of our apprentices thought that they'd be doing the less skilled jobs in the team such as making cups of tea but they quickly found out that an apprenticeship is a real role, it's not about making tea for the team. Apprentice software engineers are real software engineers. The essence of an apprenticeship is on-the-job training, working alongside experienced engineers, learning ways of working and best practices. We enabled our apprentices to do the job for real, got them solving real problems, and kept them away from "practice" projects. There were no tea rounds.

### **Rule 2: Deliver Customer Value**

Delivering for the customer is the most important thing we do as software engineers, the quicker your apprentice is able to deliver customer value the sooner you start your apprentices' Deliver Results / Customer Obsession flywheel. We got our apprentices delivering code to solve real problems as quickly as possible. We started them off fixing bugs, working on our paper-cut ticket queue and solving on-call issues alongside our on-call engineers. We identified real projects where they worked alongside other engineers to deliver value, these project tasks were initially non-critical-path items on our core projects but they delivered real customer value. We got them reviewing code alongside the rest of our team

as soon as possible so that they became part of the code-quality conversation. We had them working on-call within their first 9 months so that they started to understand our team systems and wider business context. We had them solving problems alongside our Product Manager and Customers to increase their customer awareness. As their skills increased and opportunities came up, we identified design tasks and stand-alone projects where they could take the lead.

### **Rule 3: Structure knowledge growth**

In the early stages of the apprenticeship our apprentices needed support gaining basic skills such as how to navigate file directories or how to use source control. We asked our tenured engineers to suggest an agenda of key skills to learn and had our apprentices augment this list with things they want to learn about. Having regular (weekly) sessions where our tenured engineers taught apprentices and the apprentices demonstrated knowledge they'd researched created a healthy conversation forum to bootstrap technical relationships. We set up mentors to work alongside our apprentices, these mentors were motivated by sharing knowledge and growing people. We connected our apprentices with experts in our organisation to further enhance their knowledge network and idea exposure.

**Rule 4: Degree Work Beats Project Work**

As a manager I ensured our apprentices were always able to prioritise degree (apprenticeship) work over team work, I built capacity in our team schedule to allow this. I worked with our apprentices to spot opportunities to align degree course requirements and real work projects and timings. e.g. security reviews at a similar time to course security modules. I encouraged and supported autonomy with time management for our apprentices to own how they delivered against their academic and job demands.

**Rule 5: Team**

Our apprentices were part of all team-centred activities and had a voice in the team, they contributed to all stand-ups, team meetings,

retros, design sessions and review sessions. They were encouraged to ask any questions they had, it's a great forcing function in the team to reduce ambiguity in communication. We celebrated apprentice success, had them demoing work, shouting out their project and academic achievements, acknowledging their contribution to team success. We aimed to identify all opportunities to give our apprentices a public voice and recognition.

**Rule 6: At the end there can be tea**

We did break the no tea-making rule; on the final day of their apprenticeship one of our apprentices did decide to make the team cups of tea as a thank you for the support they'd had during the apprenticeship. We then went out for a celebratory team meal.

**Rich Brooks won Apprentice Line Manager of the Year at Amazon's internal awards.****Hear what one of his apprentice reports had to say about working with Rich:**

"Rich was a key player in setting up the Software Apprenticeship Scheme, he has a profound impact on the apprenticeship programme and is one of the reasons we have so many Software Apprentices. Rich has been my manager for 3 years of the scheme and has paved the way in which managers should manage and support apprentices. He is the reason I and other apprentices have become competent engineers. Rich provides an outstanding level of support while letting you be a leader of your own time and work. He helps you help yourself and is the most understanding manager I've ever had. From the start of the apprenticeship Rich has been devoted to making us competent engineers instead of being concerned with our work output. He has supported us to work as part of the team and treats us like engineers on the team. He spreads his culture and ethos across the team and the organisation which is why peers and leaders of the organisation trust and respect our opinion. Rich is amazing and every manager could (and should) learn something from Rich. "

top tips for

# MANAGING VS. COACHING

**While coaching and managing are different approaches to leadership, today's organisations need to learn how to balance them at the same time. This is to create high-performing teams and optimise their productivity. It is critical to understand the differences between these two so you can get the most out of day-to-day operations.**

## **Supervision vs. Support**

Supervision vs. Support

Essentially, managing is all about supervising the work of others to achieve organisational goals. It involves tasks such as setting objectives, assigning responsibilities and monitoring progress. Coaching, however, is a collaborative approach that helps team members develop their skills and competencies. It involves asking powerful questions, listening actively and providing guidance.

## **Productivity vs. Potential**

While managing can provide structure and direction, its focus on achieving planned results by following set workflows may impede creativity and innovation. By promoting a culture of continuous learning, coaching offers individuals opportunities to grow and explore their untapped potential. It drives employee engagement, autonomy and ownership.

## **Direction vs. Development**

Every situation might call for a different approach. For this reason, effective leaders should assess each case individually to determine if they need to be more directive or supportive. Managing is a good approach when directing a team's workflow to assure it meets its goals or when a team experiences blockers preventing them from completing their tasks on time. And coaching is the right approach to help employees improve their soft skills to collaborate effectively or to improve their performance. It also helps them develop the critical-thinking skills they need to make informed decisions and produce high-quality work.

**Managing and coaching are complementary skills that nurture your team's long-term growth and support them in meeting their objectives. Leverage them both when leading others.**



# PARS

POST-APPRENTICESHIP  
RECOGNITION SCHEME

Empowering Apprentices  
and Enriching Organisations

**Line Managers, envision the finish line from day one. Apprentices have spoken, and their message is clear: knowing that their hard work will be valued on completion is a powerful motivator. By introducing the Post-Apprenticeship Recognition Scheme (PARS) early in their journey you're igniting engagement and fuelling determination.**

The Association of Apprentices and the Chartered Institution for Further Education have created a brand-new professional recognition scheme for qualified apprentices.

The award of PARS post-nominals will elevate the status of both the apprentice and the apprenticeship route, contributing to raising parity of esteem and building awareness of the impact that qualified apprentices offer.

**Apprentices  
will receive a  
certificate  
and the right  
to use a post-  
nominal  
designation**



## Eligibility

PARS is open to all apprentices (regardless of level or occupational pathway) who:



completed their  
apprenticeship since  
1 Jan 2019



completed their  
apprenticeship in the UK



have the support of their  
employer (or an industry-  
linked sponsor)

LEARN MORE >>



THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION  
FOR FURTHER EDUCATION



Association of  
Apprentices

# off-the-job TRAINING

**Off-the-job training is a highly important aspect of an apprenticeship. It is defined as an activity that is not part of an apprentice's day-to-day role which supports their apprenticeship training.**

The minimum volume of hours no longer links to working hours (previously there was a 20% off-the-job training rule). Off-the-job training now consists of a minimum of six hours per week – a consistent figure, irrespective of the hours worked by the apprentice. All off-the-job training must be recorded and evidence retained. Training providers will support their learners to do this, but you can help too.

## Examples of off-the-job training

The training can consist of a range of activities, which will help develop an apprentice's skills. Here are a few examples:

- Shadowing other members of the team to learn new skills.
- In-house training programmes relevant to the apprenticeship.
- Writing reflective journals.
- Attendance at workshops, training days and webinars relevant to the apprenticeship.
- Completion of online learning modules on AoA Learn, the Association of Apprentices' online learning platform.
- AoA Masterclasses (live or on-demand)
- Self-study that includes reading or watching videos.
- Training in new working practices or on new equipment.
- Role-playing or simulation exercises.
- Industry visits/conferences relevant to apprenticeships such as online and in-person events
- Writing assessments, assignments and completing projects or activities.
- Practical training or training in the workplace relevant to the apprenticeship.

## Benefits of off-the-job training

- Provides a better understanding of the overall knowledge, skills and behaviours required in the wider industry.
- Promotes a flexible, practical and creative approach to learning – and an opportunity to gain new, transferable skills.
- Provides an environment where learning can be explored in various ways through real-life learning.
- Promotes networking with other apprentices.

case study

# Bellway



Amy Sumner, Commercial Manager  
Bellway Homes North West

## MANAGER ADVICE FROM AN APPRENTICE

**I am Commercial Manager at Bellway Homes North West; I joined Bellway in 2017 to complete a 3-year Degree Apprenticeship. I have always been passionate about degree apprenticeship having completed one myself and understanding the juggling of work, university work and life.**

**Having that level of understanding has helped me support others though this process over the years and here are some do's and don'ts that I would recommend:**

### **Have a chat**

Take your new starter away from their desk for a chat. Ideally this would happen weekly for the first 6 weeks and then monthly. This gives them an opportunity to ask any questions and also gives you a good gauge of how they are getting on and how to best support them.

### **Desk Layout**

This is one of my favourite things for a new starter as when I started it helped me a lot. Nothing fancy just a simple document showing peoples names, job title and where they sit. Starting a new job is daunting without trying to remember everyone's name.

### **Feedback**

Having chats every week is a great way to provide one to one feedback that can help guide your apprentice. I always like to start this by asking them what was good about their week and what could be better, and in return I will give the same information.

### **Encourage them to become part of the team**

As they are starting a new job and education at the same time this can be lonely. Normally I encourage a brew round to get them up and away from their desk talking to all members of the team. Although this can be controversial, I very rarely find that when you ask

someone for a brew that they simply answer with 'yes' or 'no', it is always followed with 'how are you finding it' or 'did you watch the match'.

### **Give them the basics**

Notepads and pens. Having a notepad to hand ready to take notes on new tasks or new words in meetings, this will become their dictionary and help them understand the meetings they sit in a lot more. If it is possible, I find it is good to stay behind at the end of the meeting and run through the discussion with the apprentice.

### **Give them time**

Juggling work, college/university, and life is a big adjustment. I like to know the coursework deadlines and exam times to ensure that I am allowing my apprentice enough time to give their best to their studies. Equally I make it clear that although I will support them through university it is down to them to ask for help or time. Time management is a valuable skill.

### **Don't forget what it was like**

Whether you completed an apprenticeship or not you will have started a junior role at some point in your career. Remember the good and try and replicate it and remember the bad and avoid being the same.

# navigating the path: prioritising your MENTAL HEALTH

**We understand that supporting an apprentice with mental health challenges can feel daunting for Line Managers. To shed light on this important topic, we're sharing valuable advice from an apprentice who has navigated these waters. While their message is directed at fellow apprentices, it offers Line Managers a unique window and an insider perspective into the support your team might need.**

By Ethan Woolsgrove,  
Level 6 Digital Marketing  
Apprenticeship at  
Accolade Wines



## 1. Set Realistic Expectations

As you step into your apprenticeship, it's vital to establish realistic expectations for yourself. Recognise that you're in a learning phase. Unrealistic demands and the constant pursuit of perfection can quickly take a toll on your mental health. Embrace a growth mindset, where each challenge becomes an opportunity for learning and improvement.

## 2. Time Management

Create a structured routine that accommodates both professional commitments and personal relaxation. Set boundaries and allocate time for hobbies, exercise, and spending time with loved ones. Adequate rest and leisure contribute significantly to maintaining a healthy mental state.

## 3. Open Communication

Don't hesitate to communicate your needs and concerns with your supervisor or mentor. Speaking up doesn't indicate weakness, it demonstrates your commitment to your well-being and your willingness to collaborate towards a solution.

## 4. Build a Support Network

Foster relationships with your colleagues and fellow apprentices. Sharing experiences, challenges, and triumphs can create a sense of camaraderie. Having someone who understands your journey can provide emotional support and alleviate feelings of isolation.

## 5. Mindfulness and Self-Care

In the hustle and bustle of a busy apprenticeship, don't forget to allocate time for mindfulness and self-care. Engage in activities that relax your mind.

## 6. Learn to Manage Stress

Stress is inevitable, but how you manage it makes all the difference. Identify stressors and adopt healthy coping mechanisms. Breathing exercises, journaling, or engaging in creative outlets can channel stress into productive energy.

## 7. Celebrate Small Wins

Remember to celebrate your small victories. All milestones are worth acknowledging. These provide a sense of accomplishment and motivation to keep pushing forward.

## 8. Set Personal Goals

Set personal goals that promote your well-being. These could include learning a new hobby, volunteering, or pursuing a personal project. Having aspirations beyond your apprenticeship can enrich your life and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

## 9. Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Physical and mental well-being are interconnected. Engage in regular physical activity, prioritise a balanced diet, and ensure you're getting adequate sleep.

## 10. Seek Professional Help When Needed

If you find your mental health deteriorating despite your efforts, don't hesitate to seek professional help. Therapists or counsellors can provide you with coping strategies and tools to manage your mental health effectively. Seeking assistance is a step towards taking control of your well-being and building a strong foundation for your future.

resources for

# LINE MANAGERS



## OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING FROM GOV.UK

To find out more about off-the-job training and how to record it, access further information [here](#) (pdf, 55 pages).



## TIPS FROM A TRAINING PROVIDER

Lifetime provides inside information [here](#).



## AOA INSIGHTS

Read AoA's latest insights report to find out more about the apprentice community, [here](#).



## MANAGING AN APPRENTICE

From Government Communication Service (GCS). Adapt [this handy guide](#) to suit your needs.



## CATCH UP ON VIMEO

Did you miss our webinar 'How coaching skills can help line managers'? [Watch it now](#).



## MENTAL HEALTH

On [AoA Learn](#), partners can access mental health resources which are available at the click of a button.

### **More resources from Skills Builder -**

Feedback is essential for both early careers talent to grow and managers to effectively guide them. The guide offers a four-step framework for giving clear and impactful essential skills feedback, along with practical examples.

**[Download 'Framing Feedback: Supporting Early Talent to Succeed'](#)**.



# how effective are you as a MANAGER?



## INSTRUCTIONS:

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 for each statement, where:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

## QUESTIONS:

## RATING SCALE:

1 2 3 4 5

I regularly schedule one-on-one meetings with my apprentices to discuss their progress and concerns.

I provide clear and constructive feedback to help my apprentices improve their skills.

I encourage my apprentices to take on challenging tasks that stretch their abilities.

I am familiar with the specific learning objectives and off-the-job training requirements of each apprentice's programme.

I actively create opportunities for my apprentices to network.

I ensure that my apprentices have access to the resources they need for their learning and development.

I am approachable and make time to address any concerns or questions my apprentices may have.

I celebrate the achievements and milestones of my apprentices.

I advocate for my apprentices within the organisation and help them gain visibility.

I encourage a culture of continuous learning and improvement within my team.

I ensure the workload aligns with my apprentices' programmes.

I actively promote and support the additional needs of apprentices including mental health and well-being.

I foster a collaborative environment where apprentices can learn from their peers and other team members.

I regularly assess the workload of my apprentices to ensure a balance between work and learning.

I actively seek feedback from my apprentices on how I can better support their development.

# how effective are you as a MANAGER?



## SCORING GUIDE

Add up your scores from all 15 questions to get your total.

- **60-75 points: Exceptional Apprentice Manager**

You're doing an outstanding job supporting your apprentices! Your approach fosters a positive learning environment and helps apprentices thrive. Keep up the excellent work and consider sharing your best practices with other managers.

- **45-59 points: Effective Apprentice Manager**

You're on the right track with your apprentice management skills. There's room for improvement, but you're providing good support. Focus on areas where you scored lower to enhance your effectiveness.

- **30-44 points: Developing Apprentice Manager**

You have a foundation to build upon, but there's significant room for improvement. Review the areas where you scored lower and create an action plan to enhance your support for apprentices.

- **15-29 points: Needs Improvement**

Your current approach may not be providing adequate support for your apprentices. It's crucial to reassess your management style and seek additional training or guidance on effectively managing apprentices.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Reflect on your scores and identify areas where you can improve.
2. Discuss your results with your peers or supervisor to gain additional insights.
3. Create an action plan to address any weak areas.
4. Consider seeking additional training or resources on apprentice management.
5. Retake this quiz in 3-6 months to track your progress.

Remember, effective apprentice management is an ongoing process. By continually striving to improve, you're not only helping your apprentices succeed but also contributing to the overall success of your organisation and the apprenticeship programme.



# THANK YOU



We're truly grateful to our partner organisations for championing the apprenticeship journey with us.

Together, we're crafting more than just skills – we're shaping future leaders and innovators.

**Here's to the bright futures we're building and the success stories yet to unfold. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey!**

## WITH THANKS TO

All of AoA's Founding Partners, Advisory Partners and Corporate Partners

Amazon

AoA's Apprentice Council

AoA Members

Bellway Homes

KPMG

Thames Water

Some contributions may have been edited for length and/or clarity.