

The Apprenticeship Training Agency

The National Skills Academy for Health's Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) is specially designed to support employers by directly employing and managing individuals who wish to undertake an apprenticeship.

The distinctive feature of the ATA model is that it is the ATA which acts as the apprentice's employer, placing them with a host employer and coordinating their training through approved training providers. This allows the host employer to enjoy the advantages of an apprentice whilst alleviating the administrative overhead.

What support do we provide?

You will have a dedicated Local Skills Coordinator who will:

- Agree employment requirements for the Apprenticeship roles with the host employer
- Agree values-based questioning with the employer for Apprentices to check their values and commitment to work within a care environment
- Advertise the available job roles through the National Apprenticeship Service website to identify potential candidates and collate application forms
- Carry out initial face-to-face interviews with each candidate and draw up a short list of suitable candidates to put forward for interview with the host employer
- Liaise with the agreed training provider to ensure that the training provided will be delivered in an effective and timely manner with full support provided for the apprentice
- Complete all DBS and Occupational Health checks for the apprentice as required, (at cost price to the host employer)
- Provide all HR services for the apprentice including dealing with any disciplinary issues that may arise during the term of the Apprenticeship
- Liaise with the host employer and Apprentice to mediate a resolution to any issues that may be affecting the apprentices performance within the placement
- Provide the option of reallocating the apprentice to a different placement with another employer if the host employer /apprentice relationship isn't working
- Ensure that a full initial assessment is completed by the training provider to identify the apprentices learning needs
- Ensure that the qualification is at the correct level for the apprentice to achieve in a timely manner
- Closely monitor the apprentice's journey to check that adequate progression is being made by the apprentice throughout their Apprenticeship.
- Provide a single point of contact for employer and apprentice throughout the term of the Apprenticeship

Who can use the ATA Services?

Our ATA is open to all healthcare employers across the NHS, independent and voluntary sectors.

Many smaller and medium-sized employers find the ATA model helpful as they often don't have the time to dedicate to taking on an apprentice and all of the management responsibilities that come with it. It also allows them to reduce the risk to the company in case they are not able to sustain the placement or the apprentice is not suitable for any reason.

Larger employers can also benefit from the model as it allows them to use their resources as effectively as possible, helping to ensure that they have the range and numbers of staff they need whilst balancing the annual budget.

Apprenticeship wage rates:

The current National minimum wage figures as stated below show that if an apprentice is 16-18 then they will be paid a minimum of £2.73 per hour until they reach their 19th birthday therefore if is a learner is still under 19 and their length of stay on the apprenticeship goes over 1 year they are still only entitled to £2.73.

(Figures correct until October 2015)

Age	First Year	After the First Year
16-18	£2.73	£2.73
19-20	£2.73	£5.13
21+	£2.73	£6.50

How much will the training cost?

As long as the apprentice meets the eligibility criteria the Apprenticeship can be fully funded. Your Local Skills Coordinator can advise on current funding availability.

Apprenticeship Training Agency costs:

The cost of using the ATA is made up of:

- The weekly wage agreed for the apprentice. This must be at least the current national minimum hourly rate of pay for apprentices (see above), but the host employer can choose to pay more if they wish to. This would be discussed and agreed in advance
- A management fee of £975 for National Skills Academy for Health to ensure the smooth running of the placement. If the apprenticeship lasts more than a 12-months the fee would be applied pro-rata for the additional months
- VAT charged at the current rate
- Charges for a DBS check and Occupational Health check if these are required by the host employer

Your Local Skills Coordinator will be happy to discuss the ATA costs with you in detail.

How are the fees paid?

At the commencement of the agreement, the host employer pays fees for the first 3 months in advance with the remainder of the total cost being paid at quarterly intervals.

Is there any funding available to help with the cost?

Yes, if the apprentice is aged between 16-24 years of age and is a new member of staff we can help you apply for an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) worth £1,500 for each apprentice you take on. This grant is to support small employers who would not otherwise be able to afford to take on an apprentice and is available until the end of December 2014. There are a number of eligibility criteria attached to the grant which we would go through when we support you with your application. You would normally receive this money between 6-12 weeks after the apprenticeship starts. The grant will be paid to the training provider who will then pass the payment on to you.

What do I do next if I would like to use the ATA to employ an apprentice?

Contact your Local Skills Coordinator who will be able to answer your questions and support you through the whole process. For further information or to arrange an initial meeting with your Local Skills Coordinator, email information@nsahealth.org.uk or call 020 7391 7173.