

# EE EXPRESS

Yeovil College's quarterly update on changes, developments and news surrounding Apprenticeships.

Dear Employer,

We hope that you, your staff and all your families are staying safe and well and are adapting to new ways of working in what is our 'new normal'. If you have taken on a new apprentice(s) this academic year, we hope that they are settling in well and are becoming a valuable member of your team.

This week is National Apprenticeship Week (one of our favourite times of the year in the Employer Engagement team) and we wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing hard work and support for your apprentices, throughout what has been a challenging year. We are so proud to be working with such supportive employers and our colleagues in the assessing teams report back that the majority of apprentices have shown real resilience and flexibility, maintaining their college studies alongside changes to usual work patterns. Apprentices are a hugely important part of Yeovil College and despite the challenges presented by Covid, we are heartened by the continued uptake and interest in apprenticeships from both potential apprentices and employers.

Here is a message from our Principal & CEO, Mark Bolton, on apprenticeships at Yeovil College.

## [National Apprenticeship Video](#)

You have hopefully been receiving the regular email updates from Paul Sealey, our Director of Employer Engagement, which have included the latest information on how the college is adapting and useful links in relation to the pandemic and your business. If you have not been receiving these, we would ask that you contact your Apprenticeship Co-Ordinator, who will look into this for you.

We have also collated some of the links below, along with updating you on a few other areas, which may be of interest.

### **New Apprentice Bonus Payments**

You're probably already aware of the government's new apprentice bonus payments, which have now been extended until 31st March 2021. Lots of employers are already taking advantage of the bonus scheme and the benefits currently being offered when taking on a new apprentice - the extension to the scheme is very welcome and is making training an apprentice more affordable for many companies. You are eligible for the payments if you take on a new apprentice before the end of March and the bonuses apply to all industry areas and can equate to an additional £2,000 of funding per apprentice (depending on apprentice age group).

Full details of the scheme and eligibility can be found here: [Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have taken on a new apprentice since 1st August but have not yet applied for your bonus, you'll need to log in to your Apprenticeship Service account and provide a few details about your company and the apprenticeship programme. To apply for your bonus, log in via this link: [https://engage.apprenticeships.gov.uk/Incentives\\_ApplyNow](https://engage.apprenticeships.gov.uk/Incentives_ApplyNow)

We are unable to access this funding on your behalf, so please make sure you don't miss out!

### **Links giving useful information relating to COVID-19**

- Please [click here](#) to read about the Support Available For Your Business.
- Please [click here](#) to read the Government Advice For Apprentices & Employers.
- Please [click here](#) to read Employment Advice.

### **Apprentice National Minimum Wage Rate Update**

It was announced before Christmas that the National Minimum Wage rates are set to increase as of 1st April 2021. This affects both the National Minimum Wage for apprentices and also those who are both aged 19+ and in the second year of their apprenticeship. The NMW for apprentices will rise from £4.15 per hour to £4.30.

For information on the changes to wage rates (including changes for specific age groups), please visit [National Living Wage increase to protect workers' living standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have any queries at all about what you should be paying your apprentice, please don't hesitate to contact your Apprenticeship Co-Ordinator - they will be happy to help.

### **Free Training Courses from 'The Skills Toolkit' which can be used for Off the Job Training as well as boosting existing employees' skills:**

The government have collated a selection of free e-learning courses to help improve individual's skills and help boost their confidence in the world of work. The courses could be used to count towards apprentices' Off the Job Training and will contribute to their development in the workplace.

[The Skills Toolkit – Free digital courses to help you progress in work and boost your job prospects \(campaign.gov.uk\)](https://www.campaign.gov.uk)

### **Could you help a redundant apprentice in your business?**

Whilst we have been relatively lucky in this respect at the college, there are unfortunately some apprentices out there who have been made redundant as a result of the pandemic and many of them are more experienced with developed skills and knowledge. Hiring a redundant apprentice can help bridge skills gaps and develop your business and provide a quick return on investment. If you have the opportunity within your organisation to help an apprentice complete their training programme, please contact your Apprenticeship Co-Ordinator in the first instance to enquire about any redundant Yeovil College apprentices. The government have also launched an Apprentice Redundancy Support Service, which you can register for to receive alerts about work ready apprentices.

For more information: [Education Skills Funding Agency \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk)

### **Understanding the benefits of having 19+ apprentices in your business**

For some employers, the thought of having a 19+ apprentice is tricky, whether it's because of the cost of training and employing an older apprentice or the thought of having a less 'mouldable' apprentice. However, apprenticeships are open to all age groups now and 19+ apprentices often really are worth their weight in gold. We work with numerous 19+ apprentices who have used the apprenticeship as a way to facilitate a career change and as an opportunity to get into their chosen industry and the extension of the bonus payments presents an ideal opportunity to consider a mature apprentice.

Here are just a few of the reasons we think older apprentices make great additions to a team:

- Life experience, used to being in the workplace and understand the commitment of employment.
- Bring lots of transferable skills and experience with them that make them more able to hit the ground running.
- Often are very dedicated to their learning and achieving their qualification.
- Less apprehensive about asking questions and sharing their own ideas.
- Legally able to work 40+ hours per week.
- Ready to start - not bound to the academic year schedule due to existing education.

### **Social Media**

Don't forget to follow all the Yeovil College social media channels. Find us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn using @YeovilCollege. The Apprenticeship Team are on Twitter with daily updates - @YC\_Apprentices.

Keep an eye on our social media channels to find out what we are up to during National Apprenticeship Week this week and if you want to do a shout out for one of your apprentices who has continued to perform amazingly throughout the last year, then please let us know and don't forget to tag us in your posts! We love seeing what our apprentices and employers are getting up to!

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to let you know that your Apprenticeship Co-Ordinators are always here to answer any questions you may have during this uncertain time and we want to re-assure that we will do all we can to support you and your Apprentice/s now and in the future. We may not be able to have as much face-to-face contact as usual, but the team are more than happy to arrange video meetings to catch up, if needed. Either contact your Apprenticeship Co-Ordinator directly or email the team on [apprenticeships@yeovil.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@yeovil.ac.uk).

Thank you again for your ongoing support of apprenticeships - we couldn't do this without you!

Kind regards

The Employer Engagement Team @ Yeovil College