

Young Apprenticeships - Guide To Successful Delivery



Young Apprenticeships is a fantastic programme for 14-16 year olds and its success is largely dependent on lead partners and colleges who co-ordinate and deliver it.

Our evaluation of recent programmes identified many examples of successful delivery and good practice which we would like to share with you in this guide.

Ingredients of a successful Young Apprenticeship partnership - 1. Effective teamwork and communications between all partners

Effective and regular communications is essential for the partnership to be a success. All partners must:

- be dedicated and committed to the programme
- understand and have knowledge of the programme
- set clear targets
- are student-centred

A lead partner whom we interviewed concisely sums up:
"Success is everybody, not just one part!"

In practice, this means the following:

- Schools are flexible with their timetable, inform the rest of the partnership of any key dates such as exams early on, and take an interest in what the learner is doing by visiting them at college/placement.
- Employers work with the lead partner and provide feedback on how the learner is doing especially if any issues arise.
- YA co-ordinators undertake placement visits to ensure that students are settling in and completing their progress reviews and diaries.
- Lead partners regularly liaise with the employer even if just for 5 or 10 minutes. Employers generally prefer lead partners to keep in regular contact with them and provide an update.. It is also a chance for lead partners to check that learners are doing what they should be doing on their placement i.e. that they are not doing menial tasks but are stimulated and learning about industry.
- School and employer partners report attendance issues.
- The lead partner provides the employer with a toolkit that comprises information about:-
 - the programme

Tip: Hold regular breakfast meetings with employers as this provides an opportunity to discuss what the learner needs to cover on their placement as well as what support employers can provide to reinforce learning at college. It is also a great opportunity for lead partners to hear how they can further support employers.

- key skills and experience that need to be developed by the student during their placement
- contact details including the school
- contact details in case of issues or concerns
- a copy of the risk assessment document which states what the student can and cannot do
- copies of letters sent to parents.
- Provide the employer with a detailed plan of what needs to be covered at work as well as discussions with the employer about what the learner is doing at college so that employers can reinforce this in the work place.

Lead partners need to be effective communicators and co-ordinators in order to facilitate communications with all partners involved, as this is critical to the success of the Young Apprenticeship programme.

Commenting on their lead partner, one college partner told People 1st:

"I don't think the partnership would be as successful without the work they (the lead) put in...its constant communications...they are proactive, provide us with the information we need, are there for the students and know them all. They have a very good relationship with the schools and employers."



2. Support and Selection

Selecting and recruiting the right candidate for the Young Apprenticeship programme is essential. The learner has to be committed, enthusiastic and have a genuine interest in the course.

Based on the findings of our recent evaluation of the Young Apprenticeship programme, People 1st recommends a combination of the following selection and criteria methods¹:

- Good behavioural and attendance record
- Numeracy and literacy tests
- School reports and SATs results
- Aptitude tests
- Interview – informal (ideally the lead partner and college tutor should be present)
- Taster days (at college where tutors and Young Apprenticeship learners are present)

Tip: Keep the interview quite informal and be supportive. The main traits to look for are enthusiasm and a real desire to do the course *"the most important thing we are looking for in the interview is that they want to do it"* (Lead partner)

Once the right learner is selected, it is equally important to support the learners throughout their course.

¹ Please note that there are formal set criteria for the selection of Young Apprenticeship candidates but the above were highlighted in the research as particularly useful.

We would suggest the following:***Lead partner support***

- Formal visits to all learners (ideally weekly or twice a month)
- Monitoring attendance and liaison with schools regarding any issues
- Provision of uniform and equipment
- Additional literacy and numeracy / ICT support
- Where the college is the lead partner– access to the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) with computers and specific vocationally related learning packages
- Career progression advice
- Review learners on a regular basis at college and on work placement
- Termly reports

School support

- Provide access to a computer at lunch time or after school
- A dedicated co-ordinator for vocational subjects
- Support co-ordinator in liaising with the learner and providing placement visits.
- Provide extra help with maths and English as well as catch-up sessions for any other subjects missed
- Pastoral support if needed

Employer support

- Talk to the learner before they start the placement – see what they want to get out of it and set out your company's expectations.
- Have a uniform and locker room arranged for learners before they arrive so they feel welcomed.
- Arrange tasks for them in advance and assign a mentor or buddy as well as someone who is responsible for them .
- Keep the tasks interesting and varied.
- Place the learner in a department where there is a strong manager who will take the time to teach them and not use them as another pair of hands. The department manager needs to have a genuine desire to work with and support the learner.

Potential drop outs can be prevented or detected early on if continued support is provided from the start.

"If it's not working for them (the learner) it needs to be picked up early and they need to be put on a route that is right for them. We shouldn't be as worried about retention rates but doing what is best for the learners"

Comment from a lead partner.



3. Engage the learner

Teaching methods that engage and stimulate young learners are vital to the success of the Young Apprenticeship programme.

They should be a combination of the following to provide young learners with variety throughout the day:

- Practical tasks
- Teaching that is personalised and centred on the student
- Relevant learning related to the work placement
- Focus on practical problem-solving and real life examples
- Demonstrations
- Computer tests and research
- Access to different tutors to expose learner to different styles of teaching
- Learners treated as professionals and as part of a team

Students are more responsive and motivated if they are incentivised:

- Prize incentives - e.g. £10 voucher of their choice if their attendance record is 90% and over.
- Celebrating success – e.g. hosting a dinner event prepared by the learner for parents and teachers
- Enter students for national and local awards.

Tips: Take the learner on educational trips and visits to broaden their subject knowledge, and organise employability workshops for students before their work placement.

Mix learners from different schools and put YA learners in groups of older students so they can benefit from their wisdom and experience.

Involve learners in a practical task at the start of class, ideally talking to them continuously for a maximum of 10 minutes. Workshop style lessons work well – split the lesson up into 3-5 sections so it is broken up by activities.

Encourage learners to practice what they have learned at home e.g. set the table at Christmas/Sunday lunch and take a picture to bring back to class

Provide learners with a polo shirt with their name and school/college logo on. It will give them a group identity and sense of importance.

Ensure that lessons include tasks for students to complete within a certain timescale so that they can experience the pressure they can expect at work, a certain time frame as is the case in industry.



“It is essential that all partners are learner focused so the learners grow as people and come away with knowledge and confidence” (Sharon Cooper, Tutor at Thames Valley University)

4. Offer an interesting and real learning experience

A fundamental part of the Young Apprenticeship is that the work experience needs to be interesting and a real learning experience.



For a successful work placement:

- Employers should vary the activities that learners do e.g. vary the time it takes to complete tasks, move learners to different departments so that they can work with different members of staff.
- Have a work place buddy/mentor assigned to the learner so they have someone to learn from and someone they can approach if they have any problems.
- Place the Young Apprentice with different employers so that they learn different skills and experience different facets of the industry (unless the learner is especially keen to stay with the same employer).
- Provide the employer with a draft training plan that follows a scheme of work with examples of activities they can do with young learners in the workplace. This will help ensure that what the learners do in the college is being reinforced in the workplace.
- Employers need to be prepared for learners so they feel expected – e.g. have tasks ready for them, have their uniform and locker prepared

Tips: Allow the learners to take ownership of their work experience

Employers should be positive and patient with the learner and get their feedback regularly.

Where possible, the lead partner should try to match the learners to the work placement. For instance, more confident students are better suited in larger kitchens, those who are a little unsure or not so confident should be put them somewhere quieter.

5. Partner buy-in

For the Youth Apprenticeship programme to be a success, school and employer partners need to be fully bought into the programme.

Partners need to remind schools, learners and parents of the following benefits of the Young Apprenticeship programme. The learner will:

- leave school with a level 2 qualification
- obtain industry experience and employability skills
- have a better chance of getting a part time job or a full time Apprenticeship

Schools need to play an active part in the programme which would include:

- visiting the learners at college
- attending steering group meetings
- having a positive approach to the programme
- supporting the student in school

- gain hands-on practical experience
- be motivated because they are doing something they enjoy

The Young Apprenticeship provides an alternative to the traditional GCSE route which may not suit all learners.



It is important for the school to have a designated Young Apprenticeship champion. Ideally this person should be a 14-19 co-ordinator or senior staff member with an understanding and, where possible, an interest in the industry. This will help ensure that the school plays an active role in the Young Apprenticeship programme.

To promote the Young Apprenticeship programme to employers, lead partners need to communicate the benefits of the scheme.

We would suggest the following:

- Point out that there is a massive skills shortage and if local businesses are linked to local colleges through a Young Apprenticeship programme, they can recruit locally rather than spend money on recruiting nationally/internationally.
- Provide employers with good practice case studies of successful Young Apprenticeship learners.

Tips: Nominate a single contact for communicating with employers.

Only communicate with employers when necessary because they are very busy. A lead partner, Peter Sale from Hillingdon Training Limited says: *"bringing them into discussions that they don't need to be part of is not good practice"*

Before the learner begins their work placement, the lead partner and employer should meet to discuss which optional units from the qualification are most relevant for the employer. The employer also needs to understand what learners are covering at college so this can be reinforced in the workplace