

APPRENTICESHIPS: A Practical Showcase For Employers In Essex

Employers... enjoy this short, practical resource, designed to share facts and links to help you to understand where, and how, apprenticeships might work for your business plans. We have chatted to Essex businesses who outline how, as employers, they have introduced apprenticeships and experienced benefits first-hand.

Do watch the video clips to hear how apprenticeships work for Essex-based businesses Leonardo, ARC Systems and Rose Builders.

[Need to know the basics of how apprenticeships work?](#)

Apprenticeship Basics To Get You Started

Who can work as an apprentice in my business?

Apprenticeships are a fantastic option covering hundreds of job roles for employers to consider, whether recruiting a new member of staff or thinking about reskilling or upskilling an existing member of staff.

They are suitable for anyone aged 16+ with no upper age limit. Apprenticeships last for at least 12 months and an apprentice must be employed and have a contract of employment.

Can an apprenticeship be part-time?

Most apprenticeships are full-time (at least 30 hours per week) but part-time flexibilities are available (from 16+ hours per week).

What about the training?

Apprenticeships include on-the-job and off-the-job training to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be competent and effective. Apprentices typically spend 80% of their time on the job, learning and gaining experience, and 20% off-the-job training (think of this as study time), which may be at the workplace, a college, or with a training provider.

“A recent apprentice was in her 40’s and has gone from strength to strength”



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“Apprenticeships work across the company, we have one in accounts and also IT solutions, plus in the past I have had business admin apprentices too”

Joanne, ARC Systems

Let’s Talk About Apprenticeship Benefits

SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprise) employers in England gain numerous benefits from apprentices as part of their workforce. Here’s what you should know:

1. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Tailored Training: Working with your approved training provider you can agree adaptations to the apprentices training according to the needs of your business.

Skill Gaps: Apprentices can be trained to fill specific current and future skill gaps within the company, improving overall efficiency and business resilience.

receive incentive payments for hiring apprentices, especially those aged 16 to 18.

Reduced National Insurance Contributions: Organisations hiring apprentices under the age of 25 are exempt from paying employer National Insurance contributions for them.

3. WORKFORCE GROWTH

Future Leaders: Apprentices can become highly skilled and loyal employees, reducing the need for external recruitment.

Diverse Talent Pool: Apprenticeships open up opportunities to bring fresh perspectives and ideas to businesses.

4. BUSINESS PRODUCTIVITY

Increased Productivity: Studies have shown that businesses

employing apprentices often see an increase in productivity.

Retention Rates: Apprentices tend to stay longer with the business, reducing turnover disruption and costs.

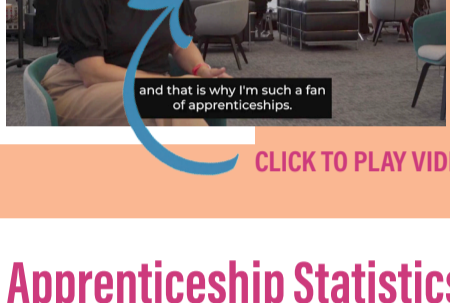
5. BRAND IMAGE AND CSR

Reputation: Being known as an employer that invests in talent can improve a company’s reputation and make it more attractive to the local community, clients and employees.

6. SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

Support Networks: SMEs have access to support from apprenticeship training providers and government services, which help simplify the process of hiring and managing apprentices. See the helpful links section.

[Estimate funding available for training](#)

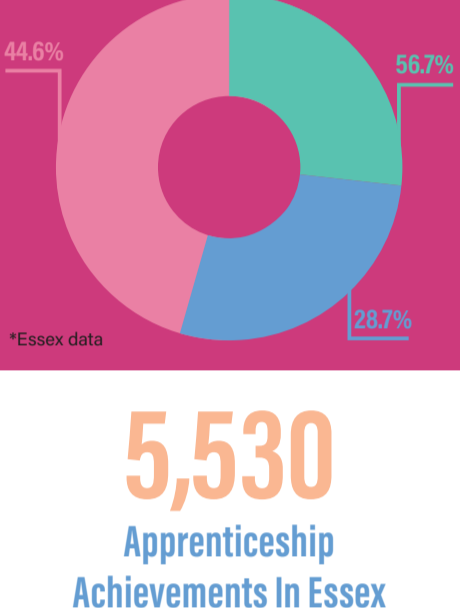
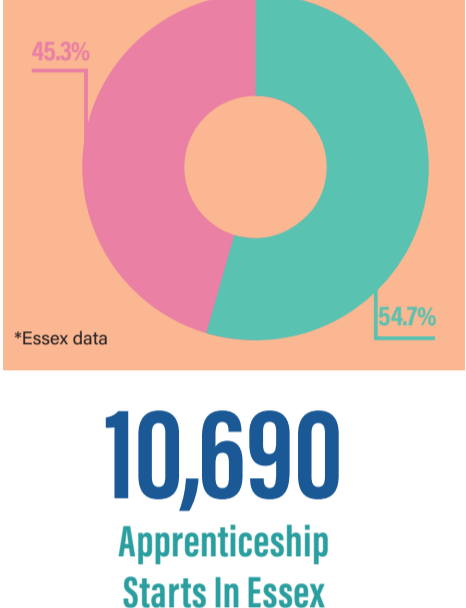
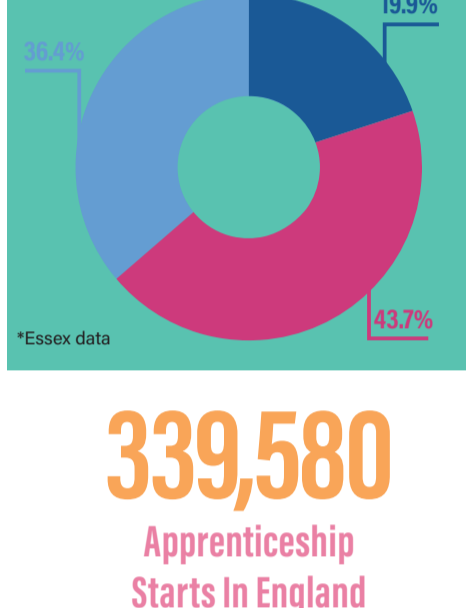


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“I am a huge advocate for apprenticeships as I feel that they are part of the solution to many of our challenges that we have around resourcing, succession planning and knowledge transfer.”

Emily, Leonardo

Apprenticeship Statistics 2023-2024



339,580
Apprenticeship
Starts In England

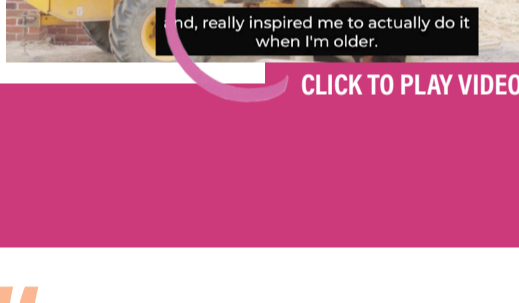
10,690
Apprenticeship
Starts In Essex

5,530
Apprenticeship
Achievements In Essex

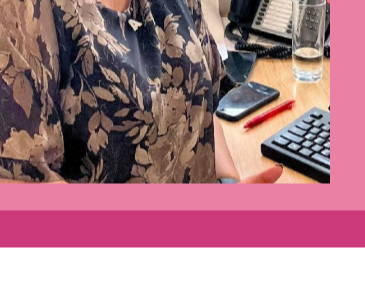
£20,000
Average Apprentice
Salary In Essex

BASILDON
Essex Location With
The Most Starts

Insights From A Family Firm



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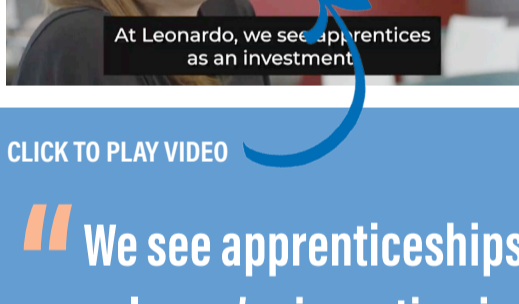
“Apprentices bring skills to us and they’re learning new technology and we’ve got a lot of skilled people that actually want to pass on their trades and knowledge”

Claire, Rose Builders

“We are getting more apprentice applicants each year, so we know we are doing something right! The demand from young people is there and so I would absolutely encourage any employer to consider an apprenticeship scheme.”

Emily, Leonardo

Are There Guidelines On Pay For Apprentices?



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When recruiting a new apprentice, employers decide on the salary scale, so long as it complies with National Minimum Wage requirements for the individual. You could look at similar apprenticeship vacancies to see what other employers are offering in their package.

For Current National Minimum Wage Rates

If you are offering an apprenticeship to an existing member of staff, it would not be expected that their terms and conditions would be changed. Many employers build in more incremental rises as the apprentice brings more value to the organisation and increase their responsibilities.

“We see apprenticeships as an investment. We’re investing in young people, we’re investing in the business and we’re investing in our future”

Emily, Leonardo

Little Known Facts

1 Employers are not required to pay National Insurance contributions for apprentices under the age of 25 on earnings below the higher tax rate.

2 Effective from April 2025, the employer’s NI contribution rate is 15%, and the threshold for contributions lowered from £9,100 to £5,000 per annum.

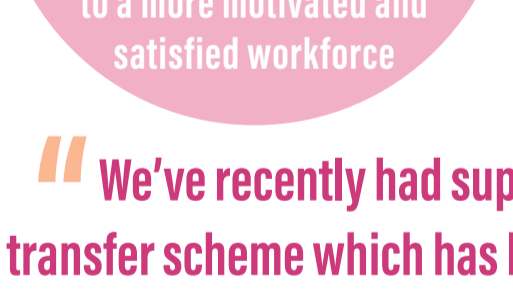
EXAMPLE CALCULATION:

- Annual Salary of Apprentice: £25,000
- New Secondary Threshold: £5,000
- Earnings Subject to NI Contributions: £25,000 - £5,000 = £20,000
- Employer’s NI Contribution Rate: 15%
- Employer’s NI Contributions Without Exemption: £20,000 x 15% = £3,000
- Cost Saving with NI Exemption:

- As the employer is exempt from paying NI contributions for this apprentice, they would save £3,000 per year under the rate effective from April 2025.

SUMMARY:

- Annual Salary: £25,000
- Employer NI Contributions Saved: £3,000



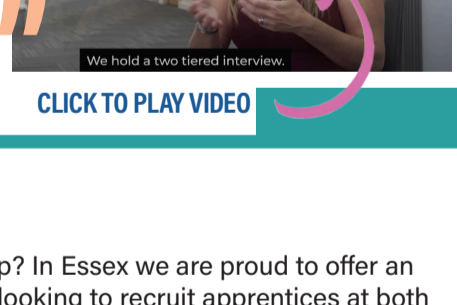
The Essex Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service

The Essex Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service helps large businesses to transfer up to 50% of their unspent apprenticeship levy to help other businesses with apprenticeship training costs. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) usually pay 5% towards the cost of apprenticeship training for apprentices aged 22 and over, but levy transfers cover these costs entirely.

[Visit the EALTS website for more information](#)

“We’ve recently had support from the Essex levy transfer scheme which has been brilliant, it actually isn’t expensive for employers to hire an apprentice”

Joanne, ARC Systems



[CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

Accessible Apprenticeships

Are you the right business to make a difference with an accessible apprenticeship? In Essex we are proud to offer an inclusive programme offering a free tailored ‘matching’ services for businesses looking to recruit apprentices at both Level 2 and level 3. We cover 10 diverse industries and provide access to over 50 apprenticeship standards, ensuring you find the best fit for your business needs. We aim to do this by working with our SEND schools and colleges across Essex to identify talented individuals with clear aspirations to undertake an apprenticeship pathway.

[Visit the Essex Opportunities website for more information](#)

Helpful Links

INTERESTED IN RECRUITING YOUR FIRST APPRENTICE BUT NEED MORE HELP? We’ve got you...

- ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL EMPLOYER HUB SUPPORT**
- REQUEST AN AMBASSADOR BUDDY** Be linked up to an employer with apprentices. Ambassadors volunteer their time to talk to other businesses
- HOW TO GUIDE: Recruit your first apprentice**
- Understand more about [skills improvement plans in Essex](#)

GET FREE HELP AND SUPPORT

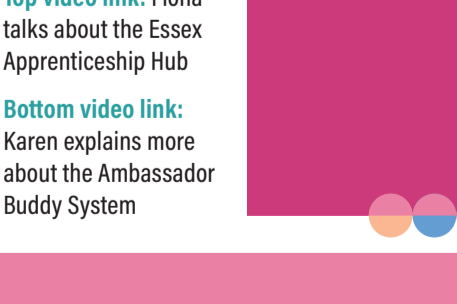
- CALL:** 08000 150 400
- EMAIL:** nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

- Find an [apprenticeship training provider](#) who will support you through what is needed

- ASPIRATIONAL ESSEX FOR EMPLOYERS ACCREDITATION:** get recognised and share your apprenticeship journey. Taking on apprentices and utilising the Essex Levy Transfer Service count towards becoming an accredited employer in Greater Essex.



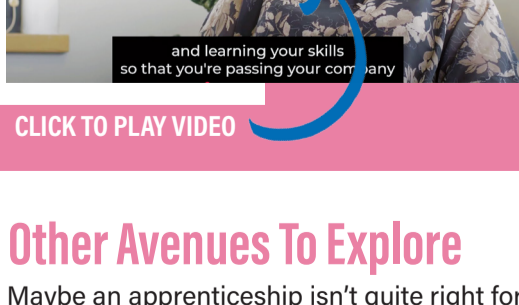
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Top video link: Fiona talks about the Essex Apprenticeship Hub

Bottom video link: Karen explains more about the Ambassador Buddy System



[CLICK TO PLAY VIDEO](#)

“So if you’re an employer that hasn’t dealt with apprenticeships before, I would encourage you just to go for it – it is a lot easier than people think it is and there’s lots of support out there”

Claire, Rose Builders

Other Avenues To Explore

Maybe an apprenticeship isn’t quite right for your business at the moment. There are some alternative ways to boost your workforce such as [providing T Level industry placements](#) that may suit your business needs.

Engaging your schools, colleges, universities and the wider skills system can benefit your business in many ways and there are alternative options available. Have a look at some [wider case studies](#) and [employer insights](#) in a guide for employers. Find out here how you can [get involved with Essex schools and colleges](#).



Contact

This apprenticeship resource for employers has been funded and developed in a partnership between the [East of England Apprenticeship Ambassador Network](#) (known as the AAN) and the [Essex County Council](#). Content from this resource can be shared more widely in the spirit of promoting information about apprenticeships, please acknowledge the source.