

Social worker degree apprenticeships

Frequently asked questions for employers



1. Can we use the apprenticeship levy for this?

Yes.

2. What does the levy cover?

The levy can only be spent on apprenticeship training and end-point assessment.

3. How is it paid and to whom?

The levy is automatically collected by government through payroll returns on a monthly basis. It then appears in an online account available to that employer. They can use it to pay their learning provider and end-point assessor. In the case of an integrated degree apprenticeship, this can be the same organisation.

4. Is any other funding available for this scheme?

Not as far as we know.

5. Who can be a social work apprentice?

In principle, anyone. Apprenticeships are open to all. However, employers may need to consider competing requests from staff wishing to undertake this apprenticeship. They will need to consider whether the candidate is capable of meeting the academic, English and maths requirements.

6. What are the qualification entry requirements?

Apprenticeships are open to all so there are no formal entry criteria. Employers and learning providers must decide whether they think a candidate is suitable and capable of completing their apprenticeship.

7. What is it going to cost me as an employer?

The government will assign a maximum funding band to the apprenticeship for the cost of training and end-point assessment. The trailblazer group has estimated that this will be the highest band, i.e. £27,000. The actual price will be subject to negotiation between the employer and their chosen learning provider. In addition you will need to pay the apprentice's salary and on-costs.

8. Is it only open to local authorities (statutory bodies)?

No. If an organisation can provide the experience and support to train an apprentice to be a fully qualified social worker, they can offer an apprenticeship.

9. Can existing employees become social worker apprentices?

Yes.

10. Can I advertise externally for social work apprentices?

Yes.

11. Do social worker apprentices have to have a new employment contract?

This is entirely up to the employer. What they do have to sign is an apprenticeship agreement with the learning provider and apprentice setting out the role of each and the programme structure. Employers also have to sign a commitment statement.

12. What is the employer's responsibility?

To employ the apprentice for a minimum of 12 months on at least 30 hours a week and allow them to undertake off-the-job learning for at least 20% of their paid working hours.

13. What happens when they qualify as a social worker?

They have successfully completed their apprenticeship and it is then up to them and their employer as to what they do next.

14. What are the implications on employment rights for the apprentice?

Apprentices are employees and so have the same rights.

15. What will their final qualification be?

A degree in social work.

16. Is this a 'generic' social worker degree?

Social worker is a regulated profession and all social workers must be trained to work with adults and children and families. The degree must conform to this requirement.

17. Is this at undergraduate or post-graduate level?

It is at undergraduate level. The job of social worker is achievable with a level 6 degree, i.e. a BA.

18. Where do apprentices undertake their placements?

This is for the employer and the learning provider to agree between them.

19. Can non-levy-paying employers access funding for the social worker apprenticeship?

Yes. The levy applies to all employers with an annual payroll bill of over £3m. Non-levy payers would pay 10% of the agreed cost of training and end-point assessment, the government pays the rest (so long as it is no more than the government-assigned cap).

20. If 20% off-the-job training (academic) is not sufficient, who will fund the additional cost?

The government sets a maximum funding band. Levy paying employers can use their levy to pay up to this maximum. Non-levy payers draw down 90% of the cost from government up to this maximum. The actual price of training and assessment is down to the employer and learning provider to negotiate.

21. Will the academic delivery be distance-learning or at a higher education institution site?

This arrangement is for the employer and learning provider to negotiate. There must be at least 20% of the apprentice's paid working hours spent in off-the-job learning. This means learning while not distracted by day-to-day work. [Government has published guidance on what this means in practice.](#)

22. What is the balance between work and study?

This arrangement is for the employer and learning provider to negotiate. There must be at least 20% of the apprentice's paid working hours spent in off-the-job learning. This means learning while not distracted by day-to-day work. [Government has published guidance on what this means in practice.](#)

23. How do I recruit an apprentice?

Recruitment methods are entirely up to the employer. Government provides an online route for employers to advertise their apprenticeships and for potential apprentices to register their interest.

24. What happens if the apprentice fails the end-point assessment?

Policy on retakes is being discussed by the trailblazer group of employers and learning providers as part of the end-point assessment strategy. This will be published by early 2018.

25. How much do I need to pay the apprentice?

There is a minimum wage for apprentices, depending on their age but employers are welcome to pay whatever they choose. Wage rates are available on the [Government website.](#)

26. How long will it take to complete?

It is estimated that the programme will take typically 36 months. Depending on individual circumstances, it could take less or more time. Learning providers can develop programmes of between 30-42 months.

27. As an employer, can I set the essential criteria?

Yes, employers will need to set essential criteria to determine who they will sponsor.

28. Do I need to take on an apprentice?

No.

29. What happens to the levy funding if I don't take on an apprentice?

Any levy payment not spent after 24 months will be reclaimed by the government.

30. What are the contractual arrangements for an apprentice (i.e. does it need to be an apprenticeship contract or a continuation of existing contract with the extension of a learning arrangement)?

This is entirely up to the employer. What they do have to sign is an apprenticeship agreement with the learning provider and apprentice setting out the role of each and the programme structure. Employers also have to sign a commitment statement. The contract must last at least as long as the apprenticeship programme to allow completion.

31. What are apprentice's employment rights?

Apprentices are employees and so have the same employment rights.

32. Who is responsible for the apprentice (i.e. practice educator/supervisor)?

This is for the employer to determine.

33. How do I procure a higher education institution to deliver the academic/assessment element of the apprenticeship?

Employers can only use learning providers who are on both the government's [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#) and the [Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations.](#)

34. Which higher education institutions (HEIs) deliver the social worker degree apprenticeship?

Once the assessment strategy has been drafted by the trailblazer group of employers and learning providers and signed off and published by government, HEIs will be able to apply to be on the [Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations](#). They will also need to be on the [Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations](#).

35. Can we work with other employers to procure a learning provider?

Yes.

36. Can we engage with other employers to ensure a viable cohort?

Yes.

37. What am I allowed to call my apprentice?

Because of the protected nature of the title of social worker, we suggest social work apprentice.

38. Can apprentices accredit prior or experiential learning and if so, what?

This will entirely depend on a learning provider's policy on accrediting prior learning. Even if they do, as a bare minimum, an apprentice must be on the programme for at least a year.

39. What assistance is available to voluntary agencies?

There is no distinction made between employers, irrespective of their sector.

40. Why is it a generic degree?

Social worker is a regulated profession and all social workers must be trained to work with adults and children and families. The degree must conform to this requirement.