

# Apprenticeship Handbook

# 2012

## Every Young Person Matters

# connexions



GREATER MERSEYSIDE



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# INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been designed to assist school and college leavers who are considering applying for Apprenticeships and other opportunities.

Your Connexions adviser at your local centre can give you up to date information on the full range of opportunities available to you. You can also contact advisers on 0800 0126 606 or by email at [personal.adviser@connexionslive.com](mailto:personal.adviser@connexionslive.com) or you can log on to

[www.connexionslive.com](http://www.connexionslive.com)

for advice and to visit the searchable database of currently available opportunities.

The application process for Apprenticeships usually takes several stages:

- Completion of an Application Form or Curriculum Vitae (CV) with a covering letter, or, apply on-line electronically
- Completion of an aptitude assessment (in most cases)
- Attending an interview
- Passing a medical (particularly for the uniformed services)

Please also bear in mind the following guidelines:

Sitting an assessment paper and passing it does not guarantee a job or a placement with an employer.

Sometimes employers with many applicants may not always advise you if you have not been successful.

**You will need to continue to visit your local Connexions Centre or check the website to keep up to date with the vacancies on offer.**

Keep your options open and don't rely solely on applying to **one** organisation for **one** job. Competition for places is quite fierce – bear in mind that each organisation receives hundreds of applications and sometimes only have a few opportunities available.

If you are unable to gain an apprenticeship of your choice – it is useful to consider applying for a college course or other training in the same occupation. This demonstrates your commitment to this area of learning and, increasingly, companies contact colleges direct when vacancies arise after their main recruitment period.

# WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

With an Apprenticeship you can train on the job, get qualified, get paid and get a career – all in one go. You'll be working in the real world, getting hands on experience and learning at the same time. There are three types and levels of Apprenticeship:

## Intermediate Level Apprenticeships

Aimed at those with a wide range of qualifications from no GCSEs right up to 5 GCSEs at A-C grade, depending on the industry. Apprentices are employed and paid a wage by their employer from day one and may also have the opportunity to move onto an Advanced Apprenticeship. Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 2 Competence Qualification (e.g. NVQ2, BTEC First, Diplomas), Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification (Technical Certificate).

## Advanced Level Apprenticeships

Advanced Level Apprenticeships are aimed at those with higher level GCSEs, A levels or International Baccalaureate and are also employed from day one. At this level, the apprenticeships usually take longer to complete but this is dependent on ability. Apprentices work towards work-based learning such as a Level 3 Competence Qualification (e.g. NVQ3, BTEC National, Diplomas), Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification (Technical Certificate).

## Higher Apprenticeships

Higher Apprenticeships are aimed at those with A levels or above. Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a Level 4 Competence Qualification (e.g. NVQ4, BTEC Higher National), Functional Skills and, in some cases, a knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree.

## Functional Skills

Apprentices are also trained in Functional Skills qualifications which encourage people to develop skills that are vital to success in the world of work. The functional skills areas are:

- Application of number
- Communication
- Improving own learning and performance
- Information technology
- Problem solving
- Working with others

## Technical Certificates

In most cases, Apprenticeships require the achievement of Technical Certificates. Technical Certificates focus on the knowledge and understanding that underpins the competencies. They may also cover wider aspects of the chosen occupation or sector. They include BTEC or City & Guilds Qualifications. They prove that the Apprentice understands the theory behind the job as well as being able to carry out the practical skills.

Connexions advisers will be able to provide you with all the information you need to make an informed choice about the opportunity to best suit you. You can however also get up to date information on Apprenticeships at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

## Sources of Employment Opportunities other than Apprenticeships

- Connexions also receive job opportunities from employers that are known as jobs with or without training
- Your local Jobcentre Plus Office can help you to find both full and part time work. You can call in to one of their offices or telephone their jobs line Jobseeker Direct - **0845 60 60 234**. Further information, including searching for work can be found on [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)
- Use the Newspapers
- Register with employment and recruitment agencies or there may be organisations in your area who help local people find work.
- Use the internet to search for vacancies with employment and recruitment agencies.

**In addition to employment opportunities**, Connexions advisers will also be able to offer other options for those considering leaving school in 2012. These include Foundation Learning and Access to Apprenticeship opportunities whereby a young person is linked to a training provider, who may also place them with an employer, and they work towards gaining accredited qualifications such as NVQ level 1 and 2 and work experience. These options are designed for those not in education, employment or training who may require a range of additional support to enable them to progress.

## Qualification Levels and Equivalents

	General Qualifications	The New Diplomas	Occupational Qualifications
Level 4 +	Degree	-	NVQ Level 4/5 BTEC Higher National
Level 3	A / AS Levels International Baccalaureate	Advanced <sup>3</sup> & Progression <sup>4</sup> Diploma	NVQ Level 3 BTEC National
Level 2	GCSE (A* - C)	Higher Diploma <sup>2</sup>	NVQ Level 2 BTEC First
Level 1	GCSE (D – G)	Foundation Diploma <sup>1</sup>	NVQ Level 1 BTEC Foundation
Entry Level	Entry Level Qualifications		

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades D-G

<sup>2</sup> Equivalent to 7 GCSEs at grades A\* - C

<sup>3</sup> Equivalent to 3.5 A Levels

<sup>4</sup> Equivalent to 2 A Levels (could be combined with A / AS Levels)

Equivalent information from: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## NVQ's (National Vocational Qualifications)

NVQs are available in over 200 vocational areas. There are 5 levels of award (see table above). Most young people who enter training at 16-17 will work towards gaining qualifications at NVQ level 2 or level 3 or equivalent qualifications.

## A Level (A) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Most schools and colleges will expect you to gain a good range of GCSEs at grades A\* to C before undertaking A levels, usually including English and Mathematics.

AS Levels form a compulsory part of a full A Level course but can also be taken as a separate qualification.

## International Baccalaureate (IB)

This international alternative to A Level study is available at a few schools and colleges and is designed for students who have at least 4 GCSEs (grades A-C). It is normally a two year course. Contact your local education authority for further details of schools delivering this qualification in your area.

## Legislation affecting the Recruitment of Young People

### National Minimum Wage

- Employers who are not offering an Apprenticeship with full training **must** pay you the National Minimum Wage. Currently **£3:68 per hour at 16/17yrs, £4:98 per hour at 18 – 20yrs, £6:08 per hour 21yrs and over.**
- The legal **Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage rate is £2.60 per hour**
- The National Minimum Wage will be increasing from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012

### Time Off for Study or Training (TOFST)

If you are not successful with your application for an apprenticeship, and still want to work and earn money, there may be some full time vacancies available which you may be interested in as an alternative option. Initially these jobs may not offer training but if you leave school and start work and you don't have 5 GCSEs (A-C) you may be entitled to reasonable *paid* time off to study or train for qualifications while you are still aged 16-17. This is known as **Time Off for Study or Training**. Please visit

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/DG\\_066260](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/OptionsAt16/DG_066260)

for further information.

### Hours of Work

If you are under 18yrs your employer should not generally ask you to work more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week (including overtime). You should also not be required to work between the hours of 11pm and 6am. There are some exceptions, but this legislation has been put in place to protect you.

### Equal Opportunities

Recruitment should be based solely on your potential to do the job and gain the qualifications. Selection is only about ensuring that the best person is picked for the job. Connexions can help you in the following ways:

- Give you information and guidance about all types of jobs
- Advice on what to study to help you find the type of career you are looking for and the type of courses to suit you.
- Put you in touch with employers or training providers.
- Discuss your ideas with your parents/carers and offer independent and factual advice.
- Support you with your application for employment and after you have found work.

If you have a health problem or disability that may affect you in the workplace there may be additional help available to support you both during the application process, at interview and once you have started work with your employer.

The Connexions Service promotes Equal Opportunities and will help and advise you if you experience a problem.

**If you have any questions about any of these issues please contact your local Connexions Centre who will advise you.**

## Parents / Carers

If you're a parent or carer of a young person in Greater Merseyside, then Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership can help you to help them achieve their best. We understand the vital role that you have in helping and supporting your child.

So, as well as helping young people, our job is also to support you, by making sure that you have the information and advice you need to support your child with the choices and decisions they face. You can talk to a Connexions Adviser at parents' and carers' evenings at school, or in your local Connexions Centre. You can also visit the Greater Merseyside Connexions parents and carers website area: [www.connexionslive.com](http://www.connexionslive.com)

## Job Search

For advice and help in preparing yourself for completing application forms, preparing CVs and going for interviews, GMCP produce a free on-line booklet called '**How to Get That Job**'. Please ask your Connexions adviser for a copy.

## Connexions Database

For opportunities on our database, please go to [www.connexionslive.com/jobs.aspx](http://www.connexionslive.com/jobs.aspx)

## National Apprenticeship Service

The National Apprenticeship Service is a website where you can find out more about Apprenticeships and search for vacancies. You can also apply for Apprenticeships using their online service.

Visit [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) to find out more.

## Contacting Connexions

To find your nearest Connexions Centre in Merseyside, please go to our website <http://www.connexionslive.com/AboutConnexions/FindUs/Default.aspx>

Or contact us anytime between 9am and 8pm for friendly advice and guidance.

Phone: **0800 0126 606**

Email: [personal.adviser@connexionslive.com](mailto:personal.adviser@connexionslive.com)

Webchat with an adviser on our website at [www.connexionslive.com](http://www.connexionslive.com) You don't need a webcam or any special software for this.

Once you've started on a college course, training programme, voluntary opportunity or into an apprenticeship or a job, please let your Connexions Personal Adviser know. Otherwise they'll just keep contacting you to try and get you fixed up!