

Guide to the Southwark Apprenticeship Standard

The Southwark Apprenticeship Standard is the new standard for quality apprenticeships established by Southwark Council in 2015. It is based on ten years of experience delivering outstanding apprenticeships in the Council and in partnership with our major contractors.

We have identified some key areas which, when properly addressed, give businesses and apprentices the best chance for a great apprenticeship.

Employers

Employers are responsible for cultivating a proper training environment in the workplace. An apprentice is contracted under the same terms as an employee and the employer has the same duties to an apprentice as to any other member of staff in their organisation. To ensure the apprentice is able to thrive in the organisation employers should provide:

Secure employment: apprenticeship frameworks last for at least 12 months. To meet the Standard, employers must provide a contract for a minimum term of 12 months.

A fair wage: we know that proper compensation is an important part of any employer-employee relationship. Apprentices are no different. We advocate for the payment of the London Living Wage as the minimum for an employee in Southwark. To meet the Standard employers must pay their apprentices LLW.

Mentoring and support: an apprentice is likely to be new, or returning, to the world of work. Therefore, an employer will need to provide proper mentoring for their apprentice to support their transition to – and completion of – the role. To meet the Standard employers must demonstrate that mentoring and support is in place for each apprentice. This may be provided within the organisation or alongside external sources.

We know that many businesses will need support to work towards the Standard. There are a range of business support options for employers in Southwark working towards the Standard. To find out more please visit www.southwark.gov.uk/apprenticeships.

Providers

What sets an apprenticeship apart from other kinds of learning on the job is the accredited training and qualification element. This is delivered by Skills Funding Agency approved training providers which may be colleges or private organisations.

Finding the right provider is an important step for any employer taking on an apprentice. To help businesses find the right provider for them we have established some guidelines for what makes a good provider. In addition to being graded by Ofsted as 'good' or 'outstanding', a good provider will have:

- Appropriate equal opportunities and health and safety policies
- Quality assured delivery plans and timetables
- Blended learning methods (a mix of on- and offline learning)
- Effective and regular learner progress reviews
- Appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment
- Induction processes with clear individual learning plans

- Facilities and resources to adequately support additional/ special learning needs
- Completion rates at or above the national average for the framework under consideration+

+We recommend that, where possible, employers opt for a provider with a completion rate of 80%.

We also recommend that employers use a provider with Direct Claim Status (DCS) for the framework they have selected. This means that the Skills Funding Agency have checked and approved their assessment and accreditation processes. Once DCS has been granted a provider can award a qualification without external approval. In some cases a framework may be new to the college. In this case, an employer may choose to ask the provider about their DCS in related frameworks. Employers should note that providers without DCS may experience a delay in drawing down funding and awarding qualifications.

To speak to someone about getting support for your business, or about choosing a provider, please contact the Local Economy Team at localeconomy@southwark.gov.uk or call 020 7525 2524.