

Apprenticeships

Guidance for wider primary and community healthcare teams in Dental, Pharmacy and Optometry



Developing people
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We can often think that primary care apprenticeships are only employed in GP practices, however there are a wider array of apprenticeships being used across the wider primary care settings including dental practices, dental laboratories, opticians, and pharmacies.

This booklet will provide you with an overview of the apprenticeships you can use in dental practices, opticians and pharmacists and provide useful hints and tips on how to start recruiting apprentices to your business.

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is on the job training leading to a national qualification, available for both new and existing staff. Anyone over the age of 16, who is not in full time education, can apply to be an apprentice.

There are different levels of apprenticeships, from intermediate and advanced to higher and degree levels.

Apprenticeships are used to develop the skills and knowledge of both new and existing employees and typically combine on-the-job training at an employer's site with off-the-job training provided by a training organisation.

What are the benefits?

Apprenticeships are a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled, and qualified workforce. Apprenticeship allow you to diversify and freshen up your workforce. 86% of employers said apprenticeships developed skills relevant to their organisation and 78% reported improved productivity.

Apprenticeships in dental practices, opticians, and pharmacies

Apprenticeships can be used to develop new and existing staff in both clinical and non-clinical roles. Apprenticeships can be used to develop skills in administration, customer service, and in specialist back-office skills, such as finance and IT. Apprenticeships are also available for roles such as:

- Dental Nurse
- Oral Health Practitioner
- Dental Practice Manager
- Orthodontic Therapist
- Laboratory Technician (dental)
- Dental Technician
- Clinical Dental Technician
- Pharmacy Technician
- Pharmacy Services Assistant
- Optical Assistant
- Optometrist

How can I access funding for apprenticeships?

There are three ways to access funding to pay for apprenticeship training, this funding does not cover salary costs you will have to fund the apprentice's salary.

- 1. Apprenticeship Levy** Employers with a pay bill over £3 million each year, pay the apprenticeship levy. Levy paying employers can spend their apprenticeship levy funding on apprenticeship training.
- 2. Reserve government co-investment** If you don't pay the apprenticeship levy you can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
- 3. Levy Transfers** Levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship (you still need to cover salary).

Grow your team

How to plan, recruit and develop apprentices



Step 1

Assess your workforce development need: identify the skills gaps of your workforce and their current qualification level relating to their role. Think about any vacancies that could be considered as a future apprentice role. Estimate how much salary funding you have to spend on apprenticeship roles.

Also speak to your regional Training Hub and STP/ICS to see what is already happening locally around apprenticeship development and how you can join in.

Step 2

Access funding: Non-levy paying employer have two ways to access funding.

- 1. Reserve government co-investment.** Where government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%. Learn more about how to reserve apprenticeship funds [here](#)
- 2. Levy Transfers.** Levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship

(you still need to cover salary). You can find out if there are any large employers interested in transferring apprenticeship levy by emailing Talentforcare@hee.nhs.uk

Step 3

Choose apprenticeship training and assessments: find a training provider who will offer the right apprenticeship qualification and assess your apprentice over the duration of their qualification.

Browse apprenticeship training and search for local providers at: [Find an Apprenticeship](#)

Step 4

Advertise a vacancy: you can work with your training provider to help with advertising and shortlisting. They can also help you identify an existing employee as well as recruit new apprentices.

Step 5

Provide ongoing support for the apprentice: including, helping new apprentices to adjust to the workplace, nominating a member of the team to be the apprentices mentor, planning workload to provide the necessary opportunities to complete practical tasks in line with training goals. Also build in time for the apprentice to receive regular assessment / workplace reviews by the training provider.



How to set up a digital service account and reserve funding

If you don't pay levy you will need to set up an account first to be able to reserve apprenticeship funding

How to create an account to manage your apprenticeships

You need to create an apprenticeship account, then you will be able to get funding to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment costs.

You will use your account to:

- get apprenticeship funding
- find, save and manage training providers
- recruit apprentices
- add and manage apprenticeships

Before setting up your apprenticeship service account, you'll need:

- an email address you have access to
- the Government Gateway login for your organisation (or you can use the accounts office reference number and employer PAYE scheme reference number if your annual pay bill is less than £3 million)
- authority to add PAYE schemes to the account
- authority to accept the employer agreement on behalf of your organisation

Create your account [HERE](#) You can also access step by step videos to help set up your account [HERE](#)

How to reserve funding

As a smaller employer, who does not pay the apprenticeship levy, you can reserve funds in the 'finance' section of your [apprenticeship service account](#). You can also give your training provider permission to reserve them on their behalf.

What you'll need

You will need to know:

- which apprenticeship standard the apprentice will be doing
- what month the apprenticeship training will start

When you can use reserved funds

The reserved funds are available to use from the month of the apprenticeship start date and the following 2 months. The reservation will expire at the end of the 3rd month if you do not use it.

Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship **standards** are being developed by employer-led groups called Trailblazers. Apprenticeship standards set out the core skills, knowledge and behaviours apprentices need to be fully competent in a role.

A full list of the new Apprenticeship Standards can be found [here](#). New Standards are being developed and approved all the time, so it's good to keep up to date.

Dental Apprenticeships

Dental Nurse

Level 3

Typical Duration 18 months

Apprentices will achieve a qualification which has been approved by the General Dental Council as meeting the requirements for entry to the professional register. On completion of this apprenticeship the apprentice can register with the General Dental Council as a qualified Dental Nurse.

Occupation Profile: Dental Nurses may work in a variety of clinical environments and the apprenticeship reflects all aspects of clinical responsibilities and duties of a dental nurse's role such as providing chairside assistance, decontamination, and patient management. Completion of the apprenticeship will allow them to register as a dental nurse with the General Dental Council. It can lead to further training as a practice manager, orthodontic therapist, oral health practitioner, dental hygienist, and dental therapist.

Laboratory Technician

Level 3

Typical Duration 24 months

Apprentices will receive a certificate of completion, which may be used for entry to the level 5 dental technician apprenticeship.

Occupation Profile: During the apprenticeship laboratory technicians (dental) will develop basic competencies in core laboratory skills, such as casting and trimming dental models, making bite blocks and specula trays, and take part in the bespoke manufacturing of the full range of dentures, crown, bridges, and orthodontic appliances.

Orthodontic Therapist

Level 4

Typical Duration 13 months

You must be a Registered General Dental Council dental nurse, dental hygienist, dental therapist, or dental technician prior to commencing this apprenticeship.

Apprentices will achieve a GDC accredited level 4 Orthodontic Therapist qualification as part of the apprenticeship.

Occupation Profile: The broad purpose of the occupation is to become a registered professional who fits, adjusts, and removes braces to patient's teeth, working to the prescription of an orthodontist or dentist competent in orthodontics. They provide holistic advice on maintaining oral and general health for patients who are undergoing orthodontic treatment.

Dental Practice Manager

Level 4

Typical Duration 24 months

Apprentices must complete a Level 4 Certificate in Leadership & Management as part of the apprenticeship.

Occupation Profile: The Practice Manager is responsible for managing all non-clinical aspects within a specified practice/s to achieve excellent patient care, quality, cost and delivery performance in line with practice strategy, goals and values. The Practice Manager leads the team by providing support and direction to enhance performance, skills and knowledge of all practice staff.

Oral Health Practitioner

Level 4

Typical Duration 14-18 months

To become an Oral Health Practitioner, you must already be a registered dental nurse

Occupation Profile: Oral Health Practitioners have a high degree of autonomy and have responsibility for working directly with patients performing a range of oral health preventive procedure which involve working in a patient's mouth when carrying out oral hygiene instruction and topical fluoride application. Oral Health Practitioners also undertake a wide range of preventive health strategies such as smoking cessation advice, providing dietary counselling both to individuals and groups. It may lead to training as dental hygienist or dental therapist or wider roles in health promotion.

Dental Technician

Level 5

Typical Duration 36 months

As part of the apprenticeship all apprentices will complete a Level 5 Foundation Degree Science in Dental Technology qualification. On completion of the apprenticeship the apprentice can apply to register with the General Dental Council as a Dental Technician.

Occupation Profile: Dental Technicians design, manufacture, modify and repair custom-made dental appliances. Typically, the work is undertaken in a dental laboratory on a prescription from a dentist. The work can broadly be split into crown & bridge, dentures and orthodontics; most labs specialise in one or two of these areas but during the apprenticeship Dental Technicians will develop competency across all disciplines from start to finish before choosing if/where to specialise once they are qualified.



Clinical Dental Technician

Level 5

Typical Duration 24 months

You must be a GDC registered dental technician to do this apprenticeship. As part of the apprenticeship all apprentices will complete a Level 5 Foundation Degree Science in Dental Technology qualification.

On completion of the apprenticeship the apprentice can apply to register with the General Dental Council as a Dental Technician.

Occupation Profile: Clinical Dental Technicians (CDT) are General Dental Council (GDC) registered dental professionals who provide a complete dentures direct to patients and other dental devices such as partial dentures to the prescription of a dentist. The CDT role fits between that of a dental technician and a dentist. Like a dental technician, they are able to make dentures in a laboratory but, unlike a dental technician, they have direct contact with patients.

Pharmacy Apprenticeships

Pharmacy Service Assistant

Level 2

Typical Duration 12-15 months

Occupation Profile: The Pharmacy Services Assistant (PSA) works under the supervision of a Pharmacist, Pharmacy Technician, or other accountable healthcare professional. The PSA provides a variety of pharmacy and medicines services to patients, the public and other professional healthcare teams. The PSA supports the delivery of pharmacy services in a variety of pharmacy environments. A PSA will be involved in supporting the supply, preparation and assembly of medicines and products; issuing them to patients and other healthcare professionals and assisting in providing advice to patients to help them to make effective use of their medicines.

Pharmacy Technician

Level 3

Typical Duration 24 months

As part of the apprenticeship all apprentices will complete a GPhC accredited level 3 pharmacy technician qualification. The end-point assessment for this apprenticeship is integrated, meaning it is completed within the 24-month programme.

Occupation Profile: Pharmacy Technicians are registered professionals working within the regulatory standards for pharmacy, as set by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Pharmacy Order 2010. Pharmacy Technicians work in a wide range of settings, including (but not exclusively): registered pharmacies, community services, justice (the Prison Service), GP Practices, dispensing doctors' practices, care homes and clinical commissioning groups, hospitals, mental health, defence (HM Armed Services) and within the pharmaceutical industry Pharmacy technicians manage the supply of medicines and devices in a pharmacy and assist pharmacists with advisory services.

Both the Pharmacy Services Assistant and Pharmacy Technician apprenticeships are associated with a national procurement framework, co-developed by HEE and pharmacy employers across England. All public sector employers can utilise this framework as a simplified way of identifying and contacting with an education provider, whilst being assured that these providers meet HEE quality standards and pharmacy employer expectations.

For more information contact your HEE Regional [Apprenticeship Relationship Manager](#)

Optometry Apprenticeships

Optical Assistant

Level 2

Typical Duration 12 months

Occupation Profile: An Optical Assistant requires many skills to be able to work within the Optical retail Industry. They may be working within a small practice, a large multiple practice or within the domiciliary environment. Optical Assistants have to interpret and understand a clinically issued prescription, its effects on the eye, and the customer's vision. They need to be able to identify the appropriate spectacles to meet the customer's needs and be able to explain the features and benefits of these, using non-technical customer friendly language. They also require technical knowledge of optical lenses and the associated measurements of these lenses to allow correct and safe customer vision. They use an extensive range of technical equipment and tools to take measurements and adjust and repair spectacles.

Optometrist

Level 7

(This apprenticeship standard is in development and is not yet ready to use)

Latest development of this apprenticeship:

<https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020.01.22-Optometrist-Degree-Apprenticeship-QA.pdf>



Other Apprenticeships

There are also a whole host of other apprenticeships such as **business administrator, HR assistant, and team leader.**

You can use these apprenticeships to upskill existing staff or recruit new talent to support the back office and customer facing functions of your business.

Use the hyperlinks below to explore more apprenticeships:

[Team Leader / supervisor](#)

[Customer Service](#)

[Business Administrator](#)

[HR Support](#)

[Payroll Administrator](#)

[Chartered Manager](#)

[Retail Manager](#)

[Professional Accountant](#)

[Assistant Accountant](#)

[Accounts / Finance Assistant](#)

[Learning Mentor](#)

[Departmental Manager](#)

For more information

Where can I find other information about apprenticeships?

We have useful links to resources that will help you to find the right apprentice for you. For an electronic copy of this booklet, access to other apprenticeship stories and further information on recruiting an apprentice or placing an existing member of staff on an apprenticeship qualification visit: [Healthcare Apprenticeship Standards online \(HASO\)](#)



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