

Apprenticeship

Week

2011

Toolkit

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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome to the Apprenticeship Week campaign toolkit

The Apprenticeship Week toolkit is designed to give you all the information you need about Apprenticeship Week 2011. We want as many partners as possible to get involved in the Week so the pack also contains practical advice and ideas to help you run your own events and communications activity.

If you have any further queries on Apprenticeship Week after reading through the toolkit then please contact the National Apprenticeship Service, all the contact details are on the final page of the toolkit.

Josephine Perry
Marketing and Communications Director

2 Background

2.1 The National Apprenticeship Service

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England. It was designed to increase the number of Apprenticeship opportunities and provide a dedicated, responsive service for both employers and learners. This includes simplifying the process of recruiting an apprentice through Apprenticeship vacancies, an online web-based matching system.

Apprenticeships bring considerable value to organisations, employers, individuals and the economy. Businesses across the country are now increasingly realising the enormous benefits that Apprenticeships create, not only in terms of a highly skilled workforce but also by boosting productivity and staff retention. Research shows they are an optimal way of training, developing and skilling people for the future, helping businesses to secure a supply of people with the skills and qualities they need and which are often not available on the external job market.

2.2 What is Apprenticeship Week?

Apprenticeship Week is the week when all eyes are on Apprenticeships and it's all about raising the profile of Apprenticeships amongst employers, learners, parents, stakeholders and the media. In 2011 it will take place between the 7 and 11 February.

The objectives for Apprenticeship Week are:

- To engage and persuade employers of the advantages of employing and supporting apprentices in their workplace
- To highlight the talent and skills of apprentices to the wider public and to employers
- To highlight the range of Apprenticeships available in different sectors and progression routes to potential apprentices.

We will be targeting:

- Employers: Those already engaged with Apprenticeships (who may consider taking on more in their non-core areas), lapsed and non-engaged employers
- Young People and their parents: To raise the general reputation of Apprenticeships to highlight their value as an entry route into a successful career.

We are working on a programme for the Week, building on previous successes. People involved in Apprenticeships across the country are encouraged to carry out their own communications activity to help promote the Week and its aims. This includes learning providers, employers, Sector Skills Councils from every sector and industry.

2.3 Apprenticeship Week 2010 highlights

In 2010 the Week was designed to bring to life positive messages on Apprenticeships, engage employers on the benefits, to raise the profile and highlight the number and range of Apprenticeships available.

These messages ran strongly throughout the events and activities that were held across the country, and in many of the pieces of broadcast, print and online coverage that ran over Apprenticeship Week. Last year with the help of our partners we achieved:

- Over 1,000 pieces of national, regional and trade press coverage (70% increase on 2009)
- Over 200 events, activities and conferences throughout England.
- Over 100,000 visitors to www.apprenticeships.org.uk, and 10,300 new registrations to Apprenticeship vacancies
- Very strong national and regional broadcast presence including pieces on television - BBC Breakfast and BBC News 24, UKTV's Market Kitchen. 231 pieces of radio coverage and 240 pieces online.
- Nearly 1,100 calls to the employer helpline (08000 150 600) during the week alone; staying at an average of 793 calls for the following three weeks.

3 Apprenticeship Week 2011

3.1 The themes

The Week 2011, will take place from Monday 7 to Friday 11 February 2011. Our joint aim will be to highlight the talents and skills of apprentices and celebrate the value of Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Week can only be successful with the involvement of apprentices, employers, providers and all those involved with Apprenticeships. To help businesses, staff and apprentices to plan activities to support the Week we have created four themes, each supported by some suggestions and ideas to help kick start your plans. Not all of these will work for your business but we hope they will help to prompt some innovative activities.

Don't forget to let us know what you are planning. We can make sure your events are promoted on www.apprenticeships.org.uk and help you to get media coverage for your hard work and dedication to Apprenticeships.

The themes for Apprenticeship Week 2011 are:

- **A Great Way to Start Your Career:** This theme will focus on showing individuals that an Apprenticeship is a fantastic way to start a successful career.
- **Moving on Up:** This theme will focus on the progression routes available with an Apprenticeship.
- **Good for Business:** This theme will focus on explaining and promoting how Apprenticeships are 'Good for Business' to employers
- **The Big Thank You:** This theme will be aimed at encouraging employers to recognise the impact their apprentices have had and the benefits they brought to

their business. It will also allow apprentices to thank their employers for training them and developing their skills.

3.2 The Hub

As well as carrying out PR activity around the Week, NAS will be creating a 'hub' of resources that can be used by other parties who want to promote Apprenticeships.

The hub will include:

- **PR 'collateral'** – This will include an image library, case study database, FAQs and myth-busting documents.
- **Research** – NAS has a range of research that can be used to strengthen stories around Apprenticeship Week. This includes research on the business benefits of hiring an apprentice and statistics about the consumer demand for firms that support young people.
- **Supporter tools** – So everyone involved in Apprenticeship Week knows what's going on around the country, NAS will produce an online calendar, a national map of events, an E-bulletin and a Twitter feed and Facebook updates.

All the Hub information will be available on www.apprenticeships.org.uk

3.3 How can I get involved?

This toolkit is a great starting point if you want to get involved in Apprenticeship Week 2011. It should give you some ideas about events and activities that you can organise and promote as part of the Week, as well as handy tips to get the media interested and reach a wider audience. There are many more suggestions on www.apprenticeships.org.uk to help kick start your plans.

3.4 Working with National Apprenticeship Service teams

The Apprenticeship team would love to hear from you and find out what you are planning for Apprenticeship Week. Why not contact us and have a chat about your ideas. We will be able to let you know what else is happening in your area. Details will be placed on a central Apprenticeship Week calendar and support can be given where needed.

3.5 Who do I contact?

Please see the contacts page at the back of this toolkit to find out how best to contact us.

4 Media and Events

4.1 Planning events around the Week

The basics

- Why run an event?
Holding an event is a great way to attract the attention of employers, get media coverage and get the message behind Apprenticeship Week out to as many people as possible. Refer to the Apprenticeship Week 2010 highlights for evidence.
- Where do I start?
- This toolkit aims to give you everything you need to plan, manage and promote your event for Apprenticeship Week. So whether you've run events before or this is your first time, you should find what you need to get started here.

Event ideas

There are many suggestions and ideas on www.apprenticeships.org.uk to help kick start your plans.

Below are just a few ideas for events that will help you to engage your audience in the Week, both through direct involvement and media coverage.

Employer reception

Getting employers to come along to a reception is a great way of telling them more about the Apprenticeships programme and what it has to offer them. However, they are busy people so you need to make sure they'll see the benefits of attending your event. To get them along, you could:

- Invite local opinion formers and decisions makers who employers may want to meet such as a local MP or key business leader
- Have an interesting speaker at your event who is respected in the business community
- Offer free advice on how businesses can address their training and resourcing needs – this would enable you to present information about the benefits of hiring an apprentice alongside other useful information.

Think about the best time to hold your event. The middle of the day isn't ideal as your target audience is likely to be hard at work so breakfast and early evening events tend to work best.

Showcasing apprentices' skills

Apprentices have a range of great skills they can offer to the community as well as the workplace, so why not stage an activity to showcase these skills and show employers who don't have an apprentice what they're missing? These 'showcases' can be promoted in the local media. You could:

- Get a group of apprentice accountants to assist a charity or arts organisation with fundraising initiatives and administration support.
- Arrange for teacher support apprentices to run homework 'hints and tips' classes with parents in the local community.
- Invite local businessmen to a dinner where the food is prepared and served by a group of hospitality apprentices.
- Arrange for trade apprentices (builders, decorators, carpenters and gardeners) to decorate a shelter for homeless people.
- Get hospitality apprentices to takeover a soup kitchen and serve up gourmet food.
- Run a 'get-fit' course with sport apprentices for the local community, including school children and the elderly.
- Arrange for hair and beauty apprentices to visit a residential home to give makeovers to the residents.
- Get a group of marketing apprentices to re-design the website/newsletter for a local charity.

Job swap

You could arrange for an apprentice to swap jobs with a more senior person for a day to highlight the range of skills they possess and the value they can add to an organisation.

For example, a healthcare apprentice could swap jobs with the CEO of a Primary Care Trust for a day, or an animal care apprentice could swap with the manager of a zoo. The apprentice would show what they can do in a more senior role, and it would enable the senior person to experience the challenges and rigorous training an apprentice goes through.

You could invite a local or trade journalist to attend the job swap day and interview the parties involved.

MP visit

Arranging for your local MP to see apprentices in action can be an easy way to get media coverage. Make sure there's something happening on the day of the visit that the MP can observe or get involved in and invite relevant journalists to accompany them.

4.2 Getting people involved

Getting people involved in your event is key to its success. It's important to think about ways of creating excitement and making your Apprenticeship Week event something people will want to support.

Engaging employers

Attracting the interest of businesses that don't currently offer Apprenticeships is a 'must' but this can be difficult as business people are often very time limited. It's therefore important to tell employers what's in it for them if they come to your event; for example, the opportunity to network or the chance to get free advice on addressing training needs.

To get this information out to employers, you could write a letter or email. You may also want to contact local organisations and membership bodies that work with employers, such as your local Chamber of Commerce. They may have channels such as a newsletter or website that you can use to tell people about your event.

Engaging schools

Inviting schools to attend your event is a great way of ensuring there are 'bums on seats' and getting through to one of your target audiences of young people.

You may already have links with schools in your local community. If so, it's a good idea to call your contacts and make them aware of your event. Depending on plans for your event, you could arrange for a group of young people to come along as a class.

If you don't currently have links with local schools, you can still get in touch with them to let them know what you are doing and how they can get involved.

Engaging MPs and celebrities

In order to create an extra buzz around your event, you may wish to invite a local celebrity or MP. This person could be asked to take part in photographs or media interviews too.

Whoever you invite to attend, it's important that you think about what you want them to do and give them a specific role to perform on the day. Let them know about your plans up front so they can see you have thought about how they can help support your event.

You can find out who your local MP is by visiting www.theyworkforyou.com. Send a letter or email to their constituency office, asking them to attend your event.

Once you have the contact details for the celebrity you want to invite or their agent, send a letter or email asking them to come along and follow this up with a phone call. Some celebrities may charge money for personal appearances so, if you have no budget for this, make it clear in your letter/email. Think about people with a personal connection or story to tell in relation to Apprenticeships – they will be more likely to support you.

4.3 Getting media coverage

How can your event generate media coverage?

Local media provide excellent opportunities for you to promote Apprenticeship Week and help get people along to your event. The media will only cover stories that are interesting to their audience, so we have put together some hints and tips to help you get your media relations spot on.

What makes a good story?

- Human interest is key so remember the journalistic maxim: ‘news is people’.
- Think about the most unusual aspect of your event – is it a first for your area or are you putting on a unique activity?
- Is there anyone ‘high-profile’ attending that could get journalists interested?

Targeting the media

There should be three stages to promoting your event in the local media:

1. Letting people know your event is happening and encouraging them to attend
2. Inviting the media to your event
3. Telling people how the day went

The first thing you should do is identify who your local media are. Local media includes newspapers, magazines, radio and TV that focus on your local area. Don't forget the free weekly newspapers that are dropped through letterboxes as these are guaranteed to have a wide reach within the community.

Call your local newspaper and ask for the news editor (you will find their details in the newspaper or online). They will tell you who the best person is for you to speak to – perhaps a reporter who writes the ‘what's on’ section in your paper or a general reporter who covers your local area. Do the same with local radio and TV and build up a list of the best contacts.

Explain what your event entails, when it is being held and who will be attending and highlight any great photo opportunities. Find out when journalists' deadlines are and how far in advance they need information. It is a good idea to put this information into a table so you can keep track of who you need to contact and when.

What is a press release?

A press release, or news release, is a written form of communication directed at the media to announce a new product, development or event – something that is considered newsworthy. It is usually emailed to a reporter or editor at a newspaper, magazine, radio or TV station and is used to get the journalist interested in developing the story.

How to construct a press release

There is no hard and fast rule for producing the perfect press release, however brevity is key. Your aim is to demonstrate that you have an interesting story, the journalist can then contact you if further detail is required.

Remember that journalists may receive hundreds of press releases everyday, so make your heading and first paragraph eye-catching and punchy – this can make all the difference between acceptance and rejection of a story. To do this, try to include the answers to the five Ws (who, what, where, when and why) within your first paragraph – BUT keep it short and concise – it should be 30 words or less.

The second paragraph should expand on detail from the first and include times, dates and locations. You should use at least one quote in your press release from someone involved in the event to add some emotion to what you're saying, rather than just hard facts. The rest of the press release should give additional background details.

At the bottom of the release you should include an editor's note: basic facts such as information on NAS, plus some contact details for further information e.g. email address, telephone number and out-of-hours number if possible.

See the template and example press releases within this toolkit to help you put your own media materials together.

How to send your release

Ask the journalists how they prefer to be emailed releases i.e. as an attachment or pasted into the body of the email. Put the headline in the 'subject' box so the journalist can immediately see what the story is.

After you have sent your press release to the media, it is always a good idea to follow this up with a call to your contacts to check they have received it and ask if they need any further information.

Inviting the media to your event

Will your local media come along to your event to take photographs and interview employers and apprentices? Send an invitation to the journalist, plus the photodesk if appropriate, and follow it up with a call to see if they can attend.

Remember that if you've got a journalist coming along to your event you need to make sure there will be plenty of people around for them to talk to. Arrange to have visitors there when you're expecting the journalist, so that there is a busy atmosphere.

To help you when inviting local media, we have produced a template that you can fill in plus an example invitation for reference. Both are provided within this toolkit.

If media cannot attend your event, don't be disheartened as they may still cover it so it is still important that you send them a post-event press release (this is explained in more detail below).

Selecting and briefing spokespeople

Both broadcast and print media will be looking for interesting people to interview. These may be apprentices, employers or someone from your organisation.

Once you have chosen a spokesperson, it is important to brief them. You may want to produce a short document that sets out the background to your event or story and some key points you want them to cover. If your spokesperson is someone who hasn't had any previous experience of media interviews, you could have a practice run through with them to check they are comfortable and that they are getting your key messages across.

Telling people how the day went

After your event, you should send out a press release to the local media describing what happened. This is your chance to share your success and get messages about Apprenticeship Week out to a wider audience than just those people who attended on the day.

You may also wish to add quotes from an employer and apprentice who attended to bring the press release to life, perhaps about how useful they found it and if they plan to come back to find out more. Do make sure any quotes you write have been seen and approved by the person you're quoting.

When distributing it to local newspapers, also remember to send out any photographs you have from the event.

4.4 Event photography

Inviting newspaper photographers – hints and tips

- Consider timings. Most local newspaper photographers will only work during evenings around once or twice a week. Taking pictures outside after daylight is also technically difficult.
- Newspaper photographers often have their days fully booked with appointments. It is crucial you keep to any appointment that you have arranged.
- If you have arranged for a newspaper photographer to visit your event, remember that they are the professionals, so be open to their ideas.

Taking your own pictures – tips and hints

- The best images depict some form of action so try to photograph people doing something; for example, apprentices making over a community centre as part of a showcase event.
- The media do not like pictures of big groups. They want their audience to see everyone in the image clearly, so pictures featuring more than 10 people will stand less of a chance of being published than a smaller group shot.
- If you are taking pictures yourself, zoom in as much as you can on the subject matter and have as little background as possible.
- Make sure you can see the face of everyone in your photo and avoid capturing the backs of people's heads.
- Try to make your pictures look as natural as possible and avoid obviously posed shots.

- Photos should be accompanied by captions giving the names of everyone in the picture and the purpose of the event, or they might be rejected.

Technical information

Whether you are arranging an opportunity for the local media or taking your own photographs, there are a few things to consider:

- Local media usually prefer digital images rather than prints, but check in advance with your journalist contact before you send your pictures.
- If you are taking the pictures yourself on a digital camera, set it to the highest resolution setting.
- For newspapers and magazines, photos need to be at least 1800 x 1200 pixels, however 2400 x 1600 pixels is preferred. You will need to use at least a three megapixel camera. Images for websites may not need to be as high definition.
- Save your pictures as jpeg (filename.jpg) or tif files (filename.tif). These are the two main types of images used by newspapers and magazines.

Legal issues and consent

There is an understandable anxiety surrounding the use of images of children and young people in newspapers. If you are arranging an event, you are responsible for obtaining written consent from the parents of any children photographed (either by yourself or the media) who are under the age of 16. This also applies to the filming of children for television.

4.5 Case studies

What are case studies and why use them?

Case studies are real life examples that put a face to a news story or announcement. They make a story appeal to a journalist and, in turn, to the reader as well as adding credibility. When speaking to journalists they will often ask if you have a case study to go with a specific story, so it is important to think about this and who may be appropriate. Case studies can sometimes make the difference between securing coverage and having your story ignored.

Sourcing and using case studies

Case studies are a great way to bring an apprentice story to life and will increase interest from the media. The simplest way to source case studies is to take advantage of existing relationships and ask if apprentices/employers/teachers/providers would be able to help with media relations to promote Apprenticeships. Remember this will also benefit them as it offers the chance for them to promote their organisation.

What is expected from case studies?

Initially it is best if you interview the case study to get all the necessary facts and information about them. Think about what makes that person interesting and relevant to your particular story or announcement. Next you should write up your interview and send it to the case study to check they are happy with the information and that all of the details are correct. You may then wish to draft up a short version that you can send to journalists if requested.

Always check what your case study is happy to do. They may be happy for you to write up their story and send it to the journalist, but they may not be happy to speak to the media directly. The journalist may want to talk to your case study directly to flesh out their story, so check your case study would be happy to do this before sending out their contact details.

If you have pictures of your case study, let the journalist know as this always adds to the story.

Key points to remember:

- Always check your case study is happy to feature in the media.
- Show them the information you are sending to the journalist to check they are happy.
- Don't add their contact details to the information you send to the journalist unless they have agreed that this is OK.

Briefing case studies

If your case study is going to speak directly to a journalist, it is a good idea to brief them first. As well as their story, write down three key messages you want the case study to bring out as part of their interview with the journalist. For example:

- There are a wide range of Apprenticeships available at xxxxx college.
- Apprenticeships can be taken at different levels and over different periods of time.
- To find out more about Apprenticeships at xxxxx college, call xxxxxx to speak to a member of the admissions team.

The interview

Confirm the time, length and details of the interview with the case study and the journalist. If possible, make sure the journalist can call the case study at a convenient time so the interview is not rushed or missed. Confirm who is calling who, at what time and on what number. Let both the case study and the journalist know to contact you if they cannot make the arranged interview or if there are any problems. After the interview, call the case study to check it went well and call the journalist to check to have got all the information they need.

'Thank yous' and maintaining relationships

Case studies take time out of their busy lives to help and conduct an interview with media for you, so it is always important to thank them in some way. It is a good idea to keep them updated as to when the coverage may be appearing and send them a complimentary copy of the newspaper or magazine if possible. If you thank them and keep them up to date then they will be more likely to assist you as a case study in the future. They may also be a link to other case studies you can approach to help with activity.

5 Templates

We have created a few different templates for your use including press releases, media invitations, letters and event web copy. These are all available on www.apprenticeships.org.uk

6 Key Messages

Apprenticeships. Good for Business.

Overview of Apprenticeships

- Apprentices are employees who earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff in businesses to gain job-specific skills. Off the job, usually on a day-release basis, apprentices receive training to work towards nationally recognised qualifications.
- Apprenticeships can take between one and four years to complete depending on the level of Apprenticeship, the apprentices' ability and the industry sector.
- There are over 190 types of Apprenticeships that are suitable for hundreds of job roles.

Key messages from YouGov research (October 2009):

- Over 80% of people are more likely to use a business if it offers Apprenticeships to young people.
- 94% think it is important that companies support young people by taking on apprentices in the recession.

Key statistics from Populus research (February 2009):

- 81% of businesses agree that apprentices make their work place more productive.
- Apprentices provide the skilled workers we need for the future (82% employers agree).
- Apprenticeships mean lower recruitment costs (67% employers agree).

Key statistic from the Institute for Employment Research, 'Net benefit to Employer Investment in Apprenticeship Training' (November 2008)

- On average an apprentice pays back your investment after 2.5 years

Key messages from 'Good for Business' research:

- Apprentices bring new ideas into your company.
- Apprentices inject new life blood into a company.
- Apprenticeships demonstrate your company's commitment to training.
- Apprentices can be moulded into your ideal employee.

7 Apprenticeship Myths...and the reality

There are a number of myths around Apprenticeships but we know the reality. Refer to the range of questions and answers regarding the Apprenticeships on the website to help myth bust during Apprenticeship Week 2011.

8 Contacts

Several people are available at NAS to contact depending on who you are:

- Apprentices contact: sally.askew@apprenticeships.gov.uk 024 7682 3703
- Employers contact: iain.harper@apprenticeships.gov.uk 024 7682 3437
- Providers contact: paul.twine@apprenticeships.gov.uk 01274 444137
- Stakeholders contact: ryan.ansah@apprenticeships.gov.uk 0207 904 0796