



PERFORMANCE
LEARNING
GROUP



Apprentice Handbook



Performance Learning Group

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Who are PLG?

Performance Learning Group is a training provider with a wealth of experience in designing bespoke apprenticeship programmes that support both the apprentices and the employer. For PLG it is all about the quality of learning, creating clearly defined development pathways for people who want to create a rewarding career, whilst empowering employers to grow their business by harnessing its internal and local talent through work-based training and development.

For the last 20 years the directors of PLG have lived and breathed work-based learning, supporting people to develop the skills and attributes they need to create a successful career in their chosen occupation; whilst empowering employers to build a talented and motivated workforce to help their business grow and build on their success. Performance Learning Group love to partner with like-minded employers who have people at the heart of their business.

The Directors at PLG all started their careers within hospitality and have been apprentices themselves, they are very proud to be spending their careers helping the next generation of talent within the hospitality industry.

Our Vision

To have every person associated with PLG benefit from its relationship and value its connection

Our Values

- Connect from the heart
- Spark success
- Make it personal
- Communicate and collaborate
- Work with integrity



What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship programmes are designed to allow candidates to upskill, improve confidence and competence and grow within the working environment by developing skills and knowledge whilst working.

They are a great alternative to university or college and give you the opportunity to learn in a practical environment which is often a more time effective way of progressing into the career of your choice.
Candidates can start at entry level and progress onto higher level apprenticeships as their skills and experience grow.

Performance Learning Group currently delivery the following apprenticeship programmes that are generally available to suitable candidates/employers:

Level 2

Hospitality Team Member
Production Chef
Commis Chef
Customer Service Practitioner

Level 3

Hospitality Supervisor
Senior Production Chef
Chef De Partie
Customer Service Specialist
Business Administrator
Team Leader/ Supervisor

Level 4

Senior Culinary Chef
Hospitality Manager
Hospitality and Workplace Mental-
Health Management

Level 5

Operations Manager
L&D Consultant Business Partner

Apprenticeship Levels Available

There are different levels of apprenticeship programmes available, whether you make an application for a vacancy advertised with an apprenticeship attached or your employer nominates you to undertake an apprenticeship in your existing place of work, the levels available and what that may look like for your individual situation will be discussed with you at the interview stage and options explained to you.
Below is a table showing the levels of apprenticeship programmes and what they are equivalent to:

Intermediate Apprentice	Advanced Apprenticeship	Higher & Degree Apprenticeship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 2• 12 – 18 months• Equivalent to 5 GCSEs Grade A* - C or 4 - 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 3• 18 - 48 months• Equivalent to 2 A Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level 4,5,6,7• 4 + months• Equivalent to Foundation Degree Level





What are the perks of being an apprentice?

- Available at no cost to you - Your training will be fully funded by the government or by a 5% contribution from your employer, meaning no large debts for you unlike university.
- The government will pay the rest up to the funding band maximum.
- Earning a wage whilst learning a trade.
- All the perks of being a full-time employee such as holiday pay etc.
- Accumulating invaluable work experience whilst working towards your apprenticeship statistics show apprentices progress quicker in their chosen career than those who don't partake in any training courses.
- Gaining insight into your chosen industry to ensure it's the right path for you.
- Looks great on your CV - obtaining a nationally recognised achievement which is highly attractive to your current and future employers.
- Working alongside experienced staff who pass on their knowledge down to you as the next generation of employees.
- Having the additional support of a Mentor whilst on the apprenticeship.
- Learning at a pace suited to your individual needs and learning styles.

Financial Support

As an apprentice you will be entitled to at least apprentice minimum wage for the total of hours you spend in the workplace. As well as your salary some employers have tips added onto your salary and other employee benefits which you can discuss with your employer.

As an apprentice you are in full time education so are eligible for some students benefits and discount cards, the most popular are listed below:

Travel Perks

Student Oyster and Railcards

If you are 18 or over and a student, living in a London borough, you can get discounted travel with an Oyster card. You can apply online If you have a digital photo, on the following link <https://photocard.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/showLogon.do?selection=student> there is a £20 payment fee to get a discount card. Below is what you will need to apply.

Unique Provider Reference Number, Unique Learner Number and Apprenticeship Start & End Date.

Once you have started your apprenticeship you can contact the PLG Admin team who can provide you with this information on info@plgrp.co.uk.

16-25 Railcards

The Railcard cost £30 for one year or £70 for three years. For you to apply for the railcard all you need is proof of age so you could use your driving licence, Passport, or your National identity card, and a clear picture of likeness to you. This can be used as an app on your phone, or you can get a card.

You can apply online If you have a digital photo, on the following link <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/student-travel-card/>.

NUS Apprentice Extra Card

If you apply for an NUS Apprentice extra card it will provide you with discounts in-store or online at your favourite brands. Its £11 for a year and £19 for 2 years.

Totum Card

<https://www.totum.com> **TOTUM** is the #1 student discount card and app giving you access to huge offers on food and essentials, tech, travel and home delivery. Plus fashion, beauty and a whole lot more

Access to work is there to help your to access work or continue employment if you have a physical disability or mental health condition.

The support you will get will vary dependant on your individual needs, Via access to work you can apply for

- grant to help you pay for practical support with your work
- Support with dealing with and managing your mental health at work
- Financial support to pay for communication at job interviews and appointments

You can find more information about criteria, eligibility and how to apply on <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>





Who pays for my apprenticeship?

There are two main ways for apprenticeships to be funded, either through SME funding or directly through the apprenticeship Levy. Below is a detailed description on what the difference between the two are:

What defines a Levy Payer?

To qualify as a levy payer your employers annual wage bill through HMRC must exceed £3m. If this is the case 0.5% of everything over the £3m will be taxed and stored in their digital apprenticeship service account. The government will top this up by an additional 10% each month, but this money can only be used to pay for apprenticeships within the business.

What is the apprenticeship Levy?

The Apprenticeship Levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill over £3 million each year to make an investment in Apprenticeships. The Levy is there to be spent on 'Apprenticeship Training and associated costs'. The government have stated 'employers will get out more than they put in'.

Small to Medium Enterprises Funding (SME)

If your employer does not pay into the apprenticeship levy, then the government will fund 95% of your apprenticeship. Your employer must agree to cover the remaining 5% towards the cost of training and assessment which they will pay to the training provider (PLG) directly and agree on a payment schedule.

If your employer has fewer than fifty employees, the government will pay 100% of your apprenticeship training costs up to the funding band maximum if you meet the below criteria:

- 16 to 21
- 19 to 24 with an education, health and care plan provided by their local authority or has been in the care of their local authority

All employers access their funding using the governments Digital Apprenticeship Service, your employer will need to create an apprenticeship service account and add PLG as a training provider to access this. The PLG team will support with this process.

Levy Transfer

Apprenticeships can be funded by a levy paying employer transferring up to 50% of their unused levy to a different employer. Transferred funds are used to pay for 100% of the training and assessment costs of the apprenticeship up to the funding band maximum

At no point as a learner will you be liable for any costs in relation to your apprenticeship.



What to expect

Once you have completed all the recruitment steps and had your pre induction and induction you are officially an apprentice with PLG!

Trainer Visits

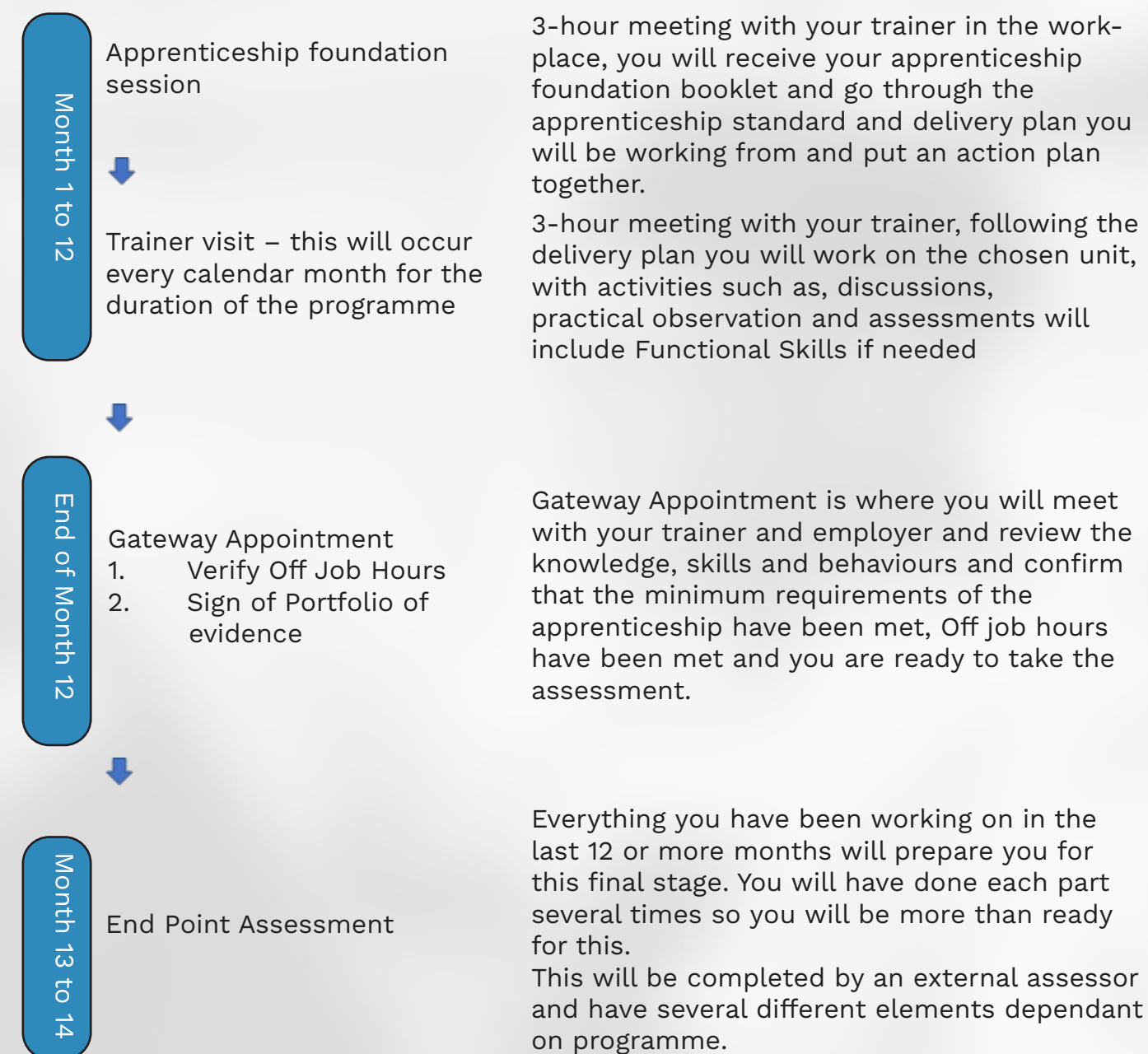
From this point your trainer will come and see you in the workplace for a teaching and learning session the appointments last around 3 hours and will occur every 4-6 weeks throughout the duration of the programme. During this time, we will deliver a full training session based on your personalised delivery scheme. Our trainer will make sure that your manager is kept up to date with how you are doing and what you need to be focused on over the next month. You will need to spend some time each month working on what has been set for you including your Maths and English Functional Skills if applicable.

Contact with PLG

Throughout your apprenticeship programme with PLG your trainer will be your main point of contact, However the support does not end here. You will have a series of communication opportunities with the Business Support team. The person who handled your initial application onto the apprenticeship will contact you at the beginning, middle and end of your programme to capture some feedback from you and have a general How are you chat. PLG prides itself on communication and listening to our learners to provide the best service possible.

Learner Journey

An example of an apprentice's journey for an intermediate Level 2 programme is as follows:



Course Lengths and EPA requirements

Each Apprenticeship has individual EPA requirements and some of the higher-level programmes often require longer on programme. Below is a general guide on what to expect. Your trainer will go through your individual End Point Assessment requirements throughout your apprenticeship, up to date detailed information on EPA requirements can be found on <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/> .

Apprenticeship Programme	Level	Minimum Course Length	EPA Requirements
Hospitality Team Member	Intermediate	12 Months	Business Project, On Demand Test & Professional discussion
Production Chef	Intermediate	12 Months	On Demand Test, Professional Discussion & Practical Observation
Commis Chef	Intermediate	14 Months	Knowledge Test, Practical Assessment & Professional Discussion
Customer Service Practitioner	Intermediate	12 Months	Apprentice Show Case, Practical Observation & Professional Discussion
Customer Service Specialist	Advanced	12 Months	Business Project, Practical Observation & Professional Discussion
Hospitality Supervisor	Advanced	12 Months	Business Project, On Demand Test & Professional Discussion & Practical Observation
Senior Production Chef	Advanced	12 Months	On Demand Test, Professional Discussion & Practical Observation
Chef De Partie	Advanced	18 Months	Practical Observation & Presentation with Q & A Professional Discussion (underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence) Knowledge Test
Team Leader Supervisor	Advanced	14 Months	Presentation with Q & A Professional Discussion (underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence)
Business Administrator	Advanced	12 Months	Knowledge Test, Portfolio Based Interview & Business Project Presentation
Senior Culinary Chef	Higher	18 Months	Project with Presentation and Practical Assessment Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence
Hospitality Manager	Higher	14 Months	On Demand Test, Professional Discussion & Business Project
Hospitality & Workplace Mental Health Management (Based on Hospitality Manager standard)	Higher	18 Months	On Demand Test, Professional Discussion & Business Project
Operations Manager	Higher	18 Months	Presentation with Q & A Professional Discussion (underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence)
Learning & Development Consultant	Higher	18 Months	Learning Journal, Professional Discussion & Work Based Project



What is off-the-job learning?

Off job learning is the term given to the time apprentices spend learning something new away from their daily job. The term “off-the-job” does not mean out of the business. These hours can include shadowing managers, practicing activities learnt as part of their apprenticeship as well as the time the apprentice spends with their trainer or working on their apprenticeship work.

The facts:

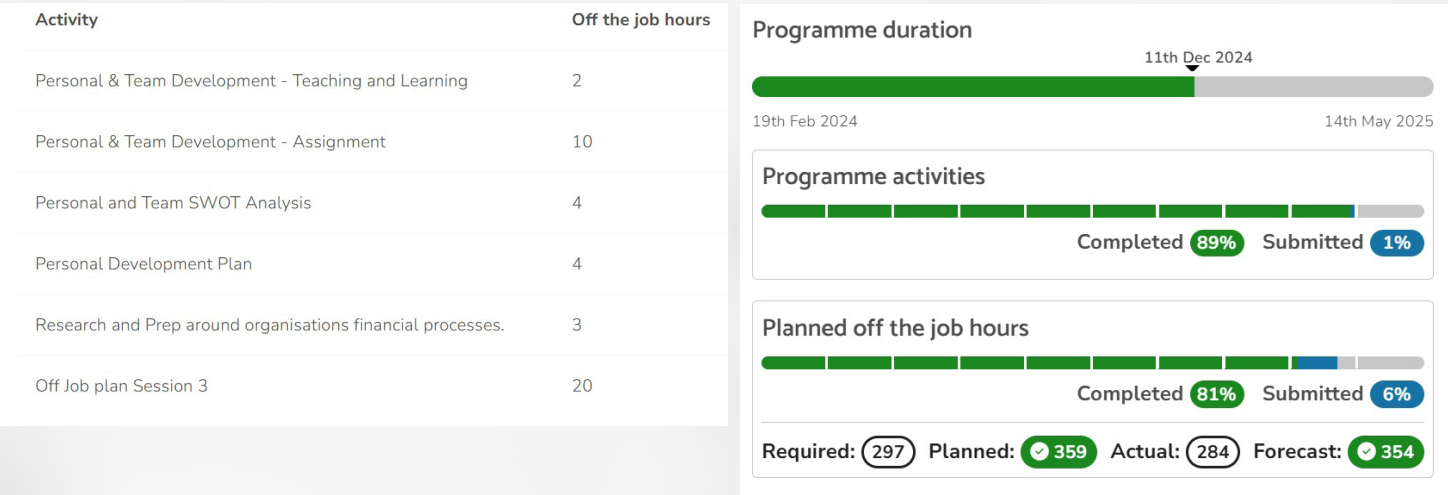
- The government state that an apprentice must complete a minimum of 6 off the job hours a week as part of their job role for the full length of the apprenticeship programme. Off the job training can be flexible in its delivery. It can vary from block release to a day a week and many more variations.
- This time must be paid time, which means that all hours recorded as off-the-job must be during working hours.
- These hours will be set out in the set plan, this is sent out at the beginning of the programme and reviewed every 8 weeks as part of a welfare review. The welfare review is a progress meeting between the trainer, apprentice and the manager where we look at personal targets, check how well the apprentice is progressing and updating the plan, recording the hours that have been completed as well as detailing what mento support is needed each month.
- Should the apprentice fall more than 4 weeks behind on their off the job hours, this will constitute a breach of funding rules.
- The time spent with the trainer is counted as off-the-job learning.
- Any relevant training/courses the apprentice completes as part of their job can be included as off-the-job hours

What this means in practice:

- Off-the-job hours does not need to be out of the business. A large part of an apprenticeship is about practicing what has been taught in order to master it, all of these hours can be counted.
- An apprentice will need to be given time to spend with the trainer, this will be 3-4 hours a month, this appointment is booked a month in advanced and at a time that suits your business needs.
- The apprentice will need some time to focus on their apprenticeship work, during this time they will complete any assignments that have been set for them, keep a diary of what they have been practicing, complete any work set by the trainer for the next month. This amount of time will vary depending on the apprenticeship and the apprentice themselves. This time can be planned in by you to fit around your business needs and is considerably less than the number of off-the-job hours needed for the full month.
- The apprentice will need a strong mentor who can commit to the welfare review every 8 weeks, and can support them throughout the month to achieve the development activities planned.

Off-the-job hours example:

As you can see for the training plan example, each module will have a number of activities, including teaching and learning sessions, SGL (Self-Guided Learning) activities, informal assessments or Mock assessments, as well as time set aside to be planned with the employer. This time is designed to allow the apprenticeship and the off job hours to be planned around the apprentice and your business and must be planned in advance as part of the welfare review process.





Gateway & End point assessment

At the end of your learning period with PLG your trainer will hold a meeting called the 'Gateway'. The apprentice and the apprentices line manager will be required to attend, during this time the trainer will go over all of the completed training sessions for the full apprenticeship. This is an opportunity for all parties to ask questions and confirm that the apprentice is fully prepared to go into the end point assessment.

Following this meeting you will then be submitted into End Point Assessment. Each apprenticeship programme has its own combination of assessment methods. Common assessment methods include, observation, multiple choice tests, professional discussion, business projects and the compilation of an evidence portfolio or recipe log.

Apprenticeship standards are graded and can result in either a pass, merit, or distinction (depending on the standard and the assessment plan). If any elements of the apprenticeship are not completed successfully, the individual assessment can potentially be retaken depending on the individual circumstances, however in some assessment plans this can limit the outcome to a pass grade.

After your apprenticeship

As you come to the end of your time on the apprenticeship programme you will need to start thinking of the next steps, because if you're not moving forward then you are just moving backwards!

The big question is, what is next for you?

You now have some decision to make around how you want to move forward, there are natural progression options within the apprenticeship world and outside of that in your personal life, and professional journey.

Below are some of the main options we have found people are considering upon completing an apprenticeship.

Progressing to the next level apprenticeship.

There are apprenticeships available at all levels up the L7 which is the equivalent of a master's degree and are all designed to help you progress. Here is a link to the institute of apprenticeships, this site lists all apprenticeships available in England.

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>.

Speak to your trainer and your employer about what might be the best option for you.

Securing a new apprenticeship with a new employer

Perhaps you want to take step into a new apprenticeship with a different employer, the best place to look for apprenticeship opportunities is the national apprenticeship website on the following link; <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>.

You can search by apprenticeship programme, job title or geographical area.

University

You may decide that now is the time for you to commit to a degree, all apprenticeship have UCAS points attached to them so will aid your route to university, however you can also achieve the equivalent of a Masters Degree using the Apprenticeship programmes if you wanted too. A good place to start if you are considering applying for university is the UCAS website, if you are planning on going you will need to get your applications in before you want to start.

<https://www.ucas.com/>

You could also take a look on the below website at what Universities are close to you <https://www.studying-in-uk.org/list-of-universities-in-the-united-kingdom/>

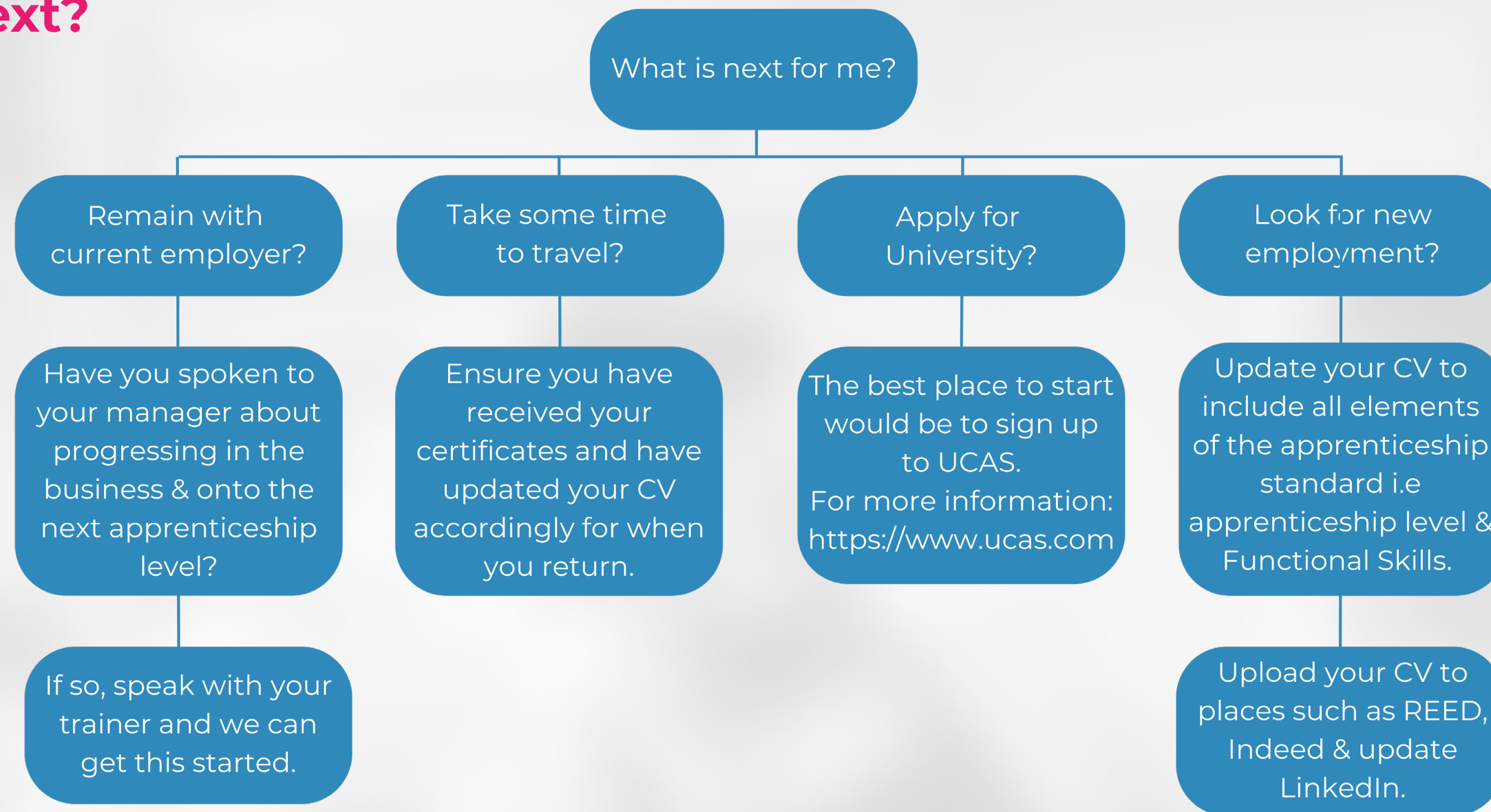
College

You may decide that you want to enrol into college to study in a theoretical environment, perhaps another subject altogether the below website is a good directory to find a suitable college to meet your needs.

<https://www.colleges.co.uk/colleges/>



What's Next?



No matter what you decide or even if are unsure what to do next...Please pick up the phone and talk to us

You have installed great improvements to your CV with the completion of the apprenticeship, the qualification supports your learning, and you have vast amounts of practical experience within the corresponding working environment. Other benefits are you have met lots of new colleagues, trained with experienced professionals and have a network of contacts, these are all aids to your career progression and next steps. It is important to update your CV to reflect your latest achievements, include any qualification certificates you have obtained including functional skills, official training days, detail your work experience and add on your overall grade achievement, a distinction is most definitely something to shout about!

Health and safety

Ultimately as the employer you have the same responsibility for health and safety of your apprentice as you would any other member of staff. Should an apprentice have an accident however, it is important that PLG are notified as we hold a secondary duty of care and would need to record any accidents. This can be done on the review sessions or via email/phone call.

Equality and diversity

PLG are committed to assisting all our learners to be successful and enjoy their learning programme. If learners feel the treatment or support, they are receiving does not meet their individual needs then please tell us.

We support and adhere to a policy of non-discrimination. This promotes equal treatment, respect and opportunity across all learners, regardless of gender, age, marital status, civil partnership, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy, race, colour, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin.

We are against any form of racism. We will use our best endeavours to provide a learning environment free from unlawful discrimination and will challenge any form of racism, harassment or victimisation

Safeguarding

The PLG safeguarding policy is made available to all apprentices and is designed to make sure that all adults and vulnerable people are kept safe. Below are some of the categories that fall under our safeguarding policy. If you have any concerns that an apprentice may be affected by any of these categories, then please contact us immediately on: safeguarding@plgrp.co.uk

Physical Abuse

No one should touch you in a way that physically hurts, e.g. punching or hitting you.

Emotional Abuse

No one should make you feel upset by teasing or bullying you.

Neglect

If you are looked after by a carer, he/she should not neglect or ignore you. You should know you are cared for.

Sexual Abuse

No one should touch you in a manner that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset. No one should make suggestive, sexual remarks to you.

Stealing

No one should force you to hand over money or possessions. Stealing is a criminal offence.

Discrimination/hate crime

No one should hurt you or discriminate against you because of your age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, cultural background or religion.

Extremism/radicalisation

No one should attempt to influence you to hold extreme views including those justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence.

Online

You should feel safe online - e.g. email, websites or social media. No one should bully or harass you, share information or images which make you feel uncomfortable, or get you involved in suspect activities.



Our Commitment to Quality Information, Advice & Guidance

We are dedicated to empowering apprentices and employers with exceptional Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) that supports informed decision-making, promotes continuous development, and drives success. Our approach is centered on providing clear, accurate, and impartial guidance tailored to individual needs, ensuring every apprentice and employer feels supported throughout their journey.

For apprentices, we aim to inspire confidence, enhance skills, and help navigate their career pathways by offering personalised advice that aligns with their aspirations and abilities. From enrolment to completion, our guidance is designed to foster resilience, growth, and success in achieving their programmes and beyond.

For employers, we provide expert advice and support to help integrate apprenticeships into their workforce development strategies. We work collaboratively to identify skills needs, tailor solutions, and ensure apprenticeships deliver measurable value for their organisation.

Our commitment to quality ensures that our IAG services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving needs of both individuals and businesses. We uphold the highest standards of confidentiality, professionalism, and continuous improvement, drawing on feedback to refine and enhance our services.

By fostering open and transparent communication, we aim to build long-lasting relationships that empower apprentices and employers to thrive in an ever-changing skills landscape. Together, we contribute to a highly skilled and motivated workforce, driving growth, opportunity, and success for all.



FAQs

In some of our recent feedback surveys we had a few popular questions comes up, here are the most popular ones:

Q Who Can do an Apprenticeship?

A Anyone who meets the below criteria can potentially complete an apprenticeship.

- UK/EU citizen who has lived within the UK/EU for the last 3 years
- be in relevant job role to programme applying for if doing internally
- working on average 30 hours per week
- not be in any other form of education

Q What are the entry requirements for an apprenticeship?

A Some programmes require a minimum Maths & English qualification particularly the higher levels. You will need to achieve your Maths & English at a minimum of level 1 for an intermediate apprenticeship and a level 2 for advanced or higher, or provide evidence of a suitable equivalent achievement. All apprentices will be required to work on maths and English as part of their personal development.

Q I have a job already can I do an apprenticeship?

A Yes, a big part of what PLG do is delivering apprenticeship programmes to existing members of staff already in the business. Providing the job role is relevant to the programme the person is applying to and they work on average 30 hours per week there is potential. For example, someone working as a PA/Receptionist could potentially do a Business Administrator or Customer Service Apprenticeship but there would be no possibility to do a Commis Chef programme.

Q Will I have to pay for my travel?

A As an apprentice you will be entitled to student discounts on travel, but unless an employer specifies your travel will be covered or re imbursed then you will be liable for your travel costs to and from work.

Q Will I incur any costs if I leave my employer or stop my apprenticeship?

A No, if you chose to stop the apprenticeship at any point you will not incur any costs, the funding will simply stop on your leave date.

Q Will I get paid?

A Yes, by law your employer has to pay you at least apprenticeship minimum wage for the hours you work.

Q What happens if I change jobs/employer whilst on an apprenticeship?

A This can happen, PLG will endeavour to support you with securing a new place of employment should your original employment cease for any reason. Providing the new place of work can support your programme IE be a similar role in the same industry and the new employer is willing to support you, then you should be able to continue your apprenticeship and complete as planned. PLG will provide full support to yourself and the new employer to assist in setting this up.

Q I have a degree, can I do an apprenticeship?

A Yes, providing the degree doesn't have any relevance to the apprenticeship programme you are applying for, and adequate learner can take place following the completion of a skills scan it is possible. For example, if a candidate has a Degree in Business Management this would not have an impact on them completing a Chef De Partie apprenticeship, but it would stop them doing a hospitality Management programme because a lot of the units around management would have been covered in the degree.



Mental Health

Anyone can develop poor mental health at any time, this could be triggered by any number of reasons and cannot necessarily be seen coming. Poor mental health is quite often linked with hospitality due to the long hours and high-pressure lifestyle and is something we take very seriously at PLG. All our staff are trained to look out for signs of poor mental health, and will provide information, support, and guidance.

Prevent & British Values

Our apprentice safety is firmly at the forefront of our focus when it comes to PLG programmes. PLG work with learners, employers, and other stakeholders to ensure we have very clear reporting guidelines regarding any potential issues or threats which could jeopardise learners' safety or wellbeing.

PLG has developed processes which allow learners to report any potential issues or concerns through our clear safeguarding policy. All of our trainers are trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues and undertake annual training to ensure they remain fully up to date with changes in legislation and referral trends within the sector.

Alongside our safeguarding processes PLG engage with local authorities to keep up to date with local threats and occurrences which happen on a regional level which allows our trainers to contextualise discussions and ensure our learners are always aware of what's happening and how to keep safe in their local area.

Complaints Policy

If at any time you are unhappy with the service you have received from PLG, please contact our Quality Director at safeguarding@plgrp.co.uk. Our full complaints policy can be found at <https://plgrp.co.uk/complaints-policy>

Invigilation Policy

As part of their apprenticeship most learners are required to complete Functional Skill external assessments. Whether these tests are on-screen or paper based they must be completed under invigilated conditions, and in accordance with awarding body regulations. Here at PLG it is our policy that all our Invigilators are either our Site Managers or learner Mentors. Being an Invigilator is a responsible job and one that we must ensure is carried out by trained personnel. To ensure that all our Invigilators are equipped to do the job, all our trainers carry out a short training session in each site, to the appropriate person to ensure they have all the tools for the job. All our employers are proud to be part of this process in ensuring that their staff sit their tests under exam conditions, enabling them the best possible opportunity to pass.





The Burnt Chef Project

PLG proudly partners with The Burnt Chef Project

Launched in May 2019, The Burnt Chef Project was founded with the sole mission of eradicating mental health stigma within the hospitality industry.

The hospitality sector is known for its slim margins, and with increasing pressure to cut costs, both employers and employees are feeling the effects on their mental health. Long, antisocial hours, tough working conditions, and the constant pressure to perform are just some of the daily struggles that hospitality professionals face.

A recent survey of 1,273 hospitality workers revealed that 8 out of 10 (84%) had experienced mental health issues during their careers, and 46% would not feel comfortable discussing their concerns with colleagues.

Mental health is just as important as physical health, and hospitality staff deserve the support of their peers and employers. We believe it is essential to create an environment where mental health is openly discussed, and where policies are regularly reviewed to reflect this. This should be the true “badge of honour” in the hospitality industry.

Together, we can break down the stigma surrounding mental health and create a more supportive environment for hospitality professionals.

To understand more about The Burnt Chef Project, or to access support, tools and advice around mental health, please visit www.theburntchefproject.com.





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