MIGHTY OAK TRAINING

Mighty Oak Training

COURSE GUIDE 2023-24

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ABOUT MIGHTY OAK

MIGHTY OAK IS A TRAINING ORGANISATION BASED IN OXFORDSHIRE. WE PROVIDE TRAINING IN BENEFITS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES, HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES TO ORGANISATIONS NATIONALLY.

Our trainers work within a Revenues and Benefits environment which means they are completely up to date with schemes and legislative changes as well as having a full understanding of the day to day processes.

Mighty Oak's founder Julie Maycock is a long established Revenues and Benefits trainer with over 30 years of experience in the sector area in a training, end user, systems and management capacity. Julie is CIPD (Chartered Institute Personal Development) trained and has a Level 3 certificate in learning and development practices.

We have extensive experience in delivering vocational qualifications in this sector and take considerable pride in the fact that they have helped over 300 learners to achieve these.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU:

Mighty Oak provides many services. We have the experience and expertise to tailor any requirements you have in the Revenues, Benefits, Housing and Customer Services field to suit you and your staff.

Our trainers have worked with over 60 authorities nationwide (previously with Acorn Training) and have built up an exemplary reputation. Trainers also hold a training qualification with CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personal Development) who are a lead organisation in the field of Learning and Development. We would be happy to supply references for your consideration.

GET IN TOUCH:
Julie Maycock (Founder):
Email: julie@mightyoaktraining.com
Linekdin: julie-maycock-9798519

Aaron Masters (Training Consultant):
Email: aaron@mightyoaktraining.com
Linekdin: aaron-masters-253152268

REVENUES & BENEFITS APPRENTICESHIPS

Mighty Oak Training is an approved provider on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoAPT) and offer training services for the Level 4 Revenues and Welfare Benefits Practitioner Apprenticeship.

WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP

An apprenticeship is a job with training. It enables someone to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to perform effectively in their job role. Apprentices have a contract of employment and are employees of the organisation which take them on. They must be paid at least the appropriate rate of the minimum wage for the duration of their apprenticeship, although many employers pay more.

WHAT ARE THE ENTRY/ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

The apprentice will need to meet the following criteria;

- Apprentices will need to be employed in a relevant job role for the duration of the apprenticeship.
- The apprentice will need to have gained functional skills level 2 (or equivalent) in English and Maths. Apprentices, who have not yet reached this level, will need to attain this prior to their end point assessment.
- The employer must agree to 6 hours a week off-the-job learning for each apprentice. We will assist each apprentice in keeping a log of the training they receive.

The level 4 Revenues and Welfare Benefits Practitioner Apprenticeship is suitable for new staff or existing staff learning new skills.

HOW ARE APPRENTICES TRAINED?

Here at Mighty Oak Training, the emphasis is on face to face learning. This is in the form of Teams and on site, visits. We work with small groups, not large cohorts/.

We use a variety of blended training techniques to supplement face to face training to make the learner experience the best we can possibly make it. Some of the tools we use include workbooks, projects, work based, discussions, coaching and eLearning. We will ensure that each individual programme is varied and interesting. The training plan will ensure that all elements of the standard have been addressed and that apprentices are prepared for end point assessment at the end of their training.

Each training plan will be devised in complete partnership with the employer

HOW IS THE TRAINING PAID FOR?

Levy paying employers will be able to draw on levy funding to pay for apprenticeship training. The funding band maximum for the Level 4 Revenues and Benefits Welfare Practitioner Apprenticeship is set at £7,000*

For training to be eligible, 6 hours a week of the training must be off the job. Our model along with employer provided training will meet this.

*Additional funding is available for 16-19 year olds and also for functional skills learning and additional needs

WHY CHOOSE US?

We feel that we distinguish ourselves from other providers through our emphasis on personal contact and creating individual training plans to meet the organisations objectives. We will establish close communication with apprentices from the outset and maintain this throughout their apprenticeship. Apprentices will always have a route to initiate conversation.

End point assessment preparation will form a very important element of the plan and as an approved EPA organisation for this apprenticeship, we are well placed to set up and guide the apprentice through a mock assessment.

We are an established vocational qualification provider in Revenues and Benefits with a success rate of 95%

IRRV LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN LOCAL TAXATION, BENEFITS AND ADVICE (RQF)

Mighty Oak is an approved assessment centre with the IRRV to deliver RQFs in:

- Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support
- Local Taxation
- Generic and Advice pathways

All these R/QCF N/SVQs are level 3 qualifications and include both technical and customer services tasks. The advice pathway includes units on advising customers about other welfare benefits. Training qill be offered in subjects where learning is required.

WHAT IS AN RQF?

RQF (Regulated Qualification Framework)
They are work related, competence based qualifications based on National Occupational Standards. They are devised to show that the candidates competently perform a range of relevant work related tasks over a period of time by a process of assessing candidate evidence.

WHO CAN UNDERTAKE THESE RQFs?

These RQFs are aimed at practitioners who currently work in a Revenues or Benefits or welfare advice environment.

HOW DOES ASSESSMENT TAKE PLACE?

To undertake these RQFs, candidates need to be registered through an approved assessment centre, of which Mighty Oak is one.

Every candidate is allocated a qualified assessor who will guide them through the process of providing evidence that satisfies the Standards. Evidence to prove competency can take the form of many different assessment methods and is usually collated by the candidate in either a paper-based or electronic based portfolio.
Mighty Oak provides licenses to an electronic based portfolio and candidates will be provided with individual log in details and will be guided in its use.

Every Centre must have a quality assurer and that person is responsible for ensuring any assessment decisions that the assessor makes are consistent and accurate. They do this by sampling the candidate's portfolio of evidence and occasionally observing the assessor.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

There is no specific time limit to undertake the RQF. This means that candidates can take time out from it; however, the support offered by Mighty Oak is 12 months.

WHAT QUALIFATION WILL I RECEIVE?

Once a candidate has proved competence and all units have been certificated you will gain a level 3 IRRV Diploma and you can use IRRV (Tech) after your name.

PRICING & DELIVERY

MIGHTY OAK OFFERS A WIDE RANGE OF INDIVIDUAL COURSES FOR STAFF NOT PURSUING A SPECIFIC QUALIFICATION.

At Mighty Oak we will work with you to tailor both the content and the duration of our courses to suit the needs of your organisation. Most of our courses are delivered remotely via Microsoft Teams, but we can also provide options for on site delivery, especially for system training.

Our courses are priced competitively by the day, rather than by delegate. Our training sessions are designed to accommodate up to ten delegates to maximise participation and discussion – additional delegates may be added by negotiation at an additional cost.

2023-24 Guide Prices (excluding VAT):

Individual Course: £750 per day*.

Diploma: £2,095 per learner. £75 discount per learner where four or more from the same site start at the same time.

*Plus travel, accommodation, and subsistence expenses where training is delivered on site.

HOW TO BOOK:

Complete the CONTACT US form on our website:

www.mightyoaktraining.com

PART 1: REVENUES

We offer a range of courses for local government revenues specialists. These courses cover both the legislative framework and practical administration of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

None of the courses in this section is system specific, and therefore they are relevant to any organisation.

If your authority uses NEC Revenues & Benefits, we can also offer a variety of practical system training courses. Find out more in Part 3 below.

Mighty Oak Training

COUNCIL TAX OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course provides an introduction to the key concepts of Council Tax registration and collection, designed primarily for staff who are advising customers on managing their household finances.

Topics covered include:

- Banding
- Exemptions & Discounts
- Liability
- Billing & Instalments
- Recovery

COUNCIL TAX REGISTRATION & RECOVERY

COURSE DURATION: THREE DAYS

This course provides delegates with a complete understanding of the legislation and administration of Council Tax, from setting the charge through to recovery. Once completed, delegates will have all the theoretical knowledge they need for work as assessment officers or advisors.

This course is not system specific and is therefore relevant to staff from any organisation.

Topics covered include:

- History and context
- Completion Notices & Valuation
- Exemptions
- Liability
- Discounts & Disregards
- Charge Calculation
- Billing & Instalments
- Pre-Court Recovery
- The Court Process
- Liability Orders
- Post-Court Recovery

REVENUES RECOVERY & ENFORCEMENT

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This one-day course is primarily designed for revenues staff who wish to increase their knowledge of recovery, particularly the court process. It goes into more detail than the standard practitioner courses, and is relevant to staff working on both Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

Topics covered include:

- Billing & Instalments
- Pre-Court Recovery
- Preparing for Court
- The Court Process

- Billing & Instalments
- Pre-Court Recovery
- Preparing for Court
- The Court Process

COUNCIL TAX APPEALS

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course provides an end-to-end overview of the appeals process for Council Tax (including completion notices) and Council Tax Reduction.

Topics covered include:

- The legislative framework.
- What can and can’t be appealed.
- Procedures for handling appeals within a local authority.
- Timescales.
- Interacting with the Valuation Tribunal.
- Preparing documentation for a hearing (“The bundle”).
- The hearing process.
- Limits of further appeals.

NON-DOMESTIC RATES OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course provides an introduction to the key concepts in Non-Domestic Rates registration and collection. It is designed to give non-specialist staff context and basic familiarity with the topic, allowing them to answer basic queries and identify areas of future development.

Topics covered include:

- History and context
- Valuation
- Exemptions
- Calculation
- Liability & Occupation

NON-DOMESTIC RATES FOR PRACTITIONERS

COURSE DURATION: THREE DAYS

This course provides delegates with a complete understanding of the legislation and administration of Non-Domestic Rates, from valuation through to recovery. Once completed, delegates will have all the theoretical knowledge they need for work as assessment officers or advisors.

Topics covered include:

- History & context
- Valuation
- Exemptions
- Calculation
- Liability & Occupation
- Reliefs (Mandatory & Discretionary)
- Billing & Instalments
- Pre-Court Recovery
- The Court Process
- Liability Orders
- Post-Court Recovery

PART 2: BENEFITS & WELFARE

These courses are designed for staff who are working for or in partnership with local authorities to provide Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and advice on broader welfare provision.

None of the courses in this section is system specific, and therefore they are relevant to any organisation.

If your authority uses NEC Revenues & Benefits, we can also offer a variety of practical system training courses. Find out more in Part 3 below.

Mighty Oak Training

HOUSING BENEFIT SPECIALIST TRAINING

COURSE DURATION: SIX DAYS

This course provides a complete program of learning for prospective Housing Benefit assessment officers.

Attendees of this course will cover all topics noted in the following courses in this catalogue:

- Introduction to Housing Benefit
- Housing Benefit Changes in Circumstance
- Self-Employed Earnings in Housing Benefit
- Persons From Abroad in Housing Benefit
- Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery

HOUSING BENEFIT & COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course gives a brief introduction to the basic principles of Housing Benefit. It is primarily intended for staff who needs to answer basic queries and provide advice as part of broader work in housing or welfare services. It also looks at the different possible kinds of Council Tax Support, including the prescribed scheme for pensioners.

Topics covered include:

- What is Housing Benefit?
- Eligibility
- Household
- Applicable Amounts
- Disregards
- Earned & Unearned Income
- Capital
- Simple Calculations
- Non-Dependants
- Rent & Tenure
- Notification & Payments

INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING BENEFIT

COURSE DURATION: THREE DAYS

This course works through all the elements of the Housing Benefit calculation, introducing attendees to the end-to-end process. It provides a strong foundation for staff to answer queries or give detailed advice to claimants on how their benefit has been calculated.

Topics covered include:

- What is Housing Benefit?
- Eligibility
- Household
- Applicable Amounts
- Disregards
- Earned & Unearned Income
- Capital
- Calculations
- Non-Dependants
- Rent & Tenure
- Notification & Payments

HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCE

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course builds on the Introduction to Housing Benefit course and gives a detailed look at the assessment and calculation of changes in circumstance.

Topics covered include:

- Identifying Changes
- Identifying Date of Change
- Late Changes
- Changes Prompting Move to UC
- Revision or Supersession
- Overpayments
- Appeals

SELF-EMPLOYED EARNINGS IN HOUSING BENEFIT

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course provides a targeted look at how to assess and calculate self-employed earnings as part of a Housing Benefit claim.

Topics covered include:

- Definition of Self-Employed
- Assessment Periods
- Income
- Expenses
- Pre-Tax Profits
- National Insurance
- Minimum Income Floor

PERSONS FROM ABROAD IN HOUSING BENEFIT

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course looks at the different classes of persons from abroad and how their status can affect their entitlement to Housing Benefit.

Topics covered include:

- Habitual Residency
- British Isles Nationals
- EEA Nationals
- Nationals from the Rest of the World

HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT RECOVERY

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course breaks down the different sorts of overpayment, their classification, and the different potential means of recovering them. Advice is also provided on negotiating payment arrangements.

Topics covered include:

- Overpayment Classification
- Local Authority Error and Admin Delay
- Recovery from Ongoing Entitlement (Clawback)
- Recovery from DWP Benefit (PDP)
- Direct Earnings Attachments
- County Court Judgments
- Charging Orders
- Bankruptcy
- Enforcement Agents
- Negotiating Payment Arrangements

HOUSING BENEFIT APPEALS

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course provides an end-to-end overview of the appeals process for Housing Benefit.

Topics covered include:

- The legislative framework.
- What can and can't be appealed.
- Procedures for handling appeals within a local authority.
- Timescales.
- Interacting with the Appeals Tribunal.
- Preparing documentation for a hearing.
- The hearing process.
- Limits of further appeals.

HOUSING BENEFIT SUBSIDY FOR BEGINNERS

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course is designed to provide a basic understanding of subsidy arrangements for Housing Benefit, and how decisions made when calculating claims can have an impact on the money received by the local authority

Topics covered include:

WELFARE BENEFITS OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course serves as an introduction to various forms of welfare benefit not directly administered by local authorities. It is designed to provide context to staff about the interactions between these benefits and Council Tax, Housing Benefit, and Council Tax Reduction, as well as enable them to offer financial advice and to answer customer queries.

Topics covered include:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

UNIVERSAL CREDIT OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course introduces both the theory and practical experience of claiming Universal Credit. It is designed to give context to staff working housing and other welfare benefits whose customers may need advice on accessing the system, as well as to managers and policy staff needing to assess how Universal Credit might affect their own services.

Topics covered include:

- What is universal credit
- Latest timetable
- Eligibility
- Claiming universal credit
- Claimant commitment
- The universal credit calculation (elements and income)
- What is universal credit
- Latest timetable
- Eligibility
- Claiming universal credit
- Claimant commitment
- The universal credit calculation (elements and income)

PART 3: NEC SYSTEM TRAINING

Mighty Oak has worked in partnership with NEC Software Solutions for many years, providing practical advice and training based on real life experience of using their systems in a local government environment.

We have established training plans for new starters in various roles using NEC's flagship Revenues & Benefits software, as well as offering refreshers and development for established staff. We have also supported several large authorities in migrating their entire Revenues & Benefits services to NEC from other providers.

The following courses represent a selection of the training plans we can provide. As always, we will work with you to tailor our content and timescales to meet the needs of your organisation. Where possible we would recommend that these courses are delivered in person, but we also have a proven record of delivering them remotely when necessary.

NEC REVENUES & BENEFITS OVERVIEW

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course provides a step-by-step walkthrough of the main screens in both the Revenues and Benefits sections of the system. As such it is primarily designed for customer service staff, auditors, and other staff who primarily need to interrogate the system rather than update it.

Basic actions such as creating notebooks and adjusting preferences will be covered, and some theoretical knowledge of Council Tax and Housing Benefit is expected. We will need access to your Test environment on the day of training.

NEC REVENUES PRACTITIONER SYSTEM TRAINING

COURSE DURATION: THREE DAYS

This course is designed to equip revenues-trained staff with the tools needed to assess Council Tax and NDR using NEC Revenues & Benefits.

Training will be fully interactive: delegates will learn how to create and terminate accounts, set up liabilities, add and remove discounts and exemptions, create account actions, and facilitate moves. Practical scenarios will be provided as well as detailed action glossaries.

No previous experience using NEC systems is expected, but a theoretical understanding of Council Tax or Non-Domestic Rates will be presumed. We will need access to your Test environment in advance of the training date to prepare scenarios.

NEC BENEFITS PRACTITIONER SYSTEM TRAINING

COURSE DURATION: THREE DAYS

This course is designed to equip benefit-trained staff with the tools needed to assess Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction using NEC Revenues & Benefits.

Training will be fully interactive: delegates will learn how to create and end claim periods, set up household members, finance items, rent periods, and payment schemes, calculate claims, and process changes in circumstance. Practical scenarios will be provided as well as detailed action glossaries.

No previous experience using NEC systems is expected, but a theoretical understanding of benefits will be presumed. We will need access to your Test environment in advance of the training date to prepare scenarios.

NEC BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS & DEBTORS

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course will familiarise staff with how to interrogate the various areas of NEC Revenues & Benefits related to Housing Benefit overpayments, including the Debtors module.

Topic covered include:

- Classifying and amending an overpayment
- Tracing the history of an overpayment
- Splitting an overpayment
- Recovery from ongoing entitlement
- Managing debts being recovered from DWP benefits [PDP]
- Debtors invoices, final notices, and recovery stages
- Tracking and allocating payments

NEC SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION: ATLAS & UC4CTR

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

ATLAS & UC4CTR are some of the most complex and involved areas of NEC system administration, but when used effectively can be powerful tools to drive automation in high volume areas of benefits processing.

This course aims to demystify the basic administration of these systems, walking through the relevant screens and looking at the end-to-end process of maintaining DWP data flows. We will also look at the various options the system provides for automatic processing of DWP data, how they work, and what their potential outcomes might be.

Moreso even that our other courses, we will work with you in the run-up to delivering this training to ensure that it engages with how you already use the system, or intend to do so.

NEC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT USER TRAINING

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course provides an overview of NEC Document Management (formerly Information@Work) from the perspective of assessment officers and other frontline users.

Topic covered include:

- Searching for documents
- Creating saved searches and tiles
- Viewing and exporting documents
- Amending system settings and metadata display
- Indexing documents
- Work trays and workflow management
- Document audit history
- Using letter templates

NEC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATOR TRAINING

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course builds on our NEC DM User Training, and is targeted at staff with a role in administering the system for front-end users.

Topics covered include:

- Creating and amending user accounts
- Creating and amending document types
- Managing workflow processes
- Creating and amending letter templates

PART 4: BUSINESS SKILLS

In addition to our specialism in Revenues & Benefits, we also provide a range of courses in general corporate skills. These courses are particularly suited to form part of broader induction plans for new starters, or as elements of ongoing professional development.

Mighty Oak Training

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

COURSE DURATION: ONE DAY

This course looks at the topic of communication from both a theoretical and a practical perspective. It is designed to help delegates think critically about how they communicate, and provides tools to do so more effectively and with greater confidence.

Topics covered include:

- What is communication?
- Why is communication important?
- Verbal vs. non-verbal communication
- Barriers to communication
- Effective listening
- Questioning
- Body language
- Assertiveness
- Writing skills

JOB APPLICATIONS & INTERVIEW SKILLS

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

This course looks at the end-to-end process of applying for a job, from tips for writing a good cover letter and CV, what employers are looking for in a personal statement, and advice on how to prepare for and conduct yourself at an interview.

CUSTOMER SERVICE "LIGHT BITES"

COURSE DURATION: HALF DAY

We offer a range of "light bite" sessions that focus on specific topics centred around communication and interpersonal skills. Each lasts around three hours and is aimed at staff who have regular contact with customers either face-to-face or on the telephone.

We can provide sessions on the following topics:

- Managing Conflict
- Listening Skills
- Questioning Skills
- Dealing with Different Customers
- Assertiveness

Mighty Oak Training

CONTACT US

www.mightyoakrtraining.com