

Date April 2020

## Benefits of Apprentices continuing with their learning whilst on furlough

Dear Employer,

At this very difficult time, when we're all dealing with the changes to our professional and personal lives caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we wanted to write to you to offer support and share our top 5 reasons why it's beneficial for apprentices to remain actively in-learning whilst on furlough, working from home or in self-isolation.

The government and the Department for Education (DfE) are actively encouraging employers and providers to keep furloughed apprentices on-programme and engaged in active learning.

### Top 5 Benefits

1. Increased motivation and self-confidence; gives a sense of purpose and focus
2. A new routine, being productive, seeing progression of their apprenticeship and a sense of achievement both with the knowledge and theory relating to their Apprenticeship Program.
3. Reduce the feeling of isolation, and the loss of ordinary contact with colleagues
4. Help them to manage their own mental health, look out for others and know where to get help from
5. Development of different methods of communication and how to make use of them in their role, as well as improving the use of technology/digital solutions within the business environment.

We've already adapted many of our training resources for remote delivery and early feedback has been very positive. We continue to develop new and innovative delivery solutions to meet the needs of the apprentices at this difficult time and to support all our apprentices and employers during the lockdown. This will help in the preparation for a return to more normal working arrangements. As ever we will work in partnership with you; our regular learning and 'social' interactions with your apprentices, will support you in relation to maintaining communication channels at this difficult time.

Before I close, I thought you might be interested to know that you can start new apprentices during the crisis; this could be a new recruit, but is more likely to be existing employees that would benefit from undertaking an apprenticeship. For these new apprentices we've adapted the curriculum to bring forward much of the underpinning knowledge and theory, alongside the English and maths if required, so that their time away from work is utilised developing new skills and expanding their knowledge so that when they return to the workplace they can use what they've learnt to the benefit of the business.

For those employers who pay the Apprenticeship Levy this will also mean your Levy spend will continue to flow and in so doing reduce the risk you losing Levy Funds due to an underspend against the 2-year rule.

*Apprentices can be furloughed in the same way as other employees and they can continue to train whilst furloughed.*

*However, you must pay your Apprentices at least the Apprenticeship Minimum Wage/National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage (AMW/NLW/NMW) as appropriate for all the time they spend training. This means you must cover any shortfall between the amount you can claim for their wages through this scheme and their appropriate minimum wage.*

Above information taken from;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

I hope you've found this information useful and you agree that there are many benefits to allowing apprentices to remain on-programme whilst on furlough, working from home or in self-isolation.

Let me close by wishing you and your family good health.

Yours sincerely,



Steve McAloone

Director of Curriculum for Technical, Adult and Employer Learning