

APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT GRANT GUIDANCE NOTES

Tees Valley Combined Authority supports the creation of Apprenticeships in the Tees Valley local authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees. This support is designed to assist employers who are committed to creating a new Apprenticeship or progressing an existing Apprentice onto a higher level of Apprenticeship. The apprenticeship training must be provided by a training provider approved by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

The Grant supports SME's who create Apprenticeships in sectors facing high demand and growth from employers as identified in the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan.

The Priority Sectors being supported are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Digital and Creative
- Construction
- Culture and Leisure
- Process, Chemical and Energy
- Health & Biologics
- Business and Professional Services
- Health Care
- Education

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Apprenticeship Support Grant is available to SME's identified by Tees Valley Combined Authority as being in one of the above Priority Sectors**:

- Apprentices Aged 16-18 - £3,000
- Apprentices Aged 19+ - £2,000

The Grant will be paid at Week 13 (following on from completion of the 13 Week Review and associated paperwork).

For any employers who do not fall into one of the above Priority Sectors, the following Grant is available:

- SME (49 or less employees), who employ an apprentice aged 19+ - £500

The Grant will be paid at Week 13 (following on from completion of the 13 Week Review and associated paperwork).

Please Note

- **Tees Valley Combined Authority will determine if your company falls within one of our identified priority sectors.
- The eligibility criteria and payment process laid out in this guidance may be revised at any time by Tees Valley Combined Authority. Any changes will be updated on our website and existing employers will be informed of any revisions which may affect their application.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR GRANT

THE EMPLOYER MUST:

- have been **trading** for a minimum period of 12 months (up to Apprenticeship start date).
- be in a **Priority Sector (as approved by TVCA) - £2,000+ Grant**
- **not** in a Priority Sector - **£500 Grant**

- **confirm that they are not able to create** an Apprenticeship **without the Apprenticeship Support Grant.**

- ensure the Apprentice's workplace is in the **Tees Valley** i.e., local authority areas of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland or Stockton-on-Tees.

- have **249 or less employees** in total across **all** worksites (**Priority Sectors only**).
- have **49** or less employees in total across **all** worksites (**Non-Priority Sectors**).

- have completed a **Sub-Threshold Subsidy Aid Declaration Form** and not received more than £300,000 in public funding awarded under the State Aid Regulation of De Minimis in the last 3 year rolling period.

- commit to paying the Apprentice(s) **at least the Apprentice National Minimum Wage** appropriate for an Apprentice of their age, including time for off-the-job training.

- confirm that, after **13 months** of the Apprentice commencing training, they will complete and return an **employer questionnaire** provided by TVCA.

- apply within 4 weeks of the training start date, if your application supports progression, then you must apply within 4 weeks of the new training start date, any applications that do not fit into this timeframe will not be considered.

Please Note:

- If eligible, employers can claim up to a maximum of three grants in a 12-month period.

- If the employer has received grants from the previous Tees Valley Apprenticeship Grant schemes, they will count towards the three grants in a 12-month period (from the apprenticeship start date of training for previous grants claimed).

- Applicants are required to confirm whether previous Apprentices continue to be in employment or have left the business.

- If a previous Apprentice has left their employment or training the employer and training provider will need to confirm the reason, why they left to Tees Valley Combined Authority before another grant can be considered.

THE APPRENTICE MUST:

- be aged **16-18** on the start date of their Apprenticeship.
- be aged **19+** on the start date of their Apprenticeship.
- **live in England.**
- be **free to be an Apprentice**, not taking part in full-time education elsewhere.
- be a **new or existing employee** recruited to an Apprentice role **or an existing Apprentice progressing** to a higher-level Apprenticeship.
- be enrolled on a **recognised ESFA qualification** from the Apprenticeship Standards or Framework confirmed by TVCA.
- complete a minimum of 13 weeks in learning. **If the Apprentice leaves or is dismissed and does not complete 13 weeks 'in learning' the employer will not be eligible for the grant.**
- be employed for a minimum for 12 months, or the time it takes to complete their Apprenticeship, whichever is greater (subject to satisfactory performance of the Apprentice as an employee).

HOW TO APPLY?

The Apprenticeship Support Grant Application Form is available to download on our website <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/business-support/tees-valley-apprenticeship-support-for-employers/>

The employer is required to return a completed Application Form and Sub-Threshold Subsidy Aid Declaration Form to the Business and Skills Team at Tees Valley Combined Authority. The Business Skills Team will acknowledge receipt and the application will then be assessed against the eligibility criteria detailed above.

All employers will be contacted by the Business and Skills Team to advise on the status of their application within 10 working days.

To apply for the Apprenticeship Support Grant please fully complete the Application Form and Sub-Threshold Subsidy Aid Declaration and send to: Project.Team@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk

For a grant application to be eligible all stated criteria must be met. Should there be any query as to whether the stated criteria are met by an applicant Tees Valley Combined Authority's Head of Education, Employment & Skills shall have the final decision

PAYMENT OF APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT GRANTS

Grant payments can only be approved once a 13-week review meeting has taken place with the employer, training provider and Apprentice.

An Employer Declaration form will be emailed to the employer 13 weeks from the apprenticeship start date. This is to confirm that a review meeting has been held (with provider, employer, and Apprentice) and the Apprentice has completed a minimum of 13 continuous weeks in training / employment with the applicant employer and is continuing with their training programme. The form is to be signed by all three parties at the review meeting and should be returned to the Combined Authority Business and Skills Team by the employer.

Once a signed Declaration form has been received from the employer the Business and Skills Team will obtain final approval of the grant. Grant payments will then be made within 10 working days of the grant approval date via BACs directly into the employer's bank account. The grant payment is made by Tees Valley Combined Authority, as this is a grant it is exempt from VAT.

Please Note: If the Declaration form or any other outstanding paperwork has not been received by week 18 of the learner's training, Tees Valley Combined Authority reserves the right to withdraw the application for grant.

All grant recipients will be sent an evaluation form to complete 13 months after the grant has been awarded.

Tees Valley Combined Authority, or duly authorised representatives appointed or other relevant bodies, may conduct further checks into the validity of the Apprenticeship Support Grant applications.

Should any information regarding the Apprentice, their enrolment or employment status prove incorrect or require clarification, an Apprenticeship Support Grant will not be issued. Where incorrect information is submitted and this influences the decision to award a grant, Tees Valley Combined Authority will request the payment be returned.