

## NEWSLETTER

## Welcome to the latest edition of the WBTC quarterly newsletter



I am thrilled to present the latest edition of our newsletter, following a truly outstanding year for WBTC. Our incredible team has delivered exceptional results, across all programmes.

The most recent achievement data is in, and we are proud to announce an apprenticeship achievement of 78.1%. To put this remarkable figure into perspective the national average for independent training providers is just 58%. Our Great Start Study Programme also saw achievement increases in key qualifications whilst working with many learners that struggled in a school environment. Our achievements rates aren't just numbers; they are a direct reflection of the commitment and quality of our diversity. This success is testament to the tireless

efforts of all our team who work everyday to help our learners succeed. We are incredibly proud of this collective achievement, and it sets a new benchmark for what we can accomplish together.

Looking ahead, we are mindful of the ongoing reforms within the sector. Ofsted has introduced a new inspection framework and scorecard, with the top rating now being 'Exceptional'. This change presents an exciting challenge for WBTC, and we are already aligning our strategies to ensure we are in the best possible position to strive for this new, prestigious rating. Additionally, we are closely monitoring the planned transition of apprenticeships from the Department of Education to the Department of Work and Pensions. This move could reshape and refocus the landscape of our industry, and our leadership team will adapt to any changes to ensure a smooth transition for our learners and employer partners.

Thank you for being part of our community. We look forward to another year of shared success and excellence.

**Craig Mincher, Managing Director**

## From Apprentice to CEO: The Power of Workplace Training

When Andrew Watts first stepped into the print room as an apprentice with Apple Print & Creative (AP&C) through WBTC, he couldn't have imagined that one day he'd be the CEO of AP&C. But that is exactly what happened - and his journey is a shining example of what apprenticeships can achieve.

Andrew began by learning the technical side of printing, mastering the tools and techniques that underpin the industry. With time he moved into sales, where his experience and leadership led him to take ownership of the business. "WBTC didn't just give me a job - they gave me a foundation. The skills I learned as an apprentice shaped the way I lead today." - Andrew Watts

His story isn't just inspiring - it's instructive. It shows that apprenticeships are more than a recruitment tool. They're a strategic investment in talent, growth, and leadership.

Ready to find out how an apprenticeship can kickstart someone's career or fuel your business's future leadership? Get in touch with WBTC today!





## Give a Young Person a Great Start: Offer a Work Placement

At WBTC, we're passionate about helping every young person take those important first steps into the world of work. Our Great Start Study Programme is specifically designed to bridge the gap between education and employment, allowing learners to achieve key qualifications like Maths and English while simultaneously developing the practical and employability skills that employers demand.

We know that true learning doesn't just happen in the classroom, which is why we're so proud of the extensive network of local employers who already welcome our students. These placements are crucial, providing hands-on experience and allowing students to observe workplace dynamics, build professional confidence, and gain invaluable insights that help them discover their true strengths and career interests. Some of our learners attend weekly, building skills steadily, while others benefit from shorter experiences—even just a day can open new doors.

As our successful programme continues to grow, so does our urgent need for new opportunities. By hosting a placement, your business isn't just offering a helping hand—you are making a tangible investment in the future workforce of our local area. Whether you're a small local shop or a large organisation, your involvement is flexible and can make a life-changing difference for one of our learners.

If you'd like to join us in making a positive impact, please reach out to Lizzie at [Elizabeth@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:Elizabeth@wbtc-uk.com); she will be delighted to chat about how your organisation could get involved.

Together, we can inspire more young people and build brighter futures for our community.

## Congratulations to last quarter's achievers:

Shane Allman  
Joshua Attwood  
Oliver Blake  
Cathryn Byng  
Susana Carvalho  
Sophie Chatterton  
Jack Concannon  
Lily-May Cumber-Wells  
Deborah Dembrey  
Suzi Devaney  
Rena Dhunna  
Simon Elsworth  
Holly Fielding  
Melinda Flack  
Aaron Grant  
Bethany Kilby  
Matthew Lawrence  
Rachel Lees  
Lydia Mathias  
Ruby Merryweather  
Dylan Morrison  
Ian Newman  
Andrew Rainey  
Tetiana Rumiantseva  
Diya Shahid  
Dai Sharland-Kiersch  
Sophie Stevens  
Ewelina Szeffler  
Annie Webber  
Lewis Whale  
Connor Young

**Choose WBTC for high quality  
apprenticeships that ensures for  
your business and workforce.**



## Volunteer Opportunities Await!

Are you looking for a rewarding way to give back to the community and gain valuable experience? West Berkshire Council is looking for dedicated volunteers for a variety of exciting roles!

This is a fantastic chance to use your skills, meet new people, and make a real difference right here in West Berkshire. Whether you have an hour a week or a few days a month, your support would be greatly appreciated.

Current opportunities are available in areas such as:

- Museums
- Art Sessions
- Opportunities at Shaw House
- Libraries



Interested in learning more about the available roles? Please visit [westberks.gov.uk/volunteer](http://westberks.gov.uk/volunteer)



# Successful Level 3 Team Leader Apprenticeship Programme

## WBTC runs a successful Team Leader Apprenticeship programme with an achievement rate of 90%

The Team Leader Apprenticeship is a 15 month programme of learning, plus 3 months to complete End Point Assessment training sessions are held monthly and can be completed face-to-face or online.

You will also have monthly 1-2-1 coaching sessions with your designated Training Consultant. Learners gain coaching sessions with your designated Training Consultant. You will learn relevant management models and theories. The topics covered are:

- Data collection and benchmarking
- Problem analysis and conclusions
- People and Relationships
- Future plans and opportunities
- Building a high-performing team
- Communication and implementing operational plans
- Managing change and continuous improvement
- Using technology
- Contributing to a project



Ian Newman

## Congratulations to our recent achievers!

Since January 2025, the following Apprentices have successfully achieved the L3 Team Leader Supervisor Apprenticeship.

**Annie Webber - Ubico | Andrew Rainey - Ubico | Manvydas Kriksciunas - Ubico | Connor Young - Cleanova**  
**Matthew Lawrence - Xtrac | Sarah Passow - West Berks Council | Shane Allman - Xtrac | Ian Newman - Xtrac**  
**Rachel Lees - Bayer PLC**

## Learner Testimonial: Ian Newman: Xtrac

"Over the past 15 months, I've been working towards completing my Level 3 Team Leader Supervisor Apprenticeship. In my role as Milling Team Leader at XTRAC I review production schedules, daily priorities, allocate work, purchase tooling, provide guidance, training, daily KPI data, problem solve, also collaborate with multiple departments and provide feedback across the team to promote a positive work environment. Also I support team operations, managing projects, or providing administrative assistance, and throughout this time, I've gained valuable leadership and management skills that directly support my day-to-day responsibilities.

The apprenticeship has given me a solid foundation in key areas such as effective communication, team motivation, and time management. It challenged me to step outside of my comfort zone and apply what I learned in real workplace scenarios. A major highlight of my journey was achieving a distinction in both my presentation discussion and portfolio discussion – a result I'm proud of.

This apprenticeship has not only boosted my confidence but also enhanced my ability to take on more responsibility within the team. I now approach tasks with a more strategic mindset and have a better understanding of how strong leadership can influence positive outcomes.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to continue developing my skills and exploring new opportunities for growth. Whether that means taking on new challenges in my current role or progressing further in leadership and management, I'm motivated to keep learning and evolving in my career"

# Safeguarding Focus

The UK in 2025 finds itself at a crossroads, with a discussions around a cultural nationalism becoming increasingly prominent. This isn't just a political talking point; it's a social phenomenon, visible in recent large-scale protests and political discourse. It's a complex issue, with deeply held beliefs on national identity, sovereignty, and immigration at its core.

The 'Unite the kingdom' march in London, organised by activist Tommy Robinson, was one of the largest nationalist gatherings in recent history. Drawing over 100,000 attendees, it was framed by supporters as a patriotic demonstration and a call to preserve British culture against what they see as unchecked migration. Robinson's rhetoric centred on a belief that British courts and institutions are failing to prioritise the rights and safety of the native population. While many attendees described their participation as an expression of love for their country, the event was marred by clashes with police and counter-protesters, highlighting the potential for this kind of movement to spill into violence.

Political figures have responded to this trend in varied ways. Prime minister Kier Starmer has condemned the violence and the co-option of national symbols, asserting that the British flag represents a country "proudly built on tolerance, diversity and respect." He has stressed the right to peaceful protest but firmly drawn a line against intimidation and racism, stating the government will "never surrender it to those that use it as a symbol of violence, fear and division."

Conversely, Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK, has frequently leveraged these sentiments. In his speeches, he links national identity directly to concerns over immigration, framing a return to what he sees as traditional British values as the solution to societal problems. This approach, while resonating with a significant portion of the electorate, is viewed by critics as stoking division.

The rise of cultural nationalism is a multifaceted issue. While a sense of national pride and identity is a natural human sentiment, history shows us the dangerous consequences that can arise when extreme nationalist viewpoints, particularly those tied to anti-immigrant rhetoric, lead to fascism and violence. It's a reminder that a strong sense of self-identity must not come at the expense of tolerance and respect for others.



## LEARNER CELEBRATION

**Roberts inspiring triumph**



We are thrilled to announce Robert Neary as our Learner of the Quarter, celebrating his incredible perseverance and determination!

Rob began his apprenticeship with low confidence and self-doubt about his academic skills. His success strategy was simple: ask lots of questions and fully dedicate himself to learning.

Despite facing struggles with writing, Rob committed to one-to-one tuition and achieved his English Level 2 Functional Skills - a massive personal victory

Though he face setbacks with his Maths, Rob didn't give up. He strategically paused the maths to focus on his final challenge: End-Point Assessment (EPA). We're proud to confirm he has already passed his AM1 element!

Rob plans to resume his Maths Functional Skills immediately after completing his EPA. His unwavering commitment to success makes him a truly deserving winner!



# Your Free Path to a Brighter Future

## Online Maths & English

Need a qualification boost? WBTC offers fully funded Functional Skills maths and English courses online, through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), for anyone aged 19 and over.

Get the equivalent of a GCSE pass from home!

### Benefits for Individuals

**Career progress:** Unlock promotions, apprenticeships, and further study.

**Confidence:** Improve skills for budgeting, problem-solving, and communication in daily life.

### Benefits for Employers

**Skilled Workforce:** Address essential skills gaps at zero cost to the business.

**Productivity & Retention:** Invest in your team to boost morale, efficiency, and loyalty.

**Eligible and ready to start?** Contact WBTC on [info@wbtc-uk](mailto:info@wbtc-uk) today to enrol!  
(Subject to conditions)

### Outstanding Achievement Rates

**78.1%**

2024-2025

60.5%

National Average  
2023-2024



**51.4%**

Apprentices Achieved  
Distinction or Merit

## Why choose WBTC?

### Employer & Satisfaction

93% of employers would rate the provision as Good or Outstanding (Survey, June 2025)



100% of learners felt resources and trainers demonstrate vocational & technical knowledge (Survey, June 2025)



### Experience & Programme Success



Over 40 Years  
Experience

Project Manager - 100%  
Business Admin - 80%  
Customer Service - 83.33%  
Digital Marketer - 100%  
Installation & Maintenance Electrician - 100%  
IT Solutions Tech - 100%  
MOET - 100%  
Operations Manager - 100%  
Teaching Assistant - 81.48%  
Team Leader - 90%



### Outstanding Achievement Rates



Start your career  
with WBTC!

[wbtc-uk.com](http://wbtc-uk.com)

## WBTC: Driving Sustainability Through Digital Innovation

Reducing our Carbon Footprint with Sharepoint



### Energy Savings

**4,690 kWh**

used a year



### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Reduced

**904.5Kgs**

of CO<sub>2</sub>eM./year

0.905 Tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eM.  
CO<sub>2</sub>eM./ year



### The Big Picture

The saving of 0.90517 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

(Carbon Dioxide equivalent) equates to:



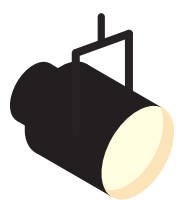
Running a petrol car for  
approx 5,159 Miles



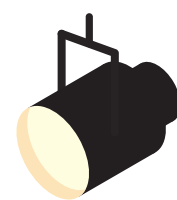
Running an aeroplane  
for 2,263 Miles



The CO<sub>2</sub> in approx 453  
Fire extinguishers



# Training Consultant in the Spotlight



Michelle Gilbert



## What is your job at WBTC?

My role at WBTC is to deliver online training to support Teaching Assistants to achieve their level 3 and 4 Teaching Assistant apprenticeships.

My learners range from 17 years old who have just started their careers to seasoned professionals in their 50s who want to formalise their skills. It's rewarding to work with such a diverse group, and I'd love to see more men enter this vital position.

## What do you find most enjoyable about your job?

The most enjoyable part of my job is witnessing a learner's transformation. Many start out with little confidence, but as they progress, they begin to believe in their own abilities.

Nothing is more rewarding than telling a learner they have passed and then celebrating at graduation.

## And the hardest part?

The biggest challenge is keeping learners engaged and ensuring everyone feels included in an online setting. It can be difficult to manage resources and adapt to the wide range of skills and experience in each group.

But the absolute hardest part is when I have to tell a learner they haven't passed their final assessment and help them manage that disappointment.

## What advice would you give someone thinking about doing an apprenticeship?

My advice is simple: just do it! It's never too late to learn something new or build on your existing knowledge. I've seen countless learners begin their journey feeling nervous and unsure, but by the end, they are so proud to demonstrate the skills they've gained and apply them in their careers.

## And when not working?

When I'm not working, I volunteer for the Swindon BATS. Which is a charity that provides sporting and social activities for visually impaired people. I help out with these activities.

My partner is registered blind. We have a retired guide dog and a working guide dog so I am busy with daily walks and 3 cats to balance it out. Although I don't walk these. They have a catio for their enjoyment!

We also have a caravan which I am proud to say I tow when we go on our little trips around the UK.

## What super power would you have and why?

I think the super power I would want is teleportation. I would love to teleport to any part of the world in seconds. Imagine able to think, "It's a beautiful sunny day, I think I'll teleport to the beach," and be there in seconds. The thought of exploring any part of the world whenever I want just sounds wonderful.

## Favourite holiday?

I've been lucky enough to travel to many different countries, but my favourite destination has to be Peru. It was at the top of my bucket list, and it didn't disappoint. I climbed the steps of the Inca Trail to watch the sunrise over Machu Picchu. Standing 8,000 feet up on that mountain was an absolutely amazing and unforgettable experience.

# DATES FOR THE DIARY

As a WBTC Partner you have access to a range of Professional Development workshops for you and your staff. Every one of our employers is a WBTC Partner which means you can send any of your staff on our workshops either for free or for a subsidised cost. Each course is run by one of our skilled trainers, all of whom have years of experience in their subjects. Understandably, our Professional Development workshops are very popular so if you are thinking of attending one, we advise you book as early as possible. To secure a place please email [Janet@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:Janet@wbtc-uk.com).

Virtual delivery will be carried out either via Teams or Google Classroom and links will be sent out with joining instructions nearer the date. Courses may be rearranged depending on numbers booked on. If this is the case we will aim to inform you as soon as possible.

## **Health & Safety in the Workplace (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 13/11/2025, 26/03/2026

## **Presentation Skills (Full Day - Face to Face)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £100

**Course dates:** 22/01/2026, 20/05/2026

## **Healthy Relationships, Citizenship and Wellbeing (Full Day - Face to Face)**

**Price:** Free for everyone

**Course dates:** 06/11/2025

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Full Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 23/10/2026

## **Emergency First Aid at Work Level 3 (Full Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £100

**Course dates:** 20/11/2025, 19/03/2026

## **Getting to Grips with Excel (Half-day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 02/03/2026, 01/06/2026

## **More Excel Formatting & Functions (Half-day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 09/03/2026, 08/06/2026

## **Mentoring an Apprentice (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Free for everyone

**Course dates:** 20/11/2025, 19/03/2026

## **Intro to Excel Data Analysis (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 23/04/2026, 24/09/2026

## **Resilience & Growth Mindset (Half-day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 25/02/2026, 08/07/2026

## **Coaching and Mentoring (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 23/04/2026, 24/09/2026

## **AI for the Workplace (Full Day - Face to Face)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 09/03/2026, 24/06/2026

## **Safeguarding (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75 (+ Qualification)

**Course dates:** 23/03/2026, 19/10/2026

## **IT: Intelligent Time Savers (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 02/02/2026, 18/05/2026

## **Courageous Conversations (Half-Day - Virtual)**

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 04/02/2026, 17/06/2026

**For more information please  
visit our website [wbtc-uk.com](https://wbtc-uk.com)**



## West Berkshire Training Consortium

7 Cheap Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5DD

**Tel:** 01635 35975 **Website:** [wbtc-uk.com](http://wbtc-uk.com)

