

# WBTC NEWSLETTER



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

This quarter, we're excited to share the highlights of our recent Graduation and Rising Stars Awards ceremony. It was a truly brilliant day celebrating the hard work, achievements and dedication of our learners and employers. We'll take a look back at the ceremony, the inspiring stories of our award winners, and the impact these achievements have on their future journeys.

In addition to celebrating success, WBTC is committed to empowering businesses with the tools for growth and efficiency. We're proud to announce we will shortly be launching our new commercial offering: comprehensive training programmes in Lean techniques and Continuous

Improvement Methodologies, both delivered by an industry expert with over 30 years of experience in optimising businesses. Please contact us for more details on these programmes and how they can benefit your organisation.

The funding rules have been released for new apprentices for 2025 with a focus on apprentices that are 16-18 years old, and reducing bureaucracy for providers and employers. This year was a bumper one with some 25 pages of changes. We have summarised the key changes within the newsletter.

Finally, I would like to highlight our regionally and nationally leading achievement rates for our apprenticeships, this is due to the hard work and dedication of the team at WBTC, our fantastic learners and supportive employers so thank you all. Further good news; we have had a successful year and I look forward to announcing in the coming months our new achievement rate.

National Achievement Rate	WBTC Achievement Rate
60.50%	73.20%

Craig Mincher, Managing Director

## Rising Stars Apprentice Graduation & Awards 2025

We're thrilled to share highlights from our recent Rising Stars Graduation and Employer Awards! On Thursday, May 15th, we gathered to celebrate the incredible achievements of our learners across all our training programs. It was a truly inspiring day, filled with pride, as we recognised the hard work and dedication that led to their success.

The event also honoured the vital role our employers and mentors play. Read on to discover more about the day, including our award winners and special guests!





# CLASS OF 25



We were delighted to host our annual Rising Stars Graduation and Employer Awards on Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. We watched friends, families and employers comes together to celebrate the achievements of our Learners across our Apprenticeship, Great Start and Commercial Training programmes.

A wave of pride and accomplishment filled Arlington Arts, recognising the hard work and dedication that has led to learner success. Through the Employer Awards, we acknowledged the essential and significant role that their mentors and employers play.

Graduates in Business, Leadership and Management, Digital, Customer Service and Teaching Assistants received their certificates from our Guest of Honour Anthony Bravo OBE, Principle of BCoT, and we celebrated the commitment Chris Moore has shown to WBTC in his previous role as Trustee by awarding him an Honorary Fellowship of WBTC.

Local businesses and individuals have always played a key part in the success of our learners, and the Employer Awards reflect how valued they are by the learners, their colleagues and the staff at WBTC. In addition, individual awards were presented to those who showed commitment, drive and tenacity through their learning programme. With the number of nominations reaching an all-time high this year, it was a tough call for the team of independent judges to decide on the winners.

Following the ceremony, guests enjoyed an afternoon tea, kindly sponsored by Stacatruc. This annual event relies upon the support of our sponsors, and our local community who ensure we can run this celebration year on year. We would like to thank them all!

"We're absolutely over the moon, here at Flourish, to have won Small Employer of the Year at the WBTC Rising Stars and Employer Awards 2025! It was such a joy to be part of the event." ~ Rachel Houlden, Managing Director of Flourish.

"I am very pleased, and honoured, to have won the Apprentice of the Year (16-18) award. This is down to the extensive support I have received from WBTC and Bayer during my apprenticeship course." ~ Jack Youster, 16-18 Apprentice of the Year, Bayer PLC.



## A Big Thank You To Our Event Sponsors



**We would like to congratulate all our finalists and are delighted to share with you the overall category winners -**

**Bayer PLC - Large Employer of the Year**

Sponsored by Newbury Weekly News and Media

**Amberjack - Medium Employer of the Year**

Sponsored by Bayer PLC

**Flourish - Small Employer of the Year**

Sponsored by SNG

**Jack Youster - 16 - 18 Apprentice of the Year**

Sponsored by Benchmark

**Zoe Perry - 19+ Apprentice of the Year**

Sponsored by Cleanova

**Sammy Willan - Great Start Learner of the Year**

Sponsored by Amberjack

**Steph Barton - Mentor of the Year**

Sponsored by Barnfield Engineering

**Angelika Kukowska - Functional Skills Learner of the Year**

Sponsored by West Berkshire Adult Learning

**Congratulations to last quarter's achievers:**



Jodie Alderman  
Amy Arblaster  
Tyler Blount  
Lola Butterworth  
Nazia Bux  
Sam Coultas  
Chloe Creasey  
Shelley Curtis  
Rebecca Doherty  
Rachel Farmer

Aylesha Ferdos  
Tom Gardner  
Mariam Ghani  
Louise Harpin  
Sophie Heather  
Louise Hobson  
Philip Howard  
Anca Ilau  
Manvydas Kriksciunas  
Paul Mababangloob

James Martin  
Zoe Perry  
Hannah Quinn  
Zahra Qureshi  
Judith Thomas  
Rachel Tyler  
Joseph Wakefield  
Ellis Walters  
Harry Wayne-Branch



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



# Safeguarding Focus

At WBTC, our commitment to your growth extends beyond the classroom. We believe that true empowerment comes within a supportive and safe environment, where everyone feels valued and protected. This includes being aware of and addressing safeguarding issues that impact our wider community, both online and offline. Recent discussions surrounding the fictional TV programme 'Adolescence' have brought critical safeguarding concerns to the forefront. The programme delves into the complex lives of teenagers navigating a range of challenging issues, including cyberbullying, sexism, online grooming, and the pressures of social media. While a work of fiction, 'Adolescence' offers a stark portrayal of the potential dangers young people can face in the digital age and the significant impact these experiences can have on their mental well-being. The storylines often depict the subtle ways in which online interactions can escalate into harmful situations, highlighting the importance of vigilance and open communication.

The vital work of Ian Russell through the 'Molly Russell' campaign further underscores the urgent need for heightened awareness and action regarding internet safety. Following the tragic loss of his daughter, Molly, Ian has tirelessly advocated for greater accountability from social media platforms and for comprehensive education on online safety for individuals of all ages. His campaign highlights the devastating consequences that online harm can have on young people and emphasizes the responsibility of platforms, educators, and families in creating a safer online environment. The campaign stresses the importance of early intervention, digital literacy, and fostering open conversations about online experiences.

Safeguarding is not a responsibility confined to specific age groups; it is a collective duty that rests upon each of us. Whether you are a younger learner embarking on your professional journey or a more experienced individual enhancing your skills, creating a culture of care and respect is paramount. This involves being mindful of our online interactions, recognizing potential warning signs in others, and understanding the resources available for support. It means fostering an environment where individuals feel comfortable speaking out if they have concerns or need help.

As your training provider, we are deeply committed to cultivating a learning space where everyone feels secure and empowered to thrive. We encourage open dialogue about these important issues and want to assure you that support is always available. Let us all actively participate in looking out for one another, both within our learning community and in the broader world. By staying informed, being proactive, and fostering a culture of empathy, we can collectively contribute to a safer and more supportive society for everyone. If you have any safeguarding concerns or wish to learn more about available resources, please do not hesitate to connect with a member of our dedicated team.

## Links for further information:

About - KiDS: Keep It Digitally Safe - [keepitdigitallysafe.org](https://keepitdigitallysafe.org).

Molly Russell: A Father's Journey | Molly Rose Foundation - [mollyrosefoundation.org](https://mollyrosefoundation.org)

## LEARNER CELEBRATION

**We are delighted to recognise the outstanding accomplishments of our WBTC learners. In this edition we are celebrating our Learner of the Quarter: A testament to dedication and achievement**

### **Timothy Rayns Learner of the Quarter and Rising Stars Apprentice of the Year Finalist**



Timothy demonstrated exceptional commitment to his apprenticeship, despite facing significant challenges. Proactively securing a transfer to continue his learning, he diligently completed his work and achieved a Distinction in his assessment. His resilience and dedication to his professional development make him a deserving candidate for 16-18 Apprentice of the Year.

WBTC wish you good luck in your future endeavours. Well Done!

# Busting Apprenticeship Myths

While awareness of apprenticeships has grown, misconceptions still persist. This article seeks to dispel common myths and shed light on the evolving value of apprenticeships in today's workforce.

## **Apprenticeships are only for people who didn't go to university**

Apprenticeships are open to individuals at various educational levels, including those with university degrees. They provide hands-on training and can be a valuable alternative or complement to traditional paths.

## **Apprenticeships are only for new employees**

Apprenticeships can benefit both new and existing employees. They offer skill development and career progression, making them a valuable tool for upskilling existing staff and addressing skills gaps.

## **Apprenticeships can only start at certain times of the year**

You can start an apprenticeship at any time of the year. Many people mistakenly think they must start at the beginning of the year or academic year. This isn't true, you can begin when it's best for you.

## **You must be young to pursue an apprenticeship**

Apprenticeships are not limited by age. People of any age can undertake apprenticeship to learn new skills or transition to a different career.

## **Off-the-job training has to be delivered externally**

Off-the-job training can be delivered both internally and externally. Where possible we integrate off-the-job training seamlessly in the working environment.

## **Apprenticeships aren't as good as a degree**

Apprenticeships and degrees serve different purposes. Apprenticeships tend to focus on practical skills and hands-on experience, while degrees offer a broader academic foundation.

## **Apprenticeships are difficult to set up for employers**

Training providers work closely with employers to manage the administration, recruitment, and delivery of the apprenticeship program, making the process much smoother for businesses.

# 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.

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75 + test

**Course dates:** 10/07/2025,

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £100

**Course dates:** 25/09/2025

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

**Price:** Free for everyone

**Course dates:** 26/06/2025

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 23/10/2025

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

**Price:** Free for everyone

**Course dates:** 21/08/2025

**"The course tutor was fantastic, very knowledgeable and experienced in different environments. Real life case studies gave practical ideas of how to potentially handle real life situations. 10/10!"**

Kerry, Manager Speen Community Manager -  
Peer to Manager Workshop attendee

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 09/07/2025

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75 (+ Qualification)

**Course dates:** 02/06/2025

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 30/09/2025

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

**Price:** Apprentice: Free

Partner: £75

**Course dates:** 09/09/2025

**"Great information was provided. An interactive workshop with some great tips and processes to use at work."**

Jen, May 2025 - Peer to Manager  
Workshop attendee

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

# Apprenticeships: Changes are afoot



Each year we receive the guidelines which mandate how we must operate when delivering apprenticeship provision, these are known as the Funding Rules. The rules are for all new apprenticeships starts from August 1<sup>ST</sup>. This year the key focus is on 16-19 education, introduction of several notable changes aimed at increasing flexibility, streamlining processes and focusing on priority areas. Here's a summary of key updates:

## **Apprenticeship Funding Rules (Effective from August 1<sup>ST</sup> 2025)**

### **Flexible Duration and Prior Learning**

- Apprenticeships can now be as short as 8 months, a significant reduction from the previous 12-month minimum, provided they meet key training requirements.
- Prior learning must be formally assessed and recorded, and where it shortens the program, both content and cost must be reduced accordingly.
- Apprentices with no prior learning must receive the full published off-the-job training (OTJ) hours for their standard.

### **Off-the-Job (OTJ) Training Simplification:**

- The distinction between full-time and part-time apprenticeships for OTJ training delivery has been removed. Providers no longer need to automatically extend durations for part-time apprentices; instead, training should be realistic based on working hours.
- The 20% rule is being phased out. Each apprenticeship standard will now have its own published minimum OTJ training requirement, removing the need to calculate hours based on working time.
- The link between OTJ training and time on programme has been removed, allowing providers to deliver OTJ hours over a flexible timeframe (Subject to the 8-month minimum duration).

### **Foundation Apprenticeships**

- A new model for young people aged 16-21 (and some 22-24 year with EHCPs, care leavers or those in/ recently released from prison) is being introduced.
- These can be at the same or lower level than a qualification already held, if they develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Maths and English remain required, but assessment is not mandatory before completion (though encouraged).
- Incentive payments of up to £2,000 are available for providers and employers, with an additional £666 progression payment for those moving to higher-level apprenticeships.
- These are being launched with few standards which can be found [here](#).

### **End Point Assessment (EPA) Reforms:**

- Significant changes are coming, with a new set of EPA principles announced in February 2025. All existing assessment plans are to be rewritten on a standard-by-standard basis from April 2025.
- The assessment process aims to be more proportionate, removing duplication, and allowing for on-programme assessment where appropriate.

# WBTC's Summer Programme 2025



**The Summer Programme includes a range of sessions and activities, that will support your confidence and enhance your skills ready for your next steps**

- Ice breakers & induction activities
- Team building activities
- CV workshops
- Support & progression advice

- Keep engaged in your education
- Excellent transition from school
- Build confidence
- Meet new friends

The dates for this years study programme are as follows: August 12th/13th and August 19th/20th. The programme will start at 10am and will finish 1pm. For more information and to reserve a space, please call 01635 35975, email [natalie.elliott@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:natalie.elliott@wbtc-uk.com) or scan the QR code.







## West Berkshire Training Consortium

7 Cheap Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5DD

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

