

## **Early Years Apprenticeship policy**

### **1. Policy overview**

This policy describes our approach to Early Years (EY) apprenticeships. We value EY apprentices and work in partnership with our training providers to provide a supportive learning environment to all employees starting their EY careers.

### **2. What is an EY apprenticeship?**

An EY apprenticeship is a development or training programme to improve knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Employees are in paid employment, and the programme includes on and off-the-job training.

Employees gain technical knowledge, practical experience and broader skills needed for their job. They also develop generic skills which are useful for their future career.

This policy only covers:

- new employees recruited on a temporary contract specifically for the period of training. We will designate these as EY apprenticeship roles

We will always seek to permanently employ an EY apprentice at the end of their completed training programme. However, we cannot guarantee permanent employment.

We offer EY apprenticeship training through partnering with external training providers.

An EY apprenticeship is an agreement between three parties:

- the apprentice ('employee')
- the training provider
- the employee's manager ('employer')

All parties work towards successful completion of the EY apprenticeship.

### **3. Committing to an EY apprenticeship**

We expect EY apprentices to have a clear understanding of the training programme. They need to fully understand what the programme will require to ensure successful completion.

Managers must commit to supporting an EY apprentice. A learning mentor will be allocated to support the EY apprentice.

### **4. Early years standards and the training programme design**

NHP will work to the Early Years practitioner standards and programme design setup by the training provider. The expectation will be that the EY apprentices will work with the training provider and the learning mentor/manager to build their understanding of the expected EY standards and skills require to be a successful early year's practitioner.

### **5. Part time EY apprenticeships**

NHP is an equal opportunities employer. We recognise that not all apprentices can work full time hours.

If the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week, we will extend the minimum duration of the apprenticeship (pro-rata) to take this into account. The apprentice must agree to this with their manager and the training provider.

Where part-time working is agreed, the training provider will:

- record the agreed average number of hours each week
- evidence why this working pattern is needed
- extend the minimum duration using the formula  $(52 \times 30 / \text{average weekly hours} = \text{new minimum duration in weeks})$

### **6. EY Apprentice recruitment – external recruitment**

We will advertise apprentice vacancies via the apprenticeship service website, we will also expect the training provider to promote these opportunities. This will be in addition to the usual advertising.

### **7. EY Apprentice pay – new recruits**

For those in level 2 training roles, we typically appoint employees at the National Minimum Wage for an apprentice.

Current rates are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice/pay-and-conditions>

## **8. EY Apprenticeship induction and performance management**

EY Apprentices will be given a full induction both from the employer and the training provider.

EY Apprenticeship contracts of employment state that apprentices are subject to a six month probation period. Therefore the apprentice will be managed in line with the NHP probation policy, which outlines key steps in the first six months of employment. This includes regular supervision meetings, training and guidance. The manager, and /or the learning mentor and apprentice must have regular meetings, reviewing learning, ensuring training opportunities are provided and the apprentice is able to raise any concerns.

In many cases the apprentice will be a young person and their apprenticeship will be their first employment. Managers/learning mentors should recognise that along with the EY apprenticeship standards the apprentice will be learning about the world of work, professional expectations and how to manage their own time and workload/study.

Through the apprenticeship the Manager and/or the learning mentor should liaise with the training provider and provide any relevant feedback and complete any records required of them.

The Manager and/or learning mentor must provide relevant learning opportunities, to ensure the EY apprentice is able to demonstrate they are meeting all of the apprenticeship standards. (see EY career progression document for EY occupational standards)

Where the EY apprentice has met all the standards required of them, during their first six months of their employment, they should be advised they have successfully completed their probation. After this, an EY apprentice would be subject to the usual performance management procedures, which include regular reviews, whilst continuing with achieving the apprenticeship standards.

## **9. Where concerns arise**

Most EY apprentices will successfully complete their training and their EY apprenticeship will provide the foundation to the start of a successful career. However, we recognise that on occasion there will be concerns raised about the apprentice skills and behaviours.

Where concerns are raised the Manager and/or the learning mentor must bring these to the individual's attention without delay. They must outline the concern and be clear on how the EY apprentice should improve.

Where there are serious concerns about the EY apprentice, to the extent they are at risk of not completing their training within the length of their employment contract, then these must be raised with the training provider at the earliest opportunity. Concerns may relate to attendance, conduct, behaviours or performance.

As there has been a commitment from NHP to the EY apprentice and the training provider all avenues of advice and guidance must be exhausted before the Manager considers ending the fixed term employment contract. Advice should be sought from a senior manager and/or HR.

Where there are concerns it would be acceptable to extend the probation period to the full length of the fixed term contract.

During probation NHP is able to dispense with the processes set out in other employment policies, e.g. disciplinary, during the initial or extended probationary period. The exception to this is where there are allegations that relate to safeguarding or Child Protection. A full investigation must be done, and even if the individual leaves their employment, a manager should make the decision as to whether employment should (or would have) ended.

In some cases, the conduct, attendance, or performance of the EY apprentice is so concerning that they are unlikely to complete their apprenticeship. An EY apprentice can be dismissed if it is evidenced there are serious concerns (with absence, performance, or conduct) to the extent they are unlikely to achieve the apprenticeship standards during their fixed term employment. The training provider should be informed of these situations.

In these cases, it would be acceptable to provide notice to the EY apprentice that there is no reasonable chance of them successfully achieving the Apprentice standards, and therefore their employment will end. Before action is taken, advice should be sought from a senior manager and/or HR. (This is particularly relevant

where the individual has a health condition that is likely to be considered a disability, or other protected characteristic).

## **10. Relevant legislation**

During the EY apprentice's employment, employment laws and the Equality Act apply.

For example, if the EY apprentice is considered as disabled (as defined by the Equality Act) then the Manager is required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that the EY apprentice is not put at a disadvantage during their training and employment.

In addition if there is a safeguarding or Child Protection concern, the usual NHP policies apply and any concerns must be referred to the DSL. Where the EY apprentice's contract of employment is terminated (or would have been terminated) as a result of a safeguarding concern this must be reported to DBS.

## **11. Review**

We will regularly review the quality of the EY apprenticeship training. This will involve the EY apprentice, their manager/learning mentor and the employer provider provision or training provider. It also provides an opportunity to discuss any challenges encountered.