

[Press release: Registration open for online apprenticeship service](#)

The Department for Education and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) are from today (13 February 2017) encouraging large employers to sign up and register for the apprenticeship service, in readiness for the launch of the [apprenticeship levy](#) on 6 April 2017.

The [apprenticeship service](#) is an online digital system (similar to online banking) that has been set up to support the apprenticeship levy.

The levy will require employers, with a wage bill of over £3 million a year, to pay 0.5% of their wage bill into the apprenticeship service, to encourage them to invest into apprentices.

The online service then allows those employers to financially manage their apprenticeship programme and help them to estimate their financial spend and recruit apprentices through their training providers. It will help employers:

- focus on their business priorities
- address skills shortages head on
- invest in the skills and training to help their organisations succeed

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Robert Halfon said:

Our funding reforms are essential to ensuring that this country works to build a highly skilled workforce for the future.

Nobody understands the skills employers need better than the employers themselves and that is why we are placing them in the driving seat, to ensure they get the talent they need to grow.

I have tried the new service myself and am impressed with how easy to use it is. All you need to do is set up an account, so I encourage employers to do it now so they can be ready for the levy coming later in this year.

Sue Husband, director of the National Apprenticeship Service said:

The apprenticeship levy will come into effect in April 2017 to put apprenticeship funding on a sustainable footing and fund growth in the apprenticeship programme.

Employers have told us that they want to be in control of their apprenticeship programme and funding. They want to manage it quickly and easily, so we have designed the apprenticeship service to do just that.

It's really quick to set up an account, and employers that have already registered during our testing phase have told us how easy they found it.

To register, levy-paying employers should have:

- their [Government Gateway](#) login details for PAYE schemes they want to include
- the details for each organisation that will be making an agreement with a training provider for apprenticeship training, including Companies House or charity number

The [register to manage your apprenticeship funds](#) page provides more guidance.

The apprenticeship levy

Over the last few years the government has embarked on a large-scale programme to reform the way apprenticeships are delivered and funded in England. The reformed apprenticeships are:

- more rigorous
- better structured
- independently assessed
- more clearly aligned to the needs of employers

In spring 2017, the way the government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Some employers will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, and there will be changes to the funding for apprenticeship training for all employers. The apprenticeship levy begins on 6 April 2017.

The levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill of over £3 million each year, to invest in apprenticeships.

Employers won't be able to pay for apprenticeships until they have started paying the levy (from May onwards).

Read more at [Apprenticeship funding: how it will work](#).

The apprenticeship service

Through the apprenticeship service, all levy-paying employers can:

All levy-paying and non-levy paying employers can:

- find – '[find apprenticeship training](#)' gives employers easy-to-digest information on the choices available to them – employers can search for and find an appropriate standard or framework, a quality-assured training provider, and compare one provider with another
- recruit – through the [recruit an apprentice](#) service, training providers can post vacancies for apprenticeships and traineeships on behalf of employers – this will be opened up to employers at a later date

Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

The SFA funds skills training for further education (FE) in England. We support over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations, and employers with £3.2 billion of funding each year.

The SFA is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Education.