



Department  
for Education



Best  
Practice  
Network

# Apprenticeship Levy Guide For Schools & MATs

How apprenticeships and  
Apprenticeship Levy funding can  
meet your staffing needs.



[bestpracticenet.co.uk/apprenticeships](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/apprenticeships)



# Contents

Introduction to the Apprenticeship Levy	4
What are apprenticeships?	4
Who can apply for an apprenticeship?	5
Who is eligible for an apprenticeship?	5
Understanding the Apprenticeship Levy and how it works	6
How does the Apprenticeship Levy work for your school?	7
Working in partnership with your school to deliver your apprenticeship strategy	8
About Best Practice Network	9
Apprenticeship Programmes for schools available with Best Practice Network	10
What to expect from apprenticeships with Best Practice Network	17
Free assisted recruitment service	18



At Best Practice Network, we pride ourselves on our track record of success in delivering high-quality apprenticeship programmes that make a tangible difference in the education sector.

Our commitment to excellence has empowered numerous schools and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) to harness the full potential of the Apprenticeship Levy, driving significant improvements in staff development and student outcomes.

We have successfully won Childcare and Education Apprenticeship Provider of the year for 2 years in a row and received a “Good” grading at our recent Ofsted inspection.

Learn more at  
[bestpracticenet.co.uk](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk)

## Our Awards & Accreditations





# Introduction to the Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy, implemented by the UK Government in April 2017, mandates contributions from all employers with a wage bill exceeding £3 million.

While this requirement covers many schools, many are unaware of the extent of their contributions or the procedures for accessing their allocated funds.

Schools affiliated with larger employer entities, such as local authorities or multi-academy trusts (MATs), may potentially access substantial funds.

## What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships provide an excellent way for schools to either recruit fresh talent or enhance the skills of their current staff.

A diverse range of apprenticeships are available ranging from level 2 (GCSE) to level 6/7 (degree and postgraduate degree level). Apprentices are employed by the school, acquiring on-the-job training that familiarises them with the school environment. Additionally they complete off-the-job training to learn new knowledge, skills and behaviours for their role.

Apprenticeships can be used to develop talent as part of a People and Talent Strategy and also for Continued Professional Development.

Schools and MATs encompass a wide variety of different roles. There are numerous apprenticeships available for training or upskilling staff for these roles.

Various apprenticeship training programmes may be relevant to your staff, including; Teaching Assistants, Unqualified Teachers, Early Years Practitioners, Senior Leaders, Headteacher and Executive Leaders.



**“Apprentices  
enjoy their studies.  
They find their  
coursework and job roles  
challenging and stimulating.  
They value greatly the care  
and support they receive  
from their tutors.”**

Ofsted Report,  
December 2023

## Who can apply for an apprenticeship?

In England, most anyone can apply for an apprenticeship if they are 16 or over and not in any other form of education.

Apprenticeships are a great way to gain an industry recognised qualification and develop a rewarding career. They are cost free for the apprentice and provide an opportunity to earn while you learn.

Current staff can also utilise apprenticeships for their CPD, this is a cost-effective solution for schools to promote and train employees.

## Who is eligible for an apprenticeship?

To be eligible for an apprenticeship the learner must have:

- ✓ Support from their employer and Apprenticeship Levy account holder
- ✓ Be working in the role related to the specific apprenticeship programme, this might be a current employee or a new apprentice starting the role
- ✓ GCSEs in English and maths at Grade C (4) or above OR able to achieve Level 2 English and maths whilst on programme (for a Level 2 apprenticeship only Level 1 Functional Skills is required)
- ✓ Held a residency in the UK for the last three years

# Understanding the Apprenticeship Levy and how it works

The Apprenticeship Levy is a contribution required from employers with a pay bill exceeding £3 million.

The Apprenticeship Levy is paid into a central Apprenticeship Service account at a rate of 0.5% of the total annual pay bill. Employers manage their levy funds through their account dedicated to apprenticeship training expenditures.

While only larger organisations pay the Apprenticeship Levy, the funds it generates also support apprenticeship training for smaller employers interested in taking on apprentices.

- The Apprenticeship Levy is paid into the apprenticeship service account monthly
- You automatically receive a 10% contribution top-up from the government. Apprenticeship training can only be delivered by an approved training provider
- Apprenticeship Levy funds can only be used to pay for training apprentices to achieve qualifications as part of an approved apprenticeship training programme
- Funds must be used within 24 months, or they expire

"Apprenticeships aren't just for new staff and young people - they can be used to upskill and train existing staff of all ages and at any level."

Tracy Clement  
Apprenticeships Director  
Best Practice Network

# How does the Apprenticeship Levy work for your school?

Depending on how your school is managed, the Apprenticeship Levy will be held and accessed differently.

See below for more information and how to access your funds.

1

## Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts

It is likely you trust will be your employer and they will pay into the Apprenticeship Levy. Get in touch with your trust head office to see how much allocation is available. There may be a centralised apprenticeship strategy in place across the trust.

2

## Voluntary-Aided Schools

If your governing body's pay bill is over £3 million, they will pay into the apprenticeship levy. To access the funds, you'll need to contact your governing body and see how much allocation is available. Some VA schools can access the levy via their local authority, this will need to be discussed with them directly, however, Best Practice Network can support these discussions.

3

## Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools

Your Local Authority is likely to pay into the Apprenticeship Levy. Your local authority should let you know how much Apprenticeship Levy you have available to spend. If you're unsure how to access the funds, contact your local authority to find out.

## What if your employer doesn't pay into the Apprenticeship Levy?

If your employer doesn't pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, or there are not enough available funds, you can still use apprenticeships at your school with the co-investment option.

The government will pay for 95% of the programme fees while your employer or account holder co-invests the remaining 5%. This 5% is invoiced monthly over the duration of the programme.

## What are Apprenticeship Levy Transfers?

Alternatively, if you or your school cannot access the Apprenticeship Levy, your apprenticeship training programmes can still be 100% funded by a levy transfer. Apprenticeships can be funded by an Apprenticeship Levy-paying employer transferring up to 50% of their levy to a different employer.

Transferred funds are used to pay for 100% of the training and assessment costs of the apprenticeship up to the funding band maximum.

Transferred funds cover the cost of the whole duration of the apprenticeship.



# What to expect from apprenticeships with Best Practice Network

As a leading provider of Early Years, Teaching Assistant and Leadership and Management apprenticeship programmes, we are committed to delivering high-quality education across all our programmes.

Apprentices learn with a mixture of coaching sessions and online classes well as independent study using high-quality teaching resources, such as webinars online documents and an extensive reference library.

Alongside the programme we run additional well-being, careers advice and guidance programme called BPN boost. There are optional monthly webinars on different topics and an online library of resources to support apprentices with their journey.

Our Leader Apprenticeships with NPQs benefit from access to FranklinCovey resources.

Best Practice Network is a corporate member of the Association of Apprentices. All apprentices will become members and be able to network with their community, attend events and access further information and resources.



Working in partnership with your school to deliver your apprenticeship strategy

Apprentices are fully supported by expert Apprenticeship Tutors based across England who will visit your school for in-person reviews and observations



We understand the unique challenges and opportunities schools and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) face when it comes to effectively utilising the apprenticeship levy.

Our dedicated team is here to work in partnership with you to create a comprehensive and impactful apprenticeship strategy tailored to your specific needs.

## Why Partner with Us?

**Expert Guidance:** Our experts have extensive experience in the education sector and are well-versed in the intricacies of the Apprenticeship Levy. We provide clear, actionable advice to help you navigate the levy, ensuring you maximize its benefits.

**Bespoke Training Programmes:** We design customised training programs that align with your school's or MAT's objectives. Whether you're looking to upskill existing staff or recruit new talent, our training solutions are crafted to meet your precise requirements.

**Recruitment Services:** Finding the right apprentices can be challenging. Our recruitment services are designed to streamline this process, helping you attract and select the best candidates who are eager to contribute to your school's success.

**Strategic Planning:** We work closely with your leadership team to develop a strategic plan that integrates apprenticeships into your broader educational goals. This includes identifying key areas where apprenticeships can add value and creating a roadmap to achieve these goals.

For more information on how we can help your school or MAT create and implement a successful apprenticeship strategy, please contact us at [partnerships@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk](mailto:partnerships@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk)

Apprenticeship Programmes for Schools available with Best Practice Network

# Teaching Assistant Level 3 Apprenticeship

The Level 3 Teaching Assistant (TA) apprenticeship is ideal if you are already working in or looking for a career in a teaching support role.

The programme is delivered over 15 months through a blended learning approach that includes monthly, half-day online taught lessons focussing on core modules, along with independent learning through online materials and coursework.

- Certificated training in one or more chosen specialist areas: SEND, Early Years, Behaviour, EAL and Assessment
- Fast-track to Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status
- Safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of children
- Work with teachers to understand and support assessment

## Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- Be employed as a Teaching Assistant with support from the school
- GCSEs in English and maths at Grade C (4) or above or able to achieve Level 2 English and maths whilst on programme
- Have held a residency in the UK for the last three years



## AT A GLANCE

-  **Course Duration**  
15-18 months
-  **Blended learning**
-  **This Course Awards**  
TA Level 3 Qualification

~~£7,000~~  
**£0 with Apprenticeship  
Levy funding.**

“The course  
itself works well  
alongside being a  
teaching assistant.  
The subjects in  
the webinars are  
very relevant.”

TA Apprentice



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/TA](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/TA)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [apprenticeships@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@bestpracticenet.co.uk)

✓ Primary ✓ Primary SEND ✓ Secondary

# Postgraduate Teacher Apprenticeship (ITT)

The Teacher Apprenticeship is perfect for developing your graduate TAs and other support staff into qualified teachers.

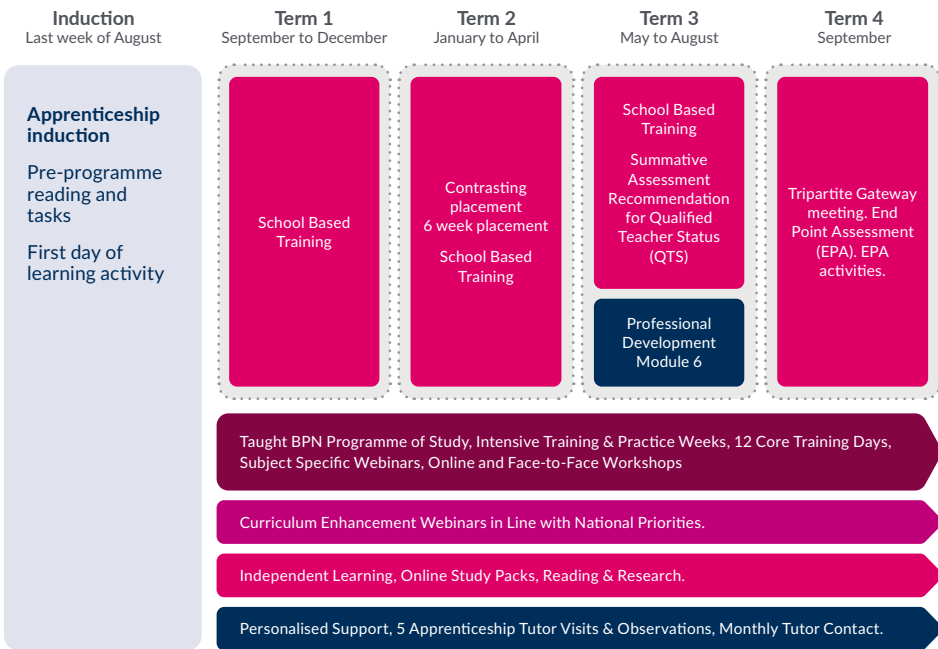
Apprentices complete the majority of the training in school while continuing to support teaching and learning. Successful completion of the programme leads to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

- Nurture your in-house talent - proven staff members can become teachers
- Access to a complete professional development pathway
- Pay on unqualified teacher pay scale while on programme Apprentices continue to support teaching and learning while on programme
- Address the teacher shortage crisis and increase retention rates

## Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- A bachelor's degree, or equivalent with a 2:2 or above
- GCSE grade 4/C or above in English, maths, (and science for primary route only) or the recognised equivalent
- Resident of the UK for the past 3 years



## AT A GLANCE

-  **Course Duration**  
15-18 months
-  **Blended learning**  
4 days a week in a school  
1 day a week training
-  **This Course Awards**  
Qualified Teacher Status

**Funded by the  
Apprenticeship  
Levy funding**

“The Teacher  
Apprenticeship is a  
structured training  
programme that covers  
all aspects of teaching,  
including pedagogy,  
assessment, and classroom  
management. It is a  
great way to develop  
your graduate TAs!”

Sian Marsh,  
Programme Director



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/teacher-training](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/teacher-training)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [teach@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:teach@bestpracticenet.co.uk)





“Lots of information and great discussion with other people to aid my learning and review my own leadership.”

NPQSL Participant,  
Spring Intake

“I am very grateful to my Course Tutor for their advice, support and listening ear over the time of the course.”

NPQH Participant,  
Spring Intake



## School Leader Programme: Level 5 Apprenticeship with NPQSL

The School Leaders Programme is a dual award which has mapped the DfE’s NPQ for Senior Leadership (NPQSL) to the Level 5 Operations Manager Standard.

The School Leader Programme is for teachers and leaders who are, or want to be, senior leaders with cross-school responsibilities.

- Gain the specialist expertise needed to tackle school improvement priorities
- Support the development of a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils
- Contribute to your school’s strategic direction and whole school activities
- Learn about operational and strategic leadership and management at a whole school level
- Apply learning and have impact in your setting immediately

### Entry requirements

Applicants must have:

- QTS and/or QTLS and/or a Level 5 or higher) qualification in any subject
- Either 2 full years experience of teaching following achieving QTS/QTLS or 2 full years experience in current role following completion of Level 5 (or equivalent)

### Learning hours

- 47 hours synchronous activity | 6 hours per asynchronous activity (based on 30+ working hours/week)

### AT A GLANCE



**Course Duration**  
18 months



**Face-to-face**  
4 sessions



**This Course Awards**  
60 masters credits, Level 5  
Operations Manager and  
NPQSL



**Intakes**  
Start in Spring or Autumn



**Coaching**  
Monthly sessions

~~£9,000~~

**£0 with Apprenticeship  
Levy funding.**



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/school-leader-programme-with-npqsl](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/school-leader-programme-with-npqsl)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk)

## Headteacher Programme: Level 7 Apprenticeship with NPQH

The Headteacher Programme is a dual award which has mapped the DfE’s NPQ for Headship (NPQH) to the Level 7 Senior Leader Standard.

The Headteacher Programme is for aspiring or recently appointed headteachers looking to develop and apply the knowledge that underpins expert school leadership.

- Gain access to extended leadership training that goes beyond the standard NPQH curriculum
- Learn what effective headteachers need to know
- Lead the strategic direction of your school
- Support the development of a positive and safe environment for pupils
- Ensure staff feel supported and valued
- Apply learning and have impact in your setting immediately
- Gain additional post-nominals, certificates and credentials

### Entry requirements

Applicants must have:

- QTS and/or QTLS and/or a Level 5 (or higher) qualification in any subject
- Experience as a current headteacher, deputy headteacher, vice principal or equivalent role and about 18 months away from applying for Headship (if not already in post)

### Learning hours

- 53 hours synchronous activity | 6 hours per asynchronous activity (based on 30+ working hours/week)

### AT A GLANCE



**Course Duration**  
18 months



**Face-to-face**  
5 sessions



**This Course Awards**  
100 masters credits, Level 7  
Senior Leader and NPQH



**Intakes**  
Start in Spring or Autumn



**Coaching**  
Monthly sessions

~~£14,000~~

**£0 with Apprenticeship  
Levy funding.**



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/headteacher-programme-with-npqh](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/headteacher-programme-with-npqh)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk)





"The course has enabled me to link with leaders in a variety of organisations. These connections allow me to learn about potential next steps for my school."

NPQEL Participant,  
Spring Intake

## Executive Leader Programme: Level 7 Apprenticeship with NPQEL

The Executive Leader Programme is a dual award which has mapped the DfE's NPQ for Executive Leadership (NPQEL) to the Level 7 Senior Leader Standard.

The Executive Leader Programme is for aspiring or recently appointed executive leaders wishing to lead change and improvement across a group of schools.

- Join 1:1 coaching sessions
- Receive advice from experts and tailored feedback on your performance
- Lead the strategic direction of multiple schools
- Learn what effective executive leaders need to know
- Set and deliver an ambitious vision across a group of schools
- Grow your network of headteachers and executive leaders
- Apply learning and have impact in your setting immediately

### Entry requirements

Applicants must have:

- QTS and/or QTLS and/or a Level 5 (or higher) qualification in any subject
- Experience as a current serving headteacher (or equivalent role) with a minimum of 3 years experience)

### Learning hours

- 59 hours synchronous activity | 6 hours per asynchronous activity (based on 30+ working hours/week)

### AT A GLANCE



**Course Duration**  
18 months



**Face-to-face**  
6 sessions



**This Course Awards**  
100 masters credits, Level 7  
Senior Leader and NPQEL



**Intakes**  
Start in Spring or Autumn



**Coaching**  
Monthly sessions

~~£14,000~~

**£0 with Apprenticeship  
Levy funding.**



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/executive-leader-programme-with-npqel](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/executive-leader-programme-with-npqel)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk)



To get started  
you can tell us  
about your vacancy  
using our apprentice  
[vacancy form](#)  
or [email us](#)

## Free assisted recruitment service

Best Practice Network can advertise your vacancies on many popular platforms, we also take care of the pre-screening process where we check applicants' eligibility before sending over a shortlist to your vacancy manager.

Each year we recruit thousands of apprentices into school support roles.

- FREE recruitment service for all schools and trusts
- Fast and efficient service (2-4 week turnaround)
- Job ads can be live within 24 hours of receiving the job description
- Candidates screened within 48 hours
- High candidate success rate
- Specialist in the education sector

*"My apprenticeship tutor is amazing, not only is she supporting me with my apprenticeship but also tutoring me through my functional skills in English and maths. She answers all my questions, is always happy to help, and she helps me so much with my confidence."*

Nicola Woodhouse,  
TA Level 3 apprentice





"I was looked after every step of the way by Best Practice. The tutor visits were the standout point of the course. I can't wait to do the L3 course in the future and keep working my way up."

"The way the course was delivered was great. The tutor who was assigned to me supported my development and progression every step of the way and I can't thank her enough."



## Early Years Practitioner: Level 2 Apprenticeship

**This apprenticeship is a funded entry-level training programme.**

Early Years Practitioners work under the guidance and supervision of an early years educator, teacher or other suitably qualified professional in the early years workforce supporting the planning and delivery of the educational programmes for children in the 0-5 age range.

- Learn how to support children's early education and development
- Become more confident in planning activities in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Learn how to keep up-to-date records to help track and identify children's individual needs, abilities and progress
- Promote health, safety and child welfare through effective, informed practice
- Receive full support from your apprenticeship tutor with monthly visits and taught sessions

### Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- Support from the employer and levy account holder
- Be able to complete Functional Skills Level 1 English and maths whilst on programme
- Resident of the UK for the past 3 years

### AT A GLANCE



**Course Duration**  
12-14 months



**Blended learning**

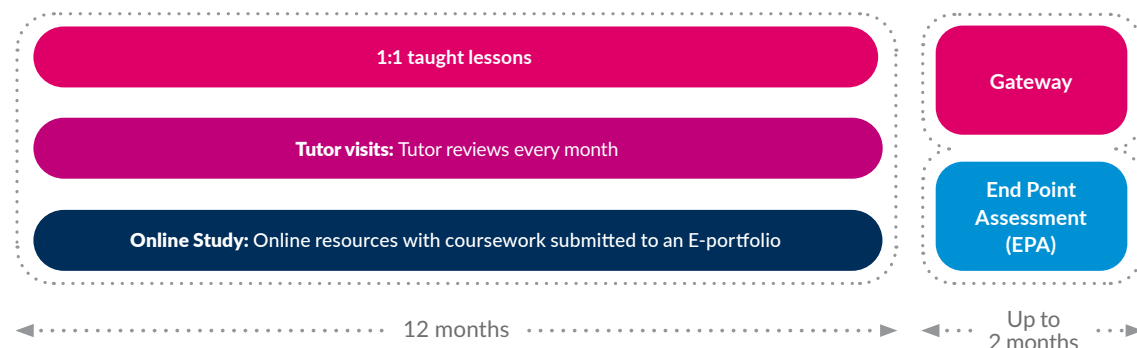


**This Course Awards**  
Practitioner Level 2, NQual  
Level 2 Diploma for the Early  
Years Practitioner

~~£5,000~~

**£0 with Apprenticeship  
Levy funding.**

### Programme Structure



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYP](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYP)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [enquiries@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bestpracticenet.co.uk)



## Early Years Educator: Level 3 Apprenticeship

**This apprenticeship is a funded intermediate level training programme. An Early Years Educator (EYE) is responsible for planning and providing effective care for children aged 0-5 in various early years settings..**

They count towards the Staff: Child ratio and can mentor Early Years Practitioners. They will implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that enables children to prepare for school.

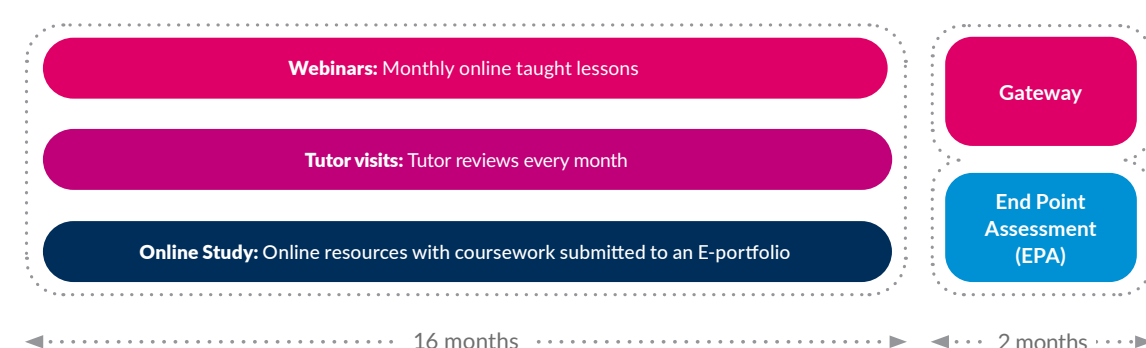
- Learn how to support and promote children's early education and development
- Plan and provide effective care and learning to prepare children for school
- Learn how to use assessment to develop informed practice for individual children
- Counts towards EYFS Level 3 staff:child ratios

### Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- Support from the employer and levy account holder
- GCSEs in English and maths at Grade C (4) or above or able to achieve Functional Skills Level 2 English and maths whilst on programme
- Award in Paediatric First Aid OR Emergency Paediatric First Aid must be achieved while on programme (if not already achieved) and must be in date when they enter gateway requirements
- Resident of the UK for the past 3 years

### Programme Structure



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYE](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYE)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [enquiries@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bestpracticenet.co.uk)







"The Level 5 Early Years Practitioner focusses on advancing practice, taking early years educations to the next level in their leadership, knowledge, skills and behaviours."

Sarah Bishop Apprenticeship

## Early Years Lead Practitioner: Level 5 Apprenticeship

The Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner (EYLP) Apprenticeship is ideal for proactive, influential practitioners, working directly with children.

These highly skilled professionals take an operational lead for the care, learning and development of all young children within their care and lead and support the practice of others.

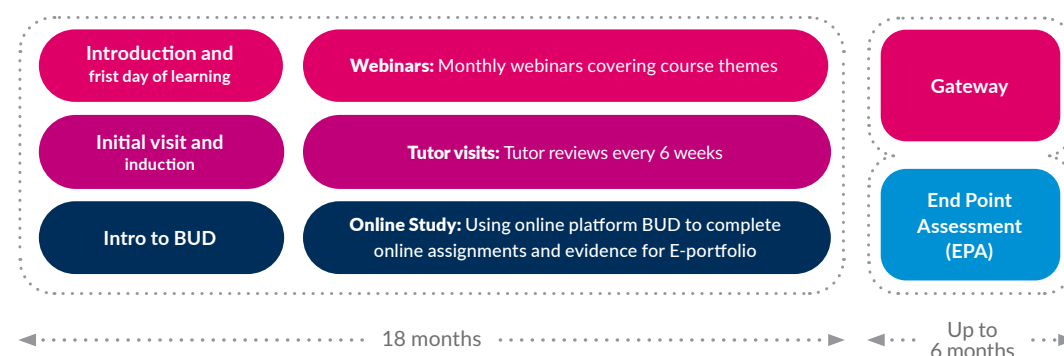
- Be responsible for supporting the quality of learning and development in your setting
- Learn how to lead day-to-day practice at an operational level
- Be involved with sector developments in your local area and nationally
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and colleagues for each child's development

### Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- Support from the employer and levy account holder
- Level 3 Early Years Educator or equivalent qualifications/extensive experience in a leadership position
- GCSEs in English and maths at Grade C (4) or above, or able to achieve level 2 English and maths whilst on programme
- Resident of the UK for the past 3 years

### Programme Structure



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYLP](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/EYLP)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk)



"We are thrilled to be offering this new employer requested programme that is easily accessible for a variety of settings."

Tracy Clement



## Playworker: Level 2 Apprenticeship

This programme is aimed at playworkers who work in a range of settings offering different models of playwork.

The purpose of our curriculum is to support playworkers to develop into positive, flexible and team-focused members of staff, and to support them to provide the best possible provision for the children in their care.

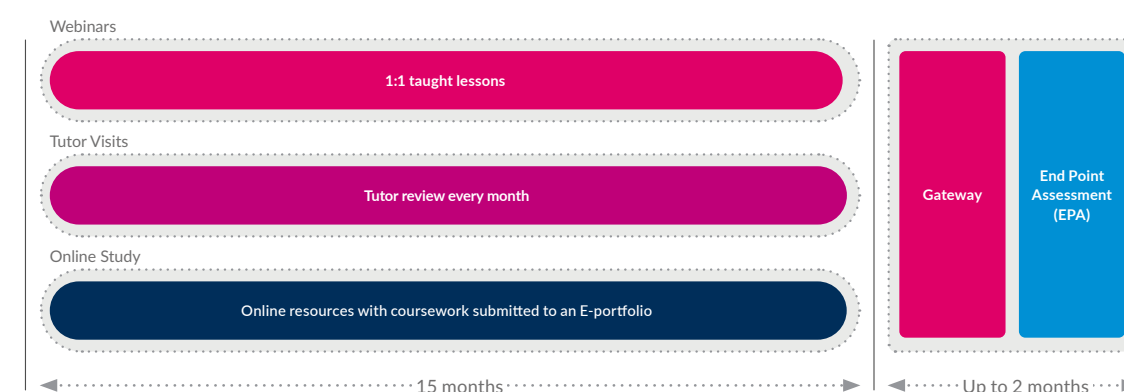
- No previous qualifications needed
- Provide excellent care and education to children in wraparound care
- Offer an accredited CPD option for employees to progress

### Entry requirements

Apprentices must meet the following criteria:

- Support from the employer and levy account holder
- Be able to complete Functional Skills Level 1 English and maths whilst on programme
- Resident of the UK for the past 3 years

### Programme Structure



Learn more and apply at [bestpracticenet.co.uk/Play](https://bestpracticenet.co.uk/Play)  
For more information call 0117 920 9428 or email [npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk](mailto:npq@bestpracticenet.co.uk)







Best  
Practice  
Network

# Let's work together

To discuss how to best use  
apprenticeships and levy  
funding to meet your staffing  
needs please get in touch.

Contact our apprenticeship specialists  
at Best Practice Network.



Scan to book  
a consultation

Learn. Share. Grow.

+44 (0) 117 920 9428

[enquiries@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bestpracticenetwork.co.uk)

[bestpracticenetwork.co.uk](http://bestpracticenetwork.co.uk)

