

A quick guide to the new **youth work** apprenticeships



Youth work apprenticeships are a great way to enhance the skills within your organisation, providing those already working in a youth work setting with the opportunity to build their knowledge and gain a recognised qualification.

And thanks to funding from NatWest Group, it needn't cost you a penny. The result? High-quality, committed staff, who know you believe in them.

The NYA is working with NatWest Group to administer over £5 million worth of training by April 2031 through the bank's apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme, which will provide 366 fully funded course places.

Thanks to NatWest's generosity, youth work organisations and youth services can upskill existing staff without any training costs, to help boost the capacity of their provision.

NatWest's significant investment plays a crucial role in NYA's strategy to build a stronger youth sector which can meet the needs of more young people.



“

The Levy funded apprenticeships are boosting the diversity of the workforce, providing better representation of the young people we work with.”

Liam Swanston,
Senior Delivery
Manager at
The Proud Trust in
Manchester

“

Thanks to the support of the NYA and with funding from NatWest's Levy scheme we've been able to give young people, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, the opportunity to gain a university level qualification.”

Pete Crossley,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Boathouse Youth in Blackpool



What qualifications can you get through the apprenticeships?

Youth Work apprenticeships, at Levels 3 and 6, were launched in 2023 as part of the National Youth Agency's (NYA) vision to build back the youth sector.

As the national body for youth work, the NYA is responsible both for ensuring the quality of youth work which is delivered across England and establishing the necessary training programmes and infrastructure.

LEVEL 3

The Level 3 apprenticeship qualification is designed for people starting out at Youth Support Worker level. It opens the pathway of studying youth work at degree level. It takes 18 months, resulting in a diploma (equivalent standard to an A-level) to enable career progression. Level 3 apprenticeship qualifications are delivered by accredited training providers.

LEVEL 6

The Level 6 integrated degree-apprenticeship is for those who are seeking to progress into leadership, and results in a recognised Honours degree in Youth Work.

The qualification draws on work-based learning and will enable the apprentice to establish, manage and develop youth work provision; work with other agencies across the community and develop rights-based youth work. Apprenticeships are available at Higher Education Institutions both in-person and online.





Who is eligible?

They are open to anyone with a contract of employment, currently working in a paid role within a youth work setting, with the endorsement of their employer.

The training provider will consider the working hours, in setting the duration of the apprenticeship, so that training expectations are realistic.

How do people study and work at the same time?

An apprenticeship involves off-the-job training which takes place within the apprentice's normal contracted hours; learners spend at least 20% of their paid hours at college or university, attending lectures, activity-based seminars, completing online study and tutorials.

Apprentices may study at their workplace as this is where they can get support from their mentor and access resources like a computer or printer. This time is protected for learning and not part of their usual job responsibilities.

The Level 3 Youth Support Worker apprenticeship and Level 6 Youth Worker degree apprenticeship are perfect for those wishing to learn (and earn) on-the-job, or those keen to start a career in youth work.

To find the full list of approved training providers, scan the QR code:



Myth-Busting Q & A

Every Employer Needs to Know



Aren't apprenticeships expensive to fund?

Not true! NatWest Group has earmarked funds from its apprenticeship levy to cover 100% of the apprenticeship training costs for any employer.

Alternatively, smaller employers can choose to pay 5% of the training and assessment costs with the government funding the rest.



Will an apprentice just leave as soon as they're qualified?

There's no guarantee they'll stay forever, but other sectors have found that apprentices tend to be loyal to their original employer, who gave them the chance to develop their career.



Won't hiring an apprentice just mean more work for my team?

Apprentices aren't there to be a burden - they're workers who contribute from day one. They'll assist with youth work sessions and take on other tasks, easing your team's load.

Yes, they need supervision, and they will be spending 20% of their time doing off-the-job learning, supported by a training provider. Ultimately, this is about growing your own talent.

Myth-Busting Q & A

Every Employer Needs to Know



Isn't youth work too complex for an apprentice to handle?

Complex skills, like managing behavioural issues, are built progressively through the apprenticeship, whilst gaining an understanding of the protocols within your organisation. Over time apprentices can handle complex tasks and will do things your way.



Don't apprentices lack the experience we need for youth work?

Nope! Some apprentices can start with less experience, but that's the point - they learn on the job. Youth work apprenticeships blend practical work with training in key areas like safeguarding, mentoring and group facilitation.



How much of my time am I expected to give once an employee is on the course?

Busted! Once onboarded, the only requirement is a twelve-week tripartite review and a contract meeting where you are invited to feedback.

Universities and training providers tend to schedule these meetings back-to-back, so your time commitment is minimised. Some reports may be required; however, employers are expected to mentor and support, providing opportunities to apply their learning at work.



Are they just for big organisations with lots of resources?

Busted! Small charities, community groups, and local councils can all take on youth work apprentices. Training providers handle most of the admin, and the funding can be arranged by the NYA. You don't need a HR department - just a willingness to mentor someone. In fact, smaller organisations often find apprentices bring fresh energy and ideas.



Will an apprentice struggle to connect with young people?

Busted! Many apprentices are closer in age to the young people they'll support, which can be an advantage - they get the 'lingo', the technology, as well as the challenges young people today are facing. Through the apprenticeships they will develop their relationship-building and communication skills to become effective youth workers.



The Proud Trust is an LGBTQ+ youth charity based in Greater Manchester.



Two youth workers from the Trust began the Level 6 degree-apprenticeship in September 2023 at the University of Lancashire.

Liam Swanston, Senior Delivery Manager, explains that the apprenticeship Levy has attracted new people looking for career development:



It's helped us recruit one of our current learners who started doing youth work years ago and wanted to enrol on the course but couldn't with their previous employer. It has power locally in terms of movement around the sector. Because we could support them through the process, it cemented their decision to move organisation.

It's fostering a culture of shared learning and igniting reflective practice that is fundamental to youth work. Our apprentices are now talking about the benefits of youth work in a much more evidence-based way."

We are here to help!

We are here to guide and support employers and learners step by step through the process of enrolling on an apprenticeship and accessing the NatWest Levy funding.

Get in touch directly with Harry Rutter, NYA Apprenticeship Development Officer, to find out more:
HarryR@nya.org.uk



Drop me a line and I can help guide you through the paperwork, so you can focus on enriching your offer and helping more young people to flourish.”



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