



Organising an Apprenticeships Fair

Toolkit for MPs



all party parliamentary group on
apprenticeships

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The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Apprenticeships is a cross-party group that constructively examines the role of apprenticeships, bringing together Members of Parliament, Peers and interested stakeholders to consider how we can deliver high quality apprenticeships whilst promoting best practice. The Group is committed to ensuring that apprenticeships, and the policies behind them, are continuously improved by everyone involved.

Dear Member of Parliament

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships is delighted to publish this toolkit to help you organise your own Apprenticeships Fair.

Apprenticeships offer a unique opportunity for businesses of all sizes to play a role in developing the talent and skills of a person, regardless of their age. By offering paid jobs and the opportunity to gain valuable skills and recognised qualifications, high-quality apprenticeships can ensure we are prepared for the future world of work.

Apprenticeship Fairs are a great way of letting your constituents know about the apprenticeship opportunities that local businesses and educators are offering. They help match potential apprentices with employers and can give young people a better understanding of the options available to them.

We hope this toolkit will enable you to organise your own Apprenticeships Fair in your constituency. If you need any further advice and support, please contact our offices.



Gillian Keegan MP
Co-Chair
APPG on Apprenticeships



Karin Smyth MP
Co-Chair
APPG on Apprenticeships

WHY SHOULD MPs ORGANISE AN APPRENTICESHIPS FAIR?

An Apprenticeships Fair is an exciting opportunity to bring together a wide range of businesses that offer apprenticeships, allowing people in your constituency to meet key local employers and talk to them directly about opportunities they have available.

Your constituents can engage with a range of businesses and educators at exhibition stands, which will be staffed by representatives from companies and other organisations that offer apprenticeships. This is an opportunity for them to ask questions and decide what kind of apprenticeship might suit them.

Apprenticeships bring many benefits for businesses and apprentices. For example, for businesses:

- A tried and tested way to recruit new staff, re-train or upskill existing staff
- Up to 95% funding could be available to support apprenticeship programmes for SMEs
- Flexible to the needs of the business and can be tailored to specific job roles
- Can help reduce staff turnover, by increasing employee satisfaction and loyalty

For apprentices they offer:

- A structured training programme, enabling people to work towards a qualification and to gain the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the chosen industry
- Experience in the working world; getting into employment earlier means there is increased potential for quick career progression
- Instead of borrowing student loans, apprentices are paid a salary and can earn a good salary earlier in their working life
- There are many different types of apprenticeships offering a wide range of vocational and professional qualifications

WHAT HAPPENS AT AN APPRENTICESHIPS FAIR?

Apprenticeship Fairs are events where employers and training providers, including colleges and universities, promote their apprenticeship opportunities directly to those looking to start or enhance their careers.

Format

Fairs should be free to attend and are usually set up as a collection of exhibition stands staffed by two or three representatives from companies and other organisations that offer apprenticeships.

We recommend that the Fair is organised as a drop-in event, with constituents able to attend anytime and stay for as little or as long as they like during the opening hours. Fairs usually last around four to five hours to allow as many people to attend as possible, for example from 10am until 2pm or 3pm.

Remember to check that you have the resources in your office to make the event a success. They don't organise themselves even when you've made good links within the local council, FE college and DWP.

Think carefully about who your event is aimed at - who is your target audience? An Apprenticeships Fair is usually aimed at students who are wondering what their future options are. It may be difficult for companies to send employees after the end of the normal working day - though this is the best time for many parents.

An Apprenticeships Fair provides an opportunity to focus on young people. It can also be used as an opportunity to

hold a wider careers fair, allowing for local firms to advertise job vacancies for young people seeking employment.

It's important to engage students with the fair. Make sure they are encouraged to bring CVs and talk to stall-holders - something which might be intimidating to them. Encourage colleges to be proactive in helping their students to get the most from attending an Apprenticeships Fair. You can organise short workshops during the event such as CV exercises, and discussions about different job sectors.

Size

Apprenticeship Fairs can range from small fairs held at local schools or further education colleges with 20 or so employers, to big national events such as the National Apprenticeship Show with 100+ exhibitors. Most constituency Apprenticeship Fairs tend to have between 30 to 50 exhibitors.

TOP TIP

Depending on the number of exhibitors, why not produce a brochure with a layout of the venue and the location of each organisation's stand to help attendees find their way around the hall?

Key elements

The main ingredients for the day are the employers who are exhibiting, your jobseekers, a guest speaker and the local press.

Having a guest speaker with a background in apprenticeships to open the Fair or run a masterclass helps to break up the day and can really help promote the Fair. Inviting local journalists along will make sure your hard work does not go unnoticed by your constituents!

Running order

A typical running order for the day:

8.30	Venue open to exhibitors to set up
10.00	Fair opens to the public
10.30	MP or special guest opens the Fair
12.00	Special guest masterclass/ presentation
14.00	Fair closes
15.00	Exhibitors to have cleared hall

Promotion

Promoting your Apprenticeships Fair is essential to attract lots of exhibitors and attendees. Publicity is crucial to this event. You can promote your Fair on your website, social media, in the local press, and by partnering with local schools, colleges and the Jobcentre Plus. You can also seek support from your local Jobcentre employer liaison officer to recruit stall-holders.

You should:

1. Promote your event to employers, apprenticeships providers and other organisations such as the National Careers Service.
2. Tell the general public including youth groups, care leaver groups, Alternative Provision centres about the event and explain why they should attend. You may need to remind attendees that the event is being organised/hosted by the MP in their role as a parliamentary representative and is not party political.

A communications strategy and schedule will help you to promote the event. Using case studies in your press release will be a good way to do this.

Consider all forms of media: local radio stations, flyers door-to-door, school newsletters, social media (remember to encourage local councillors and community groups to share, re-post or re-tweet your invitation). You can also encourage schools and colleges to display the posters and promote the Fair during assemblies.

TOP TIP

One easy way to distribute promotional materials is to make them available to download alongside the details of the Apprenticeship Fair on your website.

WHO SHOULD BE INVITED?

Constituents

Most importantly, open your Fair to any local constituent looking for a job, apprenticeship, or a career change – remember that apprenticeships are not just for 16–25 year olds.

Extend invitations to the Fair through your local authority, Jobcentre Plus, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local schools, sixth form colleges and local universities.

Employers - of all sizes

Open your exhibitors' invitation to employers of all sectors and sizes in your constituency, from multi-national corporations to independent retailers.

Advertising for exhibition slots can be done on your parliamentary website, but for maximum visibility it is worth asking local press and radio to advertise too. You should also write directly to local businesses in your constituency.

You may also want to advertise any sponsorship opportunities for local businesses (for example, advertising in the event brochure), to help cover the cost of the venue hire and pay for publicity. You should speak to large employers in your constituency and try to get two or three of them to sponsor the event.

Display the full list of exhibitors online before the event to give any residents attending the time to research the organisations, tailor their CVs, and plan their visit.

TOP TIP

For ease of registering, create an online application form so people can register to attend easily and quickly.

Training and skills providers

Organisations which provide employment-related skills training are useful organisations to invite as there will be many people exploring the Fair who may not have decided on a career or whether an apprenticeship is for them.

Local universities will be important to invite, many now offer degree apprenticeships bringing together the best of higher and vocational training. This provides a university education alongside on-the-job training and may include a work-based, academic or combined qualification or a professional qualification relevant to the industry.

Training and skills providers can add something extra to the agenda, such as a CV masterclass workshops or a drop-in career advice clinic. If you have a local university in your area, you should speak to them about this.

TOP TIP

Once stall-holders have signed up, they need to be told about parking arrangements, what size table they will have and other logistics such as chairs, electric points, Wi-Fi and what refreshments will be available (try to provide free tea, coffee and biscuits at least).

Governmental bodies and agencies

Organisations such as Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service are helpful resources to draw on when organising the Apprenticeship Fair, in addition to providing a first port of call at the Fair for all residents.

The Job Centre will be able to advise you on the types of training programmes that residents are seeking, enabling you to focus your invitations on the sectors where there is most demand.

These organisations will also advertise the Fair to their clients.

Local press

Invite journalists from local print and broadcast media along to your Apprenticeship Fair to make sure your work is advertised locally.

In the run-up to the event try and organise schedule stories that can be published to help promote the event. Examples can include a launch story at a local business, or a good news story highlighting a successful local business looking to expand.

TOP TIP

Why not invite SMEs that might not currently employ apprentices to attend? You could ask a local college or university to send a staff member to talk to about the opportunities employing apprentices can offer to SMEs.

WHEN AND WHERE?

When?

The best time to hold an Apprenticeship Fair is from January to April as it is when most final year school students start thinking about their next steps.

National Apprenticeship Week (date varies usually in Feb/March) – is an especially good time to hold it. Hundreds of events take place across the country

during National Apprenticeship Week to spread the word about the benefits of apprenticeships for young people, employers and the economy.

The Week is co-ordinated by the National Apprenticeship Service, to find out more about National Apprenticeship Service, visit the government's website here: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

WHEN AND WHERE?

Where?

If possible, try to find a venue in your constituency that will host the Apprenticeship Fair for no extra cost. Think about where you hold constituency surgeries – schools, council buildings, community centres – as these could be suitable if large enough.

If you persuade a college or community centre to host your event for free, make sure that you publicly thank them for this support. Check whether the hosting organisation have costs associated with hiring in extra tables, extending their electrical wiring, or allocating more staff.

You may want to consider partnering with a local business, charity or other service (such as the Job Centre) who will have a suitable space. In exchange for using the space, you could offer their names on the invitations, posters and other promotional material or calling the event “Apprenticeship Fair, in association with Jobcentre Plus”.

TOP TIP

Why not hold a roving surgery at your Apprenticeships Fair? Find a venue with a private room and arrange appointments with constituents during the day.

During and after the event

Make sure that you have an accurate list of which organisations are attending. You should create a room plan for the event which organisers can refer to, this can be an A3 sheet of paper above the

registration desk with a post-it note for each stall.

It is useful to have a few volunteers available on the day to help register attendees and provide them with teas and coffees. Remember to ask attendees for their postcode and how they found out about the event. Logging this information will help you understand how to improve your event in the future.

Speak to members of the public attending the event as they may wish to be quoted publicly for future events. Remember to Tweet photos and advertise the day on Facebook. Don't forget to speak to each stall holder and thank them for giving up their time.

As the event comes to an end, hand out evaluation forms to all the stallholders asking them for tick-box feedback on their experience of the day. Statements and a Likert scale are easy to complete for example: “*I was happy with the enrolment process for the event* [strongly agree] [agree] [not applicable] [disagree] [strongly disagree].”

Remember to thank stallholders via (letters or emails) as soon as possible after the event and suggest how any future events might be improved.

Feedback

If you have organised an Apprenticeship Fair in your constituency, we would love to hear about it and any tips you may have. Please contact the secretariat on ApprenticeshipsAPPG@connectpa.co.uk or tweet us on [@ApprenticeAPPG](https://twitter.com/ApprenticeAPPG)

South Bristol Jobs & Apprenticeships Fair 2020

Bristol South MP Karin Smyth is again joining forces with City of Bristol College, Bristol City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions to bring you another apprenticeships fair.

The South Bristol Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair 2020 takes place from 11am til 3pm on Thursday 27 February at the South Bristol Skills Academy in Hengrove, Bristol. It will bring together employers, training providers and apprenticeships organisations with job-seekers and school leavers.

Exhibitors include the college and council as well as some of the city's employers, such as NHS, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and Bristol Port Company. There will also be representatives from organisations supporting people into employment, such as the National Careers Service.

This is the fourth year that Karin Smyth has run the free event with City of Bristol College, which follows National Apprenticeship Week on 3-9 February 2020.

"I'm delighted to be bringing you another South Bristol Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair in partnership with City of Bristol College, Bristol City Council and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)," said Karin Smyth, "It's a fantastic opportunity to meet the training providers, employers and all those people who are involved in supporting apprenticeships."

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, said: *"This is a great opportunity for people seeking a route into work, and are keen to develop their skills and knowledge on the job. I am delighted that there are so many apprenticeship opportunities on offer across Bristol and that employers are committing to developing our city's talent."*

Speaking at last year's South Bristol Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust Apprenticeship Co-ordinator Joanna Dunlop said: *"The uptake has been brilliant – a really good breakdown of college students and pupils and a lot more adults, interested in all areas. We bought current jobs and even interviewed a couple of people during the day. This is the only event with this catchment and long may it last because it's been brilliant."*

Andy Forbes, Principal of City of Bristol College, said: *"Apprenticeships at City of Bristol College have so much to offer. The chance to earn money while you learn is a really good option, and in many areas you can now do apprenticeships right up to university level."*

Karin Smyth added: *"Apprenticeships offer a fantastic route to work and qualifications, including university degrees. We've had great feedback from previous fairs with people securing jobs and apprenticeships. The event is not just for school pupils but for their parents and grandparents as well as older people looking to re-enter the workplace or re-train."*

It's free to attend and no need to pre-book, simply turn up on the day!

TEMPLATE INVITE TO EXHIBIT/SPONSOR



Join me at [INSERT CONSTITUENCY], Apprenticeships Fair 2020

I am writing to invite you to participate at my annual jobs, apprenticeships and careers fair, taking place on [INSERT DATE] between [INSERT TIME] at [INSERT CONSTITUENCY].

Strengthening our local economy, backing local businesses and helping local people into employment is a top priority for me as your local MP. I am working with [INSERT LOCAL ORGANISATIONS] to help local people get a job or apprenticeship to build or extend their career.

Those attending will also receive helpful tips on employability, including help on writing CVs as well as advice on techniques for an interview. The event will also work to promote apprenticeships strongly.

We are aiming for the event to be a high quality event with coverage in the local media, giving you the opportunity to showcase the great work your organisation is undertaking on employment to a wider audience as well as demonstrating your commitment to wider social responsibility.

Although taking place in [INSERT CONSTITUENCY] anyone from the wider region is welcome to this free event, which we hope will attract several hundred participants. We hope that by taking part in the event, you will enable us to build on the success of previous years (if applicable) and strengthen the fair's status as a key event for the wider community.

While I do understand that this event is still some way in the future, and you may not know at this stage if you are to have any vacancies, I invite you to take part in the fair as either an exhibitor, sponsor or both. Some overview details are attached in the information sheet.

Please be advised that this event is free for exhibitors, but in order to cover some of the associated costs of the event, we are asking for a voluntary donation of [XXX]

Please do let me know if you are interested in taking part. If you are, please let me know as soon as possible by [INSERT DEADLINE] at the latest. Please send back the completed form and email it to [MP DETAILS]@parliament.uk.

Yours sincerely,
[INSERT MP NAME]

TEMPLATE INVITE TO EXHIBIT/SPONSOR



[Insert Constituency] Apprenticeships Fair 2020 Overview for potential exhibitors

Date & Venue

[DATE] at the [INSERT VENUE]

Time

The Fair will run from [INSERT TIME]. Exhibitors should be at the venue by [INSERT TIME] at the latest.

Exhibitors must stay for the entire duration of the Fair to give attendees the best opportunity to see all of what is available.

Format

Each organisation will be allocated a table at the [INSERT VENUE]. Promotional materials can be displayed on and around the table.

What does my organisation need to bring on the day?

At least one staff representative.

Promotional materials: Pop-up stand, banner, leaflets etc.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can be full-time or part-time roles.

Costs

[If your venue has a cost implication you can ask businesses attending to make a small donation to contribute towards this]

Sponsorship opportunities

[You can also seek opportunities for sponsors in order to cover the costs for the fair such as teas and coffees and venue hire]

TEMPLATE APPLICATION FORM



[Insert Constituency] Apprenticeships Fair 2020 Registration of Interest Form

Please complete and post or email back to [MP DETAILS]@parliament.uk
by [INSERT DATE]

Company details	Name Address Postcode Phone number
What sector is your organisation in?	
How would you like your organisation to be involved? (Tick all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit – we'll bring a stand and people. <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor – contact us to discuss options. <input type="checkbox"/> Host a visit
Name and contact details of the person responsible for Job Fair liaison	Name Job Title Email address Work landline Mobile number
Number of jobs you may be able to offer at the Fair	
Number of apprenticeships you may be able to offer at the Fair	
How many representatives from your organisation are you planning on bringing?	
What promotional material are you likely to bring to the Fair? (e.g pop-up stand, banners, leaflets etc.)	
How many car parking spaces will you need? And at what times and for how long?	
How many plug sockets do you need access to, if any?	
Can your organisation provide a voluntary donation of £100?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any special requests?	

TEMPLATE POSTER

Chichester Apprenticeships Fair organised by Gillian Keegan MP

Friday 7 February

Doors open from 10am

During National Apprenticeship Week, join us to hear about the exciting apprenticeships opportunities from local businesses, universities and other local organisations.



This event is kindly
sponsored by

[insert organisations]

Free
admission



www.gilliankeegan.com



gillian.keegan.mp@parliament.uk



0207 219 1193



@GillianKeegan

The APPG on Apprenticeships is sponsored by:





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