



**Employer Brief**

# **Developing your workforce - 2021 and beyond**

June 2021



Now more than ever, employers are rethinking their workforce strategy, whether it's for post-pandemic recovery, building a long-term talent pipeline, innovation or growth.

My team at SDN specialises in workforce strategy with a particular focus on helping employers understand and use government funded training for staff development.

This short Employer Brief is an introduction to identifying your current workforce priorities, briefly outlines how different government resources might work for you and describes the support we offer.

If you have any questions our contact details are on the final page.



**Colin Bentwood**  
**Managing Director, SDN**

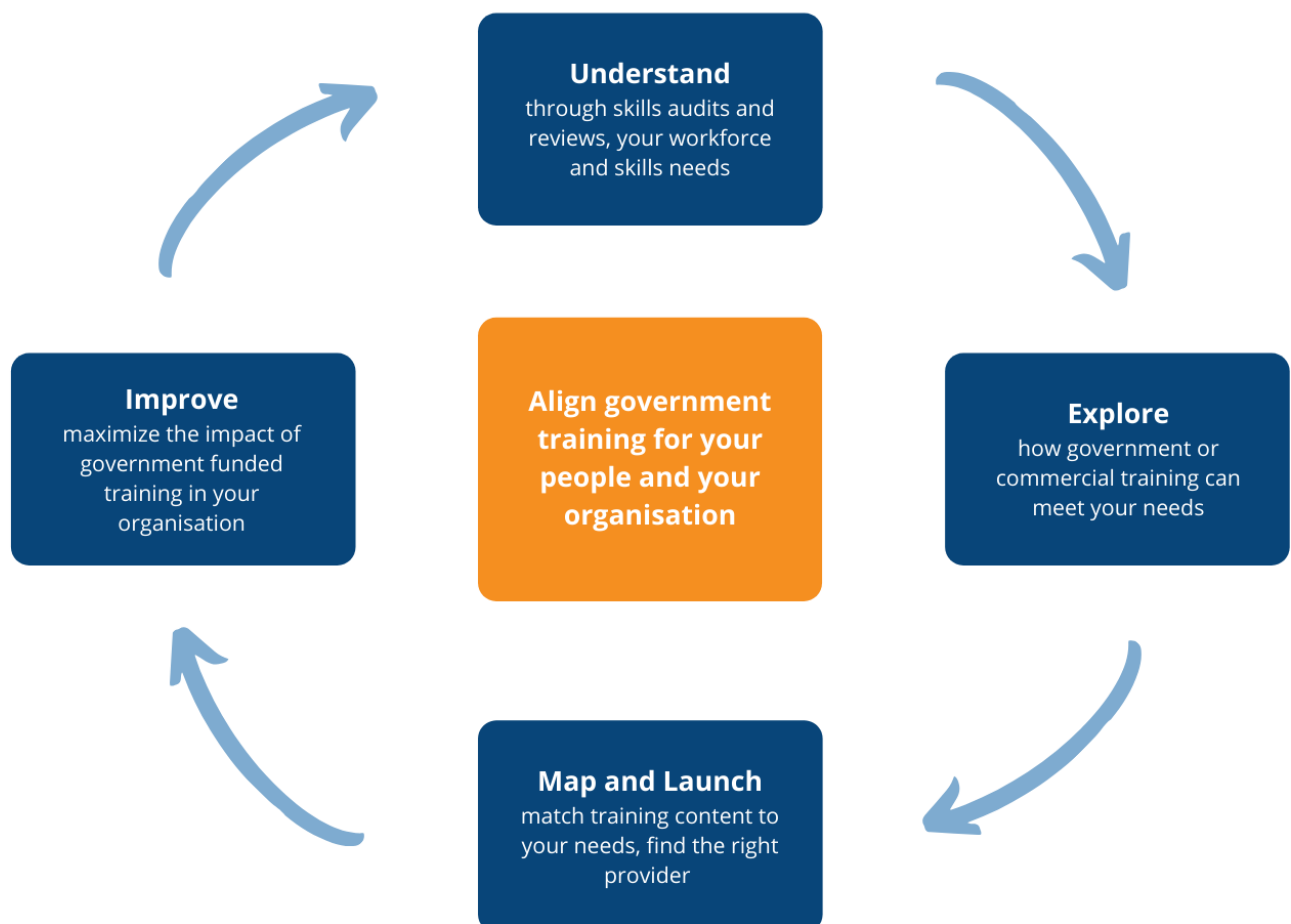
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## More about us

SDN brings together the country's leading specialists from the world of apprenticeships, technical education and workforce development. We've helped employers across the country understand, prepare and deliver skills initiatives within their organisation.

Over the past two decades we've worked with government, industry bodies and hundreds of employers and training and skills providers. That's given us a unique insight into workforce development and into how funded training can help drive a talent pipeline and contribute to your organisation's priorities.

We work with employers to:



Through consultancy and CPD, we help you act. We give you knowledge, clarity, and tools to improve and accelerate the development of your workforce.

# Publicly funded training for your workforce – why now?

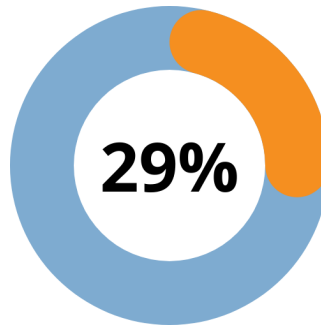
The **demand** for skills has never been greater.

Industries have skills gaps: some are struggling to attract young people; current workers are having to reskill and adapt to change.

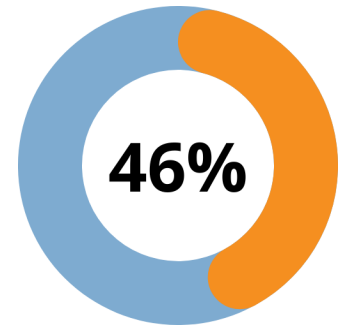
The pandemic has highlighted this all the more - skills needed 18-months ago are not the same now.

So what about the **supply** of skills?

We believe the breadth of publicly funded training schemes gives employers a unique opportunity to meet this demand for skills.



A) 29% of employers consider cost to be the main barrier in training their workforce



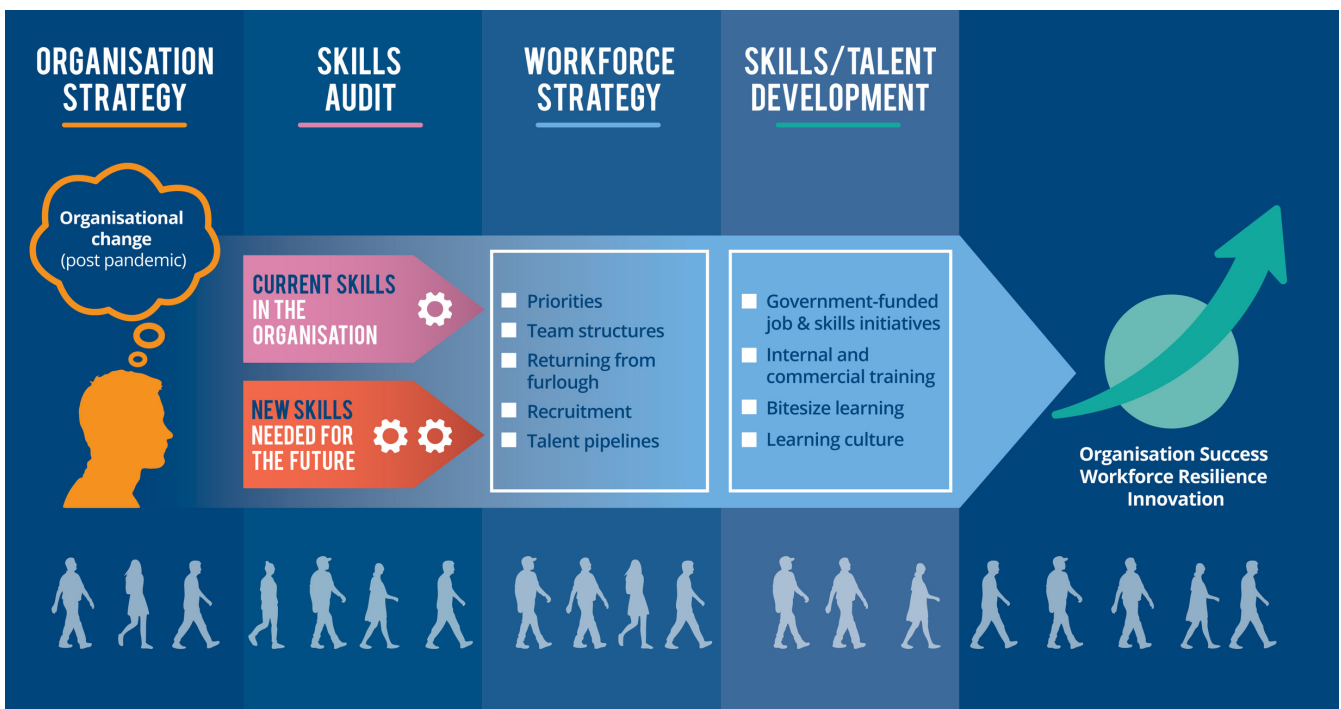
B) 46% of employers are struggling to recruit into digital roles



C) 60% of employers have a digital skills gap

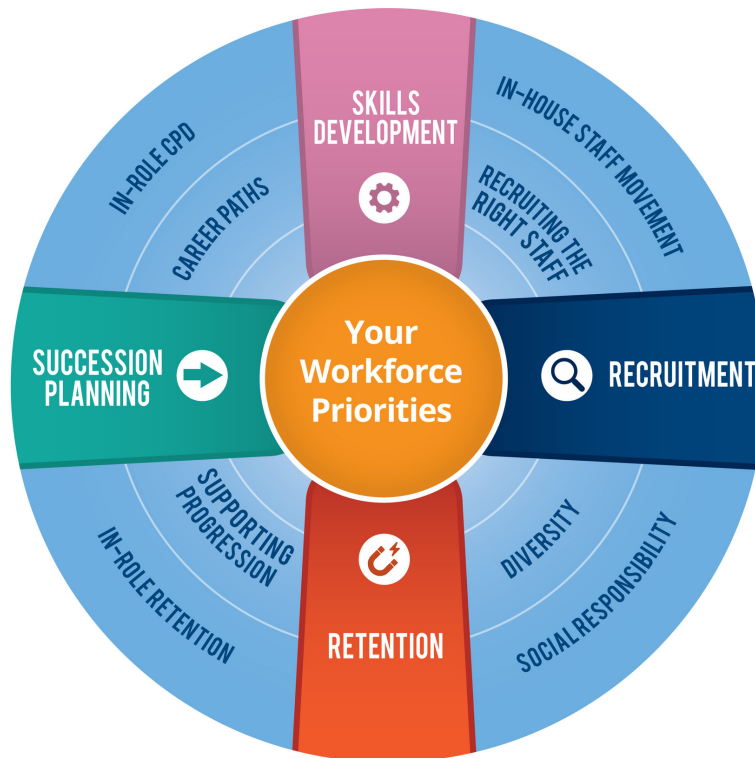


D) 9 in 10 UK employees will have to reskill by 2030



# The place to start – your workforce priorities

Before exploring the initiatives you could draw on it's really important that you are clear on your workforce priorities.



1. What are your strategic aims for the next 3-5 years?
2. What kind of workforce will be required to achieve this?
3. What kind of workforce and skills do you need post-pandemic?
4. How can your workforce be more resilient to future events?
5. What long term skills gaps are there in your organisation?
6. What disruptive technologies and industry changes might require new skills?
7. How effective are your organisation's training and career pathways?
8. What's the age profile of your team?
9. What succession plans are in place?
10. How strong is retention?
11. How could your organisation benefit from a more diverse workforce?
12. What are your corporate social responsibility priorities?

***Do you understand the different training options (government funded and others) that can help you build the skilled workforce you need?***

# At a glance - funded training and initiatives

In recent years, the government has been working closely with employers to reform technical education and introduce schemes that employers can use to meet their workforce needs.

Before we unpack these further, here is a summary of the four main schemes, who they are for and the financial support available:

	Apprenticeships	Kickstart	Traineeships	Industry Placements (T-Levels)
Employer costs	<b>Wages at least £4.15/hr</b> <i>plus, co-investment or levy funds</i>	<b>No charge</b> <i>Subsidised Wages</i>	<b>No charge</b> <i>Option to pay the young person</i>	<b>No charge</b> <i>Option to pay the young person</i>
Incentives	<b>£3,000</b> new employees 1 Apr - 30 Sep 2021 <b>+£1,000</b> for 16-18s or for under 25s with a care plan Reduced Employer NI for under-25s	100% of National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week for 6 months  No Employer NI or auto-enrolment	<b>£1,000</b> per trainee	<b>£1,000</b> per placement (until July 2022)
Training	20% off-the-job training with the provider	In-work training to develop skills to increase chances of long-term work	Skills and employability training with the provider	Placement embedded in a two-year technical qualification
Duration (in workplace)	At least 12 months	26 weeks	6 weeks to  6 months	315 hours (approx. 45 days) over two years
Eligibility conditions	Any age with prior learning conditions	<b>16-24</b>	<b>16-24</b> and qualified up to Level 3 <b>up to 25</b> with care plan	<b>16-19</b> Available in specific occupations
Why this scheme?	Upskill existing workforce; support employees into roles	Support young people at risk of long-term unemployment	Plan ahead for future talent apprenticeships / new entrants	Find the next generation of new entrants

# Apprenticeships



## What is it?

Apprenticeships are a job with training, allowing people to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to be occupationally competent. They can be used to recruit new employees or retrain your existing workforce (any age).

## How does it work?

There are over 600 apprenticeships, from entry-level to senior management. At least 20% of normal working hours must be spent on off-the-job training. Employers pay the apprentice's salary. Until September 2021 a £3,000 per apprentice incentive is available. With an extra £1,000 and reduced national insurance for 16-18 apprentices.

## Why might you consider this scheme?

- ✓ Grow motivated, skilled and qualified staff across a range of occupations
- ✓ Fill skill gaps and grow talent from within
- ✓ Create a flexible training curriculum to meet your needs



# KICKSTART SCHEME



## What is it?

Kickstart is available until December 2021. The aim is to help 16-24-year-olds acquire skills and experience that they'll need for employment.

## How does it work?

You can recruit 16-24-year-olds on Universal Credit into new roles for six-months. Salary (NMW) is covered by government for up to 25 hours a week. You can participate directly or through an approved intermediary (gateway organisation). £1,500 per person is available to help with induction, equipment and training.

## Why might you consider this scheme?

- ✓ Employ young talent before committing to more permanent roles
- ✓ Meet short term workforce needs or new project roles
- ✓ Significant proportion of costs covered by government





# Traineeships



## What is it?

Traineeships is a training programme with work experience, for young people to develop foundation skills and experience to be ready for work or an apprenticeship.

## How does it work?

Traineeships is open to 16–24-year-olds and those 25+ with a care plan. The training and/or the work placement can last from 6 weeks up to 6 months. An incentive is available of £1,000 per trainee (up to 10 trainees).

## Why might you consider this scheme?

- ✓ Training is flexible and can be tailored to your organisational context
- ✓ Attract young people to your organisation and your industry
- ✓ Get to know trainees before offering them a job / apprenticeship role



# T-LEVELS

THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION



## What is it?

T-Levels are the new technical 2-year qualifications for 16- to 19-year-olds. They equate to 3 A levels for young people to develop knowledge, attitudes and practical skills for the workplace. Industry placements are central to T-Levels giving young people meaningful and relevant experience of work at the start of their careers.

## How does it work?

Industry placements last at least 45-days (315 hours) and can be hosted as a block, day release or as a mix. You'll identify projects and tasks that are useful for your organisation and will help students develop technical and workplace skills. An incentive of £1,000 per placement is available until July 2022.

## Why might you consider this scheme?

- ✓ Attract bright new talent and capitalise on their fresh perspective
- ✓ Find solutions for entry-level skills shortages
- ✓ Develop future technical talent for your business



# Linking workforce needs with government schemes

Here are a number of (anonymised) scenarios to help you understand how government schemes can help to tackle particular workforce priorities.

## National Agency for Innovation

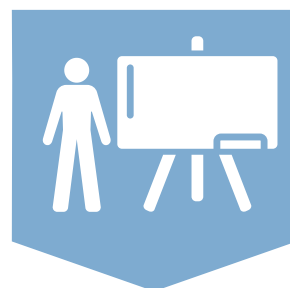
After a period of significant organisational change across their three sites, a number of staff at the National Agency for Innovation have been promoted to management positions. Several have had no formal training.

Drawing on their apprenticeship levy, the 'departmental manager' and 'senior learnership' apprenticeship standards are identified as the most suitable form of training.

First, they set out a blueprint of what is needed from the training and their requirements, to make sure their managers receive consistent training across all of their sites.

Next, they speak to a number of high-quality training providers and select one in each region.

Before the training starts, they work with each provider and tailor the content to the specific needs of the organisation, so that each manager becomes fully competent in their role.



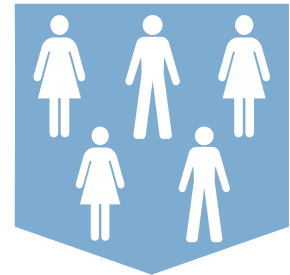
## ESK Accelerate Ltd

ESK Accelerate are a small engineering company. Many of their mechanical engineering staff are older workers and are due to retire in the next 10 years. ESK are struggling to attract younger recruits with the right skills and the skills gap is growing.

After exploring their options, they decide to take on five industry placement students who are studying a T Level in mechanical engineering.

They also set-up two higher-level apprenticeship places they can offer these students once they complete their course.

This allows the company to attract the best young people and establish a talent pipeline process they can repeat each year to grow a highly-skilled and experienced team.



## Catering Group plc

As a large global business, the Catering Group recently reviewed its corporate social responsibility strategy, focusing on social mobility and supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Having explored different government schemes, they decide to take on 100 Kickstart individuals (who are at risk of long-term unemployment) and 50 Traineeship students.

They place them in well-supported teams and give them a wide range of tasks to develop their skills.

A number of students flourish and are linked into early career roles and apprenticeship opportunities in the organisation – providing a strategic link between their social responsibility agenda and growing their talent pipeline.



# How SDN can help

We help employers understand their workforce and explore, launch and improve funded training and initiatives, aligned to the needs of your business and your people.

Through impartial consultancy and CPD, we help employers to:

## **Understand the needs of your workforce and government training/job options**

- Conduct a skills audit - ask the right questions to understand the needs of your workforce
- Help you understand each option, aligned against the specific skill needs, occupations and career routes within your organisation

## **Map training content to the needs of your organisation**

- Align training content (e.g. apprenticeship standards) to the specific knowledge and skills needed by individuals in your organisation
- Develop a blueprint, to achieve consistent training across multiple training providers / sites

## **Establish relationships with quality training providers**

- Establish and support your process for procuring the training
- Advice on asking providers the right questions, the kind of flexibility and support you should expect and how to assess the quality of training

## **Train your staff to support young people in the workplace**

- Support with the practicalities and compliance / safeguarding aspects of hosting young people in the workplace
- Train line managers and mentors on supporting young people in the workplace

## **Improve and maximise your current government-funded training**

- Identify ways to use the apprenticeship levy more effectively to develop your workforce
- Explore how your current training programmes can be improved

## **Set-up as an approved 'employer-provider' so you can self-deliver training**

- Prepare and apply to become an approved training provider
- Set-up compliance and quality systems, curriculums, training/assessment materials

# Our team, our work and our partners

## Our team

We are trusted by employers because of the impartial and broad range of expertise in the team:



**Louise Doyle**  
L&D strategy and digital



**Karen Kelly**  
Apprenticeships,  
young talent  
and SMEs



**Anna Sutton**  
Apprenticeships  
and  
Traineeships



**Simon Shaw**  
Kickstart and  
industry placements



**Erica Farmer**  
L&D strategy  
and  
remote working



**Alison Sumpter**  
Line management /  
mentoring and young  
talent

## Our work

Alongside our one-to-one support (as set out above), SDN leads on large-scale national support for employers for the Department for Education and industry bodies:



SDN delivers the government's national package of support to help employers prepare to offer high-quality T Level industry placements, including resources, events and one-to-one support.



SDN developed an apprenticeship toolkit tailored to 21 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) areas across England. The toolkits give practical advice, case studies and tools for SMEs.



SDN worked with some of the leading TV, film, and broadcasting companies to create a wireframe apprenticeship curriculum for employers to tailor and use with their training providers.

Here are just a few of the 900 employers we've worked with...





## Our partners

SDN works closely with government and leading national / regional industry bodies, including:



Regionally, we work with many of the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local / Combined Authorities across England too.



## Contact us

If you like to chat any of this through with the team, here's how to contact us:

✉ e: [hello@strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk](mailto:hello@strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk)

☎ t: **01622 962 411**

🌐 w: [www.strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk](http://www.strategicdevelopmentnetwork.co.uk)