



**Quality  
Improvement  
Agency**

**National Employer  
Service - Effective  
Practice Summary**

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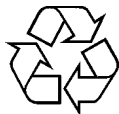
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May 2007, the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) appointed York Consulting LLP (YCL) to undertake research identifying effective practice in the training programmes and strategies of companies engaged with the National Employer Service (NES). The NES is a discrete unit within the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) National Office.

1.2 This effective practice summary report presents summaries of the effective practice findings from each of the twenty employer case studies undertaken as part of the research. It forms one of a suite of dissemination materials including:

- full report;
- research summary;
- thematic brochures:
  - benefits of training;
  - recruitment;
  - delivering Key Skills;
  - supporting employees in training;
  - internal assessment;
  - progression;
  - provider effective practice;
- standalone employer brochures:
  - Doosan Babcock Energy Limited;
  - National Grid Plc;
  - Royal Mail Group Plc;
  - BMW (UK) Limited;
  - Royal Air Force;
  - Dollond and Aitchison Limited;
  - Robert Wiseman Dairies Plc;
  - Barchester Healthcare.

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- 1.3 Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily represent QIA's views.

## 2 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE SUMMARIES

2.1 The following employers are profiled in this report:

- BMW (UK) Limited;
- Dollond and Aitchison Limited;
- National Grid Plc;
- Royal Mail Group Plc;
- British Gas Services Limited;
- Robert Wiseman Dairies Plc;
- Ministry of Defence – DETS(A);
- Kwik Fit (GB) Limited;
- Barchester Healthcare;
- BAE Systems Plc;
- Doosan Babcock Energy Limited;
- Tesco Stores Limited;
- TUI UK Limited;
- Land Rover;
- Mimosa Healthcare Group Limited;
- Vodafone UK Limited;
- J Sainsbury Plc;
- Biffa Limited.

## Effective Practice Summary: BMW (UK) Limited

- 2.2 BMW is “one of the world’s leading manufacturers of luxury cars and motorcycles”. The company runs an in-house Apprenticeship programme from its bespoke BMW Academy, near Reading.
- 2.3 The Academy runs two Advanced Apprenticeship programmes that receive Government funding through the National Employer Service: Service Apprenticeship and Parts Apprenticeship.
- 2.4 Examples of effective practice include:
- ***in-house delivery of Apprenticeship programme*** – the move from programme delivery by colleges to in-house delivery ensures BMW can deliver the highest quality Apprenticeships, which meet the needs of the business and provide a more rounded learning experience for employees;
  - ***online recruitment*** – apprentices can apply for the BMW programme online, including choosing the preferred location for their Apprenticeship;
  - ***rolling Apprenticeship programme*** – the development of a rolling programme with multiple admission points provides the flexibility required by dealerships whose staff needs may change on a month-to-month basis;
  - ***aligning requirements of government programmes with business needs*** – for example, data and monitoring requirements and tackling issues such as wider participation;
  - ***use of online learning resources*** – to provide a tailored learning experience for apprentices a bespoke online learning tool has been developed;

- ***balancing online and face-to-face learning*** – BMW recognised that its Parts apprentices required more face-to-face learning time, so the contact time was increased from 21 days per annum to 40 days per annum;
- ***use of field based career programmes advisors*** – BMW uses a team of five field advisors to monitor and assess the delivery of the work place elements of the NVQ. All field advisors are trained NVQ assessors and are responsible for the delivery of NVQ targets.

### Effective Practice Summary: Dollond and Aitchison Limited

- 2.5 Dollond and Aitchison (D&A) are one of the country's leading high street optometrists and corrective lens retailers.
- 2.6 Dollond and Aitchison have held a contract with the National Employer Service (NES) since 2001. The NES contribute funding towards the assessment of Optical Advisers to NVQ Level 2.
- 2.7 Examples of effective practice include:
- ***universal offer*** – an NVQ Level 2 is offered to every new employee joining the company – all staff must undertake it including a Key Skills element;
  - ***career progression*** – a clear career progression route is communicated to employees entering the organisation;
  - ***training culture*** – within D&A there is a strong culture of training, which is embedded throughout the company. The career path available to all employees means that they are encouraged to maximise their own potential and progress within the company through continued training and personal development;
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- ***return on investment*** – NES funded training helps ‘colleagues’ to become more productive. The value of unit sales increases following each step up in qualification level; for example, on average Optical Advisers (Level 2) will generate £7 more per sale than trainee Optical Advisers. This is because their product knowledge is better and staff are more confident when describing the merits of higher value products to customers;
- ***sector champions*** – Dollond and Aitchison’s (D&A) competitors do not offer any similarly recognised training; this is the only such offering in the sector and differentiates them from other firms. Therefore, they are the foremost employer in the sector (e.g. one employee took a pay cut to join from a competitor so that she could join training programme);
- ***In-branch support*** – support from other colleagues is a major element in staff development at D&A, which is strongly supported by the training culture embedded within the firm. Each employee has a ‘buddy’ in their branch that supports them to complete their learning workbook. Additional support is provided by other members of staff in each branch as and when it is required.

### **Effective Practice Summary: National Grid Plc**

- 2.8 National Grid is one of the world’s largest utility companies and is “dedicated to being the foremost international electricity and gas company”. They focus on the management of large and complex energy delivery networks.
- 2.9 The National Grid runs an apprentice programme and accepts around 85 new apprentices per annum, according to business need. The annual cohort of 85 apprentices is split roughly 60/40 between the gas and electric areas of the business.
- 2.10 Examples of effective practice include:
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- ***in-house delivery helps promote the company culture*** – the shift from college-led to internal Apprenticeship delivery means National Grid can develop technically competent staff who understand the company culture;
- ***a broad range of tools to assess candidates*** – to get a more rounded view of applicants’ skills and capabilities, National Grid uses a combination of practical and ability tests to improve their recruitment process;
- ***team-building week to develop morale*** – all apprentices take part in a team-building week in Cumbria to build team spirit and morale;
- ***feedback sessions to allow apprentices to self reflect on learning*** – all apprentices are required to deliver a presentation early on in their course reflecting on key lessons to date;
- ***using field level staff as mentors*** – changing mentors from management level staff to field staff (who are often former apprentices) has led to an improvement in communication between mentors and apprentices;
- ***performance related pay*** – the pay and bonus of apprentices is directly related to their NVQ performance and completion of their performance logbook.

### **Effective Practice Summary: Royal Mail Group Plc**

2.11 Royal Mail Group (Royal Mail) is unique in reaching everyone in the UK through its mails, Post Office and parcels businesses – which directly employ over 181,000 people in the UK. Every working day Royal Mail processes and delivers over 80 million items to 28 million addresses; each week we serve over 24 million customers through our network of 13,852 Post Office branches and each year our domestic and European parcels businesses.

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2.12 The Royal Mail has held a contract with the National Employer Service for a number of years. The primary function of the contract is to deliver training programmes in engineering and manufacturing technologies, retail and commercial enterprise and in business administration and law.

2.13 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***training and development culture*** – the Royal Mail culture is to offer training to all employees;
  - ***investment appraisal*** – all potential training programmes have to be given the ‘green light’ by the Investment Appraisal Team. This challenges programme designers to be clear about the benefits in advance;
  - ***business benefits of investment in training*** – the Skills Framework Manager has undertaken in-depth research looking at the returns to the business of employees undertaking an NVQ. For apprentices on the Mail Services NVQ, Royal Mail identified a considerable cost saving due to improved retention and a reduction in unplanned sickness and absence;
  - ***in-depth apprentice support and mentoring*** – all apprentices have access to a wide range of support mechanisms, including tutors, mentors and line managers. Apprentices are also surveyed three times over the course of the 18-month scheme and are brought together for a three-day period during the programme in order to share experiences;
  - ***progression*** – at the end of the 18 months, all apprentices have the opportunity to go on to a six month First Steps to Management Course (ILM Certificate in First Line Management);
  - ***positive inspection results*** – the Royal Mail was last inspected in May 2007, and achieved very positive results. They achieved Grade 2 scores across the board, except in equality of opportunity where a Grade 1 was obtained.
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## Effective Practice Summary: British Gas Services Limited

2.14 British Gas is part of the Centrica Group and provides gas, electricity and home repair services to customers in Scotland, Wales and England. The training that British Gas delivers to its installation and service engineer apprentices takes place across a network of centres that forms the British Gas Engineering Academy within the UK.

2.15 The Academy delivers Advanced Apprenticeship training for employees following the domestic gas maintenance–training programme and domestic gas installation programme. Successful applicants are recruited as trainee gas engineers and the majority of employees complete their framework in just over 12 months.

2.16 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***continual improvement*** – a two-way assessment process provides apprentices with a feedback mechanism to training officers. They continually look at ways training can be improved; for example, by modifying the delivery of modules, reviewing the induction process and the timing of work placement episodes;
- ***recruiting apprentices*** – there is a focus on ‘getting the front end right’. An emphasis is placed on screening applicants for potential technical ability and ensuring that applicants have the right attitude;
- ***investing in apprentices from day one*** – British Gas provide tangible indicators of the investment they are making in apprentices by describing the benefits at the outset, for example, the use of a company vehicle, mobile phone and laptop;
- ***fast-track framework completion*** – effective planning of block-training and work-based learning in the field means that the majority of apprentices can complete the engineering framework within 12 months;

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- ***Duke of Edinburgh (DOE) Gold Award*** – British Gas has piloted the integration of the Award within the Engineering Academy programme successfully. The residential element is proving to be particularly successful in accelerating effective working relationships between team members and training officers;
- ***making the company's values real*** – elements of the DOE Gold Award and the training officers' approach to delivery help ensure that apprentices 'own' the four values British Gas has adopted for delivering customer satisfaction;
- ***consistent approaches to high quality training delivery*** – British Gas is very keen to ensure that the training of apprentice engineers is consistent irrespective of employee location. Consistency is promoted through keeping control of the programme via in-house delivery, a standardised approach to using learning materials, allocation of a dedicated training officer who stays with the group throughout their programme and a consistent approach to block-based and work-based training;
- ***continual assessment*** – the training ethos behind assessment at British Gas is about validating knowledge and skills, identifying areas where revision would be useful and incrementally building apprentices' confidence;
- ***post framework work based mentoring*** – employees who complete the framework and pass the Accredited Certification System (ACS) are supported in the workplace for a minimum of eight weeks. Each newly qualified engineer is allocated a buddy who is an experienced qualified engineer. The degree of support is tapered over time as the apprentice gains more experience. Although eight weeks is the minimum, the support is open-ended and will vary depending on the individual.

## Effective Practice Summary: Robert Wiseman Dairies Plc

2.17 Robert Wiseman Dairies is one of the leading dairy processing and delivery firms in the UK.

2.18 The company has held a contract with the National Employer Service since 2004. The primary function of the contract is to fund assessment of drivers of dairy delivery vehicles through to NVQ Level 2 in HGV driving.

2.19 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***integrating the corporate and individual benefits of training*** – The company has completely changed its attitude towards training, from being a legislative necessity to one of being a real benefit to the business and employees. The company sees the quality of training as a real strength and a market differentiator. Several clients have commented positively on Robert Wiseman Dairies approach to training;
- ***the working time directive*** – one legislative challenge to training is the Working Time Directive that stops employees working for longer than 48 hours each week. If drivers have been working for 48 hours in a week then they cannot participate in any training. To overcome this challenge, Robert Wiseman Dairies is able to change the shifts of some of the staff to ensure that trainers get the chance to see the employees;
- ***in-house assessment*** – Robert Wiseman Dairies assesses NVQ's in-house. This facilitates improved quality and control of the assessment process. Assessments take place almost anywhere in the country at any hour of the day. By recruiting existing drivers as assessors quality of the process and flexibility of assessment is enabled;
- ***developing Key Skills*** – Key Skills development occurs in a work related context. For example, the use of delivery notes from the previous day's work are used in the 'Application of Number' training;

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- ***online portfolios*** – Robert Wiseman Dairies has recently introduced an online portfolio system for drivers on their NVQ programme enabling trainers to have remote access to NVQ assessment evidence;
- ***the support and value of internal assessors*** – internally recruited assessors spend (more) time supporting each employee on the programme. This (has) benefits (to) the individual in terms of the support they receive, as well as (for) the company in ensuring both the quality of the programme and that the assessment is focused on job requirements. Internal promotion to (become an) assessor also provides a potential career opportunity for employees.

**Effective Practice Summary: The Ministry of Defence - DETS(A)**

2.20 In 1992 the Royal Army Educational Corps was amalgamated into the The Educational and Training Services Branch of the Adjutant General's Corps is responsible for providing education to serving personnel wherever they are based around the world, whether in barracks or on operations. A wide range of educational opportunities is available including advice and guidance, mandatory command, leadership & management courses for promotion, personal development including Basic Skills are managed and delivered through a network of Army Education Centres located throughout the geographic spread of the Army.

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2.21 LSC funding (discounted to reflect the Army training) via the NES supports the delivery of Foundation (Level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3). The NES has contracted with Headquarters Director Educational and Training Services (Army) (HQ DETS(A)) for the management of all Army Work Based Learning. This executive management function is performed at HQ DETS(A) by a senior Army Officer, Assistant Director (Learning Strategy) and the detailed management of the delivery for each specialisation within the Army is sub-contracted to the Directors of the Arms & Services who have responsibility for the career management of their soldiers throughout their service.

2.22 The Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship is the preferred accreditation route for soldiers as these qualifications add value to the military trade training and give the soldier a civilian recognised qualification that is recognised by future employers.

2.23 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***maximising NES investment*** – economies of scale have resulted in 100% of the targeted learning opportunities being delivered for 90% of the funding which has already been subject to a discount to reflect the contribution to the qualification made by the Army training. The additional 10% funding is being used to either add value to LSC funded training through quality systems and improved local delivery infrastructure or to train soldiers/deliver qualifications that fall outside LSC funding criteria;
- ***moving to a Single Army Contract (SAC)*** – the SAC has been beneficial for a range of reasons including:
  - providing an opportunity to review what was being delivered and whether it was fit-for-purpose;
  - streamlining training delivery by reducing the number of training partners who were engaged;

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- simplifying the administration of the contracting process for both the Army and the LSC;
- ***value added learning within the Army*** – if the Army achieves its ambitious targets to raise the basic skills of all those leaving the Army (not all funded by the NES), the value added to the UK economy of the 250,000 of ex-Army members entering the workforce is estimated at £600m<sup>1</sup> per annum (over a 25 year period);
- ***devolved management of training*** – the following three mechanisms have been put in place to devolve the management of training within the Army’s Arms and Services Directorates:
  - establishing Commanding Officer Groups (COGs) within each Arm or Service Directorate;
  - devolving 7% of the NES funding to the Directors of each Arm or Service;
  - recruiting Quality Mentors to provide support, help and guidance to COGS as and when required.

### **Effective Practice Summary: Kwik Fit (GB) Limited**

2.24 Kwik Fit is a retail and service business in automotive repairs including tyres, exhausts and brakes. They serve around 7.5 million customers a year out of 570 centres nationwide.

2.25 Kwik Fit has held an account with the NES since 2001. They have a long history of operating Apprenticeship schemes and are in the process of signing the Skills Pledge. The NES contract contributes to the ‘Fast-Fit’ Apprenticeship programme, the ‘Master-Fitter’ programme and other discrete modules offered through Train to Gain.

2.26 Examples of effective practice include:

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<sup>1</sup> “The Value Added From Elective Learning within the Army (The Value Added Studies 2005 & 2007)” Lt Col CG Hanlan et al.

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- ***Key Skills development*** – Kwik Fit offer contextualised Key Skills development to their workforce. Key Skills are developed in a work related context, using examples that are relevant and that employees are comfortable with. Kwik Fit appreciate that Key Skills support is required by employees at all levels in the company; therefore, training is offered to all who have an identified Key Skills need;
- ***induction week*** – each year the group of apprentices that Kwik Fit recruit undertake an induction week during their first week of employment. The induction week includes team-building exercises, with apprentices building and racing go-karts. Other modules, such as Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity are also included during three days of activities at Loughborough University;
- ***train the trainers programme*** – Kwik Fit operates a Train the Trainers Programme that provides their trainers with the appropriate skills to train employees. Some trainers will have been in post for a long period of time and may not have undertaken any formal training on how to teach others. The training programme gives the basic tools to be more effective trainers and has also given Kwik Fit the ability to monitor the performance of their tutors;
- ***innovative teaching techniques*** – Kwik Fit have introduced Innovative Teaching Techniques to support their training programmes. One recent innovation utilises individual ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire’ keypads to assess the employees’ knowledge at the beginning and end of a session.

## Effective Practice Summary: Barchester Healthcare

2.27 Barchester Healthcare has around 170 care homes across the UK providing care and services to over 10,000 people.

2.28 Barchester Healthcare has held a contract with the National Employer Service since 2001. NES funded learning programmes consist of Apprenticeships (including Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Customer Service, Learning and Development, Management, Team Leading and Administration), Skills for Life provision, Train to Gain Level 2 and 3.

2.29 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***staff learning and development*** – staff retention is paramount at Barchester due to the cost and resource involved in staff recruitment. Offering great career opportunities, CPD and appropriate learning and development interventions are viewed as crucial for staff retention;
- ***the Barchester Academy*** – the large number of care homes that Barchester had across the UK makes the delivery of training to all staff logistically difficult. To address the problem of multi-site delivery, the Barchester Academy was developed as a virtual function – an umbrella structure to encompass all learning and development taking place;
- ***NES support and sharing of effective practice*** – Barchester have an extremely positive working relationship with their NES Contract Manager who supports them in developing their business. The organisation was encouraged to ‘partner up’ with other organisations in order to share ideas and effective working practice;
- ***on-line Skills for Life provision*** – Barchester was the first healthcare provider to implement an e-learning Skills for Life programme;

- ***in-house assessment*** – assessors are chosen from suitably qualified colleagues and senior staff within the employee’s care home. In comparison to the peripatetic model, there were perceived benefits, including enhancing the quality of care and engendering a learning culture;
- ***financial benefits and rewards*** – Barchester offer financial incentives and rewards to care homes and individuals to encourage the take-up and completion of Apprenticeship programmes. The training team now have the commitment from the Board to ensure a minimum of two Apprentices per care home. This will form part of the bonus scheme for General Managers of our care homes.

### Effective Practice Summary: BAE Systems Plc

2.30 BAE Systems is a global company “engaged in the development, delivery and support of advanced defence and aerospace systems in the air, on land and at sea”.

2.31 The research was carried out at the Preston Training Centre in Lancashire which is part of the BAE Systems Warton Unit, comprising of sites at Warton and Samlesbury, and its Training facility in Preston.

2.32 The Apprenticeship programme runs annually and recruits around 1000 employees per year across various UK locations, of which around 280 are based at the Warton Unit.

2.33 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***application form design*** – the use of lengthy abstract questions to examine the motivations and personal achievements of potential applicants provides a good initial assessment of applicants’ Key Skills and commitment levels;

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- ***aligning off-job practical learning with on-job realities*** – by ensuring that the workshops in the BAE Systems training centre reflect the working environment on the factory floor at BAE Systems;
- ***two-tier Apprenticeship programme*** – the use of a two-tier Apprenticeship programme (craft and technical) ensures BAE Systems focus the more academically capable and motivated employees into technical support roles which require a higher level of academic ability (HNC), while maintaining the numbers of craft apprentices required by the business;
- ***late specialisation for employees*** – all employees do a six month round-robin, trying their hand at everything from electronics to fitting. Using this approach, BAE and apprentices can get a better idea of their skills, before they specialise later on in the Apprenticeship;
- ***employee driven NVQ learning*** – the emphasis is very much on employees to take responsibility for, and drive forward, their own learning programme and NVQ programme;
- ***initial learning delivered in-house*** – the first year of the Apprenticeship is spent learning full-time at BAE’s bespoke training centre in Preston. Previously, BAE sent its students to colleges to undertake the further education, but they moved this provision in-house some 14 years ago. Using external providers meant there was only a limited ability to target and train employees in the specialisms required by the business. This move raised the pass rate for the programme from 65% to 95%.

## Effective Practice Summary: Doosan Babcock Energy Limited

2.34 Doosan Babcock is a multi-national engineering and technology company that operating in the thermal and nuclear power generation, petrochemical and oil & gas industries.

2.35 Since 2002, Doosan Babcock has held a contract with the National Employer Service. The contract is predominantly to part-fund the NVQ elements of Advanced Apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes in engineering and manufacturing. The majority of employees on the NVQ programmes have been working towards an Advanced Apprenticeship in Engineering Construction.

2.36 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***demographic analysis of the workforce*** – Doosan Babcock needed to take long-term investment decisions of their workforce training requirements. Analysis of the profile of key workers within different industry sectors identified priorities, such as the shortages of Welders and Steel Erectors;
- ***real leveraged investment*** – the company is adamant that without Government funding, a very expensive programme, which has benefits to the wider UK economy, would have to be scaled back or stopped altogether. In this respect, the money coming from the NES, leverages real investment from within the company;
- ***building a relationship with training providers*** – the company has built a strong relationship with Leeds College of Technology who provide the initial technical certification and Key Skills element of the Advanced Apprenticeship in Welding;

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- ***additional training delivered to apprentices*** – on top of the requirements for the job, Doosan Babcock also invest a significant amount of resource in providing additional training to their apprentices to develop skills beyond those required for the job for which they are training;
- ***tying the Training Unit into forward resource planning*** – the detailed Apprenticeship Training Annual Plan, produced by the Training Unit, is now included in forward resource planning within the company as a whole;
- ***quality training as a recruitment tool*** – in an industry where it can be tough to recruit young, talented individuals, the quality of the training offered does not just produce top quality employees, but also works as a tool to attract trainees;
- ***internal assessment*** – Doosan Babcock has made a conscious effort to keep the assessment and verification process in-house as far as possible;
- ***apprenticeships to motivate existing workforce*** – the Advanced Apprenticeship programme has had a positive impact on the existing workforce. Older workers state how pleased they are to see new people joining the company and completing Apprenticeships as they did. They also enjoy passing on their skills.

## Effective Practice Summary: Tesco Stores Limited

2.37 Tesco is the largest retailer operating in the United Kingdom and the third largest in the world.

2.38 Since 2005, Tesco has held a contract with the National Employer Service (NES). The contract is predominantly to fund their Retail Apprenticeship but also provides funding for adult NVQs through the Train to Gain service. This case study focuses on the Retail Apprenticeship.

2.39 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***adapting training already delivered*** – rather than develop a completely new training programme for the Apprenticeship, Tesco looked to use the existing provision and just add on the elements required to build the programme to meet the requirements of the full Apprenticeship framework;
- ***identification of suitable staff*** – Tesco actively encourage assessors to encourage those employees who they feel are suitable for the programme. In particular they try to identify employees who are perceived to have potential, but would not necessarily have the confidence to put themselves forward for a development opportunity;
- ***targeting training to motivate staff*** – everyone who is eligible for funding is encouraged to apply for the Apprenticeship programme. However, only a small number of employees will make it onto the programme via a robust selection process. This makes the programme a reward and a goal that encourages employees to feel privileged to have made it as an apprentice;

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- ***building apprentice camaraderie*** – by keeping the number of apprentices low, close camaraderie between apprentices can develop. This helps apprentices to complete difficult technical aspects of the programme through working together, as well as acting as a peer support network;
- ***progression after training*** – on completing the Apprenticeship, all successful employees are given an interview for a team leader post and encouraged to move onto the ‘Options’ management development programme;
- ***flexibility in training delivery*** – whilst assessors are given guidance on how to deliver their elements of the Apprenticeship programme, they are encouraged to use their initiative to develop innovative training opportunities;
- ***the benefits of internal assessment*** – assessors also work in the store, and as the Apprentices’ direct Line Managers, they are able to work shoulder to shoulder to deliver training and assessment on-the-job.

### **Effective Practice Summary: TUI UK Limited**

2.40 TUI Travel PLC is one of the world’s largest tourism groups and was formed in September 2007 when the Tourism division of TUI AG was merged with First Choice PLC.

2.41 TUI has held a contract with the National Employer Service since its inception. TUI is the largest private company contract-holder with the NES in terms of employee volumes. There are around 800 apprentices on the programme. They undertake either a Level 2 or Level 3 Apprenticeship in Travel and Tourism Services.

2.42 Examples of effective practice include:

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- ***support and relationship with the NES*** – TUI has a positive and valuable working relationship with the NES. The NES were seen to have facilitated networking opportunities as well as providing advice and support in relation to quality improvement;
- ***in-depth assessment and selection procedures*** – demand for Apprenticeship places greatly exceeds the supply. All applicants undertake an initial on-line assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. This is followed by a ‘taster day’ that enables potential recruits to spend time in the real working environment;
- ***apprentice mentoring*** – each apprentice is allocated a mentor who is based in the same shop. Almost all mentors are ex-apprentices and of a similar age to the apprentice. The mentor role is also seen as valuable in terms of their own personal development and progress within the organisation;
- ***on-line Key Skills package*** – TUI offer an on-line Key Skills assessment tool called Profiler. The package includes an initial assessment and a full diagnostic followed by Individual Learning Plan (ILP) production and testing facilities. All employees within the organisation are able to access the package;
- ***career progression*** – there are great career opportunities within TUI with all apprentices provided with a ‘career map’ as part of the recruitment process. Options include a Foundation Degree in Travel Operations Management following completion of the Apprenticeship;
- ***return on investment*** – TUI was able to examine how ex-apprentice performance compares to non-apprentice performance in relation to sales revenue generation across a range of job roles. They identified clear, quantifiable examples of how ex-apprentice performance outweighs that of non-apprentices.

## Effective Practice Summary: Land Rover

2.43 Land Rover is an international car manufacturer and retail company, owned by parent company Tata Motors. Land Rover has a strong commitment to staff development and customer service and it has been undertaking training with apprentices for many years.

2.44 Training is supported across its dealerships and those of other businesses such as Jaguar, Aston Martin and Volvo. Land Rover has invested in three 'state of the art' training centres, which form part of The Technical Academy. The focus of the NES funded training is on the retail side; service technicians, body repair and painting.

2.45 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***integrated provider model*** – the current training provider's operational staff operate under day-to-day control of the Land Rover Training Manager. This has ensured a stronger team approach, better management control and improved performance;
- ***on-line training system*** – Land Rover has adapted an innovative approach to training through its on-line system known as IAG (information, advice and guidance), which combines elements of recruitment, selection and initial assessment. This helps to blend off-the-job training, distance and e-learning and workplace assessment. Key Skills and technical certificate elements are integrated to maximise full framework achievement;

- ***block-based training*** – over two years, apprentices spend a series of one-week residential blocks at the training centre, with six to eight weeks in between blocks where they work at their dealership. Apprentices go back to their dealerships with their action plan updated and a copy for their manager. A block report is produced that identifies progress during the residential week and identifies development areas. The dedicated training centre provides access to modern technology and training facilities;
- ***awards event*** – the awards event, involving apprentices’ parents and partners, aims to recognise the success of Apprenticeships. This gives apprentices pride in their achievements and builds their self confidence;
- ***challenge programme*** – this provides apprentices who complete their framework with a once in a lifetime opportunity to get involved in a community development project in places such as Borneo.

### **Effective Practice Summary: Mimosa Healthcare Group Limited**

2.46 Mimosa Healthcare Holdings is a privately owned limited company established in 2000 to provide long-term care. Mimosa has 32 care homes across the country. Around ten per cent of staff are involved in the NES funded training.

2.47 It created a training company to ensure that its employees have the skills and knowledge required to be competent in their various roles. Reporting to a Senior Training Manager and a Director of Training are five NVQ Co-ordinators, a Basic/Key Skills Manager, a Learning Support Tutor and a Programme Development Manager. Each care home has an assigned training co-ordinator and well-equipped dedicated training room. The training at Mimosa as always been focused on both adults and apprentices.

2.48 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***in-house delivery of training*** – this has enabled tailored delivery of training and effective integration of training activity onto the normal operation of care homes;
- ***early completion of Key Skills and Technical Certificate*** – by changing around the framework elements through encouraging staff to do the Key Skills followed by the Technical Certificate, the NVQ became a reward for achieving the other elements. This had the benefit of ensuring that employees start with more manageable elements;
- ***the General Assistant role*** – the General Assistant is a job title that describes the work of a 16–18 year old within a care home. Under 18's are restricted by legalisation from working directly with residents. Mimosa encourages under 18's to undertake all the training elements that do not require direct work with residents. This innovation has helped involve young people who leave school, without compromising employment legalisation. When they reach 18 they build on previous training by continuing and completing the other units;
- ***the 'Knowledge Spec'*** – this is a game played on a monopoly style board. It helps to develop the skills of employees within a friendly and supportive environment for young people;
- ***Employee Support Tutor*** – the Employee Support Tutor works in a peripatetic capacity with young people, across all the care homes and in a variety of skills areas, such as, motivation and problem solving. In addition, the tutor helps deal with any other external issues; for example, family problems or personal problems that people might be experiencing;
- ***employee of the year award*** – each care home sends employees who have been on the Apprenticeship programmes to a national awards event for all Mimosa care homes.

## Effective Practice Summary: Vodafone UK Limited

2.49 Vodafone is a large international company separated into three distinct business units: Consumer Business Unit (CBU); Enterprise Business Unit (EBU); and Corporate and Technology.

2.50 Vodafone has held a contract with the National Employer Service since 2003. The initial contract was for 220 employees. The current contract encompasses over 1,000 qualifications. They have between 500 and 600 employees on the Apprenticeships Programme, 30–40% of which are not eligible for LSC funding.

2.51 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***relationship with the provider*** – Vodafone has developed a close relationship with its training provider. This means that the provider is responsive to Vodafone’s requirements. They also have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Vodafone that assists them to manage and deliver its contract in accordance with specified service level agreements;
- ***relationship with the employee*** – Vodafone has an ethos of encouraging social investment throughout the company. This has a positive impact on the approach to training for staff and by staff;
- ***signature experiences*** – one of the company’s named stratagems is ‘signature experiences’. A ‘signature experience’ is something for which Vodafone would like to be known. The impetus for training and developing staff is one of their signature experiences;

- ***developing Key Skills*** – Key Skills development occurs in a work-related context. Vodafone produces and uses data to manage workloads. This same data is used by trainers to develop Key Skills. Both the employee and the company agree that this is beneficial. Employees find it easier to learn Key Skills when trainers put the information in a relevant and understandable context for them. It also assists employees to improve their understanding of Vodafone, and how the work of employees contributes to the targets, profit and the management of the business.

### Effective Practice Summary: J Sainsbury Plc

2.52 Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited is a major UK supermarket. There are four divisions within Sainsbury's covering retail, convenience, supply chain and store support. The apprentices work within the retail division.

2.53 The relatively new Apprenticeship programmes focuses on craft skills for Bakery, Meat and Fish.

2.54 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***integrating the Apprenticeship Programme*** – the Apprenticeship Programme is integrated into Sainsbury's training activities which means that all colleagues work to the same overarching approach;
- ***Apprenticeship as an investment*** – the local stores bear all labour costs following a development period for new Apprenticeship Programmes. That they are motivated to support and develop apprentices to become qualified;
- ***developing company partnership*** – buy-in is secured from regional HR partners and regional operations managers when new Apprenticeship programmes are introduced into new regions. This helps build support for a successful programme;

- ***induction period*** – Sainsbury’s wait until after a 12-week period has elapsed before signing up colleagues onto the programme. This aligns to the business as usual probationary period;
- ***celebrating success*** – a visit to the Food Innovation Centre (at Sainsbury’s Store Support Centre in London) for apprentices and colleagues helps build on the ‘feel-good factor’.

### Effective Practice Summary: Biffa Limited

2.55 Biffa is a UK integrated waste management company with over 5,000 employees. It is a leading national company specialising in collections, resource recovery and disposal services. Biffa de-merged from Severn Trent in 2006.

2.56 They started their NES contract in 2004/05. The focus of the contract is on Level 2 Train to Gain learning. They introduced the Driving Goods Vehicles NVQ Level 2 as the benchmark for their drivers of large goods vehicles, used in much of Biffa’s activities. Approximately 150 drivers start the training per year.

2.57 Examples of effective practice include:

- ***clear focus on business efficiency*** – a business need was identified, generating multiple benefits to the business. This involved reducing the number of accidents in company vehicles through driver training;
  - ***clear management information*** – regular review of the accident statistics available via the company’s insurance database to measure the impact of the NVQ programme; to see if there is a reduction in the number of vehicle accidents;
  - ***programme is open to all staff (drivers)*** – Accident prone drivers are nominated via the insurance database as well as drivers who wish to volunteer for this training programme.
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