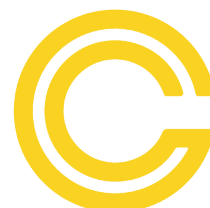


CROYDON COLLEGE APPRENTICESHIPS



Croydon
College

*When it comes to passing skills from one generation to the next,
an apprenticeship could really benefit your business*

It can be difficult to recruit in skilled trades like carpentry, joinery and construction – but apprenticeships give businesses the opportunity to support and train their own candidates, while at the same time having another pair of hands on the job. The Guild of Master Craftsmen is proud to announce a new collaboration with apprenticeship provider Croydon College, to support members who want to explore the potential benefits of taking on an apprentice. The college's Business Development Executive Diana Dos-Santos explains: 'Apprenticeships are a brilliant way of supporting a new generation of tradespeople. If you want to pass on your skills – consider an apprentice.'

UPSKILLING YOUR BUSINESS

Croydon College hosts regular Skills Forums, networking events for businesses from different industries that aim to find out exactly what employers want from their apprenticeships. It means the college can be flexible and tailor courses to make sure they are equipping candidates with the right skills. 'Apprenticeships are a great way for businesses to address a skills gap,' explains Diana. 'In some trades those skills might be held by people with generations of experience who are approaching retirement. Taking on an apprentice is a brilliant way of making sure they get passed on.'

Croydon College: Building Futures Across Industries offers Level 2 to Level 4 apprenticeships across a wide range of industries, including engineering, carpentry, construction, plumbing, business administration, accounting, teaching assistance, early years education and adult care. These programmes are open to candidates aged 16 and over, and those without formal qualifications are supported through Functional Skills courses, which are equivalent to GCSEs in English and Maths.

Apprentices typically spend one day per week at college and the remaining days gaining hands-on experience with their employer. The College also offers flexible delivery models, including hybrid and online learning options, to accommodate businesses and learners based further afield or with specific needs. Diana highlights the



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF CROYDON COLLEGE



'It's a way of growing as you move up through the ranks ... apprenticeships are a brilliant jumping-off point for long and successful careers, and perhaps even owning your own business one day.'

long-term value of apprenticeships: 'At the end of the apprenticeship, many apprentices stay with their employers and become fully-fledged members of the business. As an employer, you gain someone fully qualified and trained to your standards. They grow into the role through a blend of on-the-job experience and college-based learning.'

One of Croydon College's valued partners is PumpServ, a nationwide pump repair, service and supply company. A senior representative from PumpServ shared their appreciation for Croydon College's support: 'Communication and contact with us is excellent. The support leading up to exams is strong, and our team consistently gains the knowledge and skills we aim for.'

Croydon College continues to work with over 200 businesses, from SMEs to large enterprises, helping to shape the workforce of tomorrow through high-quality apprenticeship training.

THE RIGHT CANDIDATE FOR YOU

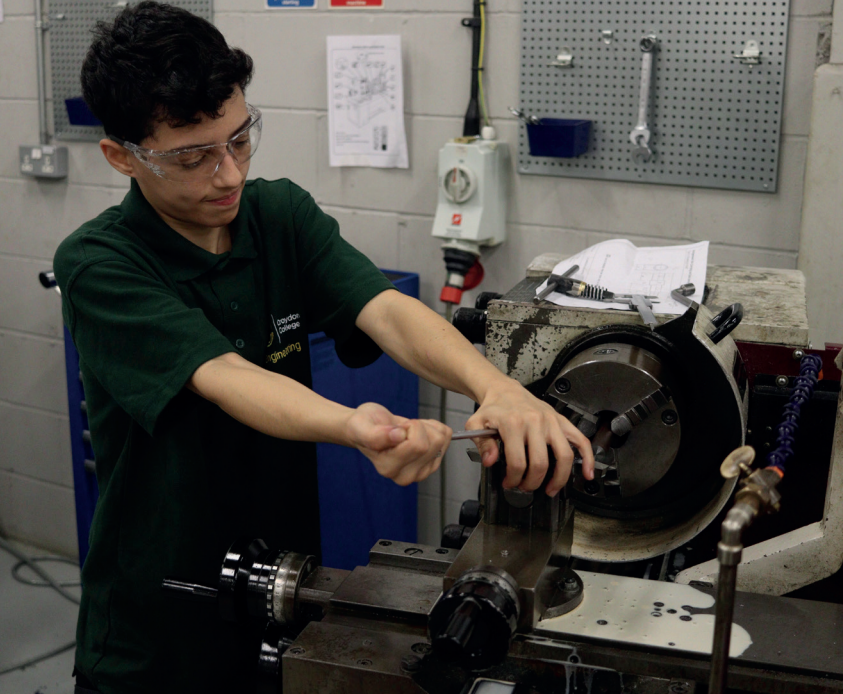
If you're considering hiring an apprentice, the first step is to register your business with the Government's Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS). This online platform allows you to manage apprenticeship funding, approve training costs and advertise roles. To register, you'll need your PAYE scheme reference number and accounts office reference number, along with permission to act on behalf of your organisation. Diana explains: 'We offer a fully managed recruitment service. Employers provide us with a job description and the qualities they're looking for, and we handle the advertising and initial candidate screening.'

Croydon College's recruitment team carefully pre-screens applicants to ensure they're a strong fit for your business and committed to learning your trade. 'It's really important to get this right,' Diana says. 'We want to place candidates who will continue the course and make a meaningful contribution to your organisation.'

The College also provides ongoing support throughout the apprenticeship, helping employers navigate funding, training plans and assessments. Businesses can also choose to put forward their own candidates. 'This happens a lot,' says Diana. 'There might be a young person in the family who wants to join the business, someone who has done a Saturday job or work experience and made a good impression, or an existing employee who will benefit from a formal apprenticeship and training.' Once an apprenticeship has been confirmed there is an enrollment process and each candidate is given a bespoke Learning Plan, which takes into account their needs and the needs of the business. 'Our tutors are brilliant at supporting students and we have a World of Work office to help ease that transition between working and learning,' says Diana.

One of the college's valued employers, T Brown Group (TBG), a mechanical, electrical and building services company based in





Leatherhead, currently has apprentices enrolled at Croydon College. One of the senior managers for the company shared their positive experience: ‘The college boasts excellent facilities and a highly approachable staff team, who not only provide top-tier tuition but also maintain exceptional communication with both myself and the business. The timely delivery of quarterly reports enables effective management of our apprentices. Additionally, our collaborative efforts have successfully addressed various challenges, particularly in providing targeted support for young learners in need.’

THE EMPLOYER’S COMMITMENT

Taking on an apprentice involves a financial commitment, but many businesses are eligible for substantial government support. Under the national co-investment scheme, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) typically pay just 5% of the apprenticeship training costs, with the UK Government covering the remaining 95%, up to the maximum funding band for the chosen apprenticeship.

For example, a Level 2 Carpentry and Joinery apprenticeship at Croydon College is funded up to £13,000. With 95% covered by the government, the employer’s contribution would be £650 over the two-year programme.

Employers who pay into the Apprenticeship Levy (those with annual payrolls over £3 million) can use their levy funds to cover training costs. Additionally, levy-paying employers can transfer up to 50% of their unused funds to other businesses, potentially covering the full cost for SMEs. Extra funding is available for apprentices under 19, apprentices aged 19–24 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, and those requiring additional learning support.

Employers must also pay apprentices at least the apprenticeship minimum wage, which from April 2025 is £7.55 per hour for those under 19 or in the first year of their apprenticeship. Croydon College encourages employers to consider offering higher wages where possible, to attract and retain motivated candidates.

While the college provides classroom- and workshop-based learning, businesses must also take on the commitment of mentoring their apprentice on the job – but this can be the perfect way of developing the ideal new employee for your company. ‘There’s a lot of learning on the job because different people and different businesses work in different ways,’ explains Diana. ‘A roofer or a carpenter, for example, might have a really specific way of doing a particular skill that they want to pass on.’

SUPPORTING A NEW GENERATION

For candidates, apprenticeships are an opportunity to ‘earn while you learn’. Diana points out that ‘classrooms aren’t for everyone’ and many young people would rather leave school and start earning a wage and learning a skilled trade. ‘It’s a way of growing as you move up through the ranks, and apprenticeships are a brilliant jumping-off point for long and successful careers, and perhaps even owning your own business one day,’ she says.

Apprenticeships can also be a great option for older learners, including people returning to work after a break, having a family or making a career transition. ‘If you have a mortgage, bills and childcare costs, apprenticeships mean you still have an income coming in as you train,’ Diana explains. ‘And at the end of the apprenticeship you will have hopefully worked your way into being a really valued and skilled member of your employer’s business. It really does have huge benefits for everyone.’

Student Maro Sakpere did an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering at Croydon College and said: ‘The hands-on workshops were encouraging and the tutors were supportive. Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to get your foot in the door.’ Alexander Coyle, a property maintenance operative apprentice at the college, said: ‘Apprenticeships have given me a real life, first-hand taste of the work life.’

For more information: Log in to the Members Area and go to the Training & Funding section:

www.findacraftsman.com/members-area/training-funding

Or contact Croydon College’s Apprenticeship Team at: employers@croydon.ac.uk or find us at: Croydon College, College Road, Croydon, CR9 1DX

croydon.ac.uk/apprenticeships/

