Swift Teaching

Developing our future Educators

Let's talk...

E: info@swift-ta.co.uk

T: 0121 285 7609

www.swift-ta.co.uk



A Guide to Apprenticeship Funding

How Swift Training Can Help Your School

Apprenticeship Funding

How Swift Training Can Help Your School

In the current educational landscape, schools across the UK are grappling with workforce shortages, budget constraints, and increasing demands for high-quality teaching and support. Apprenticeship funding, including the Apprenticeship Levy, offers schools a vital opportunity to upskill their staff, recruit new talent, and improve retention without additional financial strain.

However, many schools are not fully utilising this funding. In fact, recent statistics show that as much as £3.5 billion of unused Apprenticeship Levy funds have been returned to the Treasury since its introduction in 2017. Schools that are not making full use of these resources are missing out on opportunities to strengthen their teams and improve staff retention.

At Swift Training, we specialise in helping schools navigate apprenticeship funding, ensuring you access the financial support available and make the most of it. Whether you're a large independent school with your own levy pot or a smaller school with no direct levy contributions, we can help you unlock opportunities for development and growth.



Apprenticeship Funding Options

Apprenticeship funding in the UK supports employers, including schools, in recruiting and training apprentices. There are two primary funding routes for schools:

- **The Apprenticeship Levy:** A tax on employers with an annual wage bill over £3 million.
- **Government Co-Investment Funding:** For schools that don’t meet the levy threshold, this covers 95% of apprenticeship training costs, leaving schools to pay just 5%.



The Apprenticeship Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy is a 0.5% tax applied to employers with a wage bill over £3 million per year. For schools that meet this threshold, levy funds are placed into a digital account, which can be used to pay for apprenticeship training and assessments.

What Can the Levy Be Used For?

Levy funds can be spent on a variety of apprenticeship training programmes, including those designed to upskill your current workforce or recruit new apprentices. Roles such as Teaching Assistants (TAs), Early Years Educators, and Specialist Technicians are all eligible for funding through the levy.

What Can’t the Levy Be Used For?

Levy funds can only be used for training and assessment costs, not for wages or operational expenses. Schools must cover these additional costs through their general budget.



Government Co-Investment Funding

For schools that do not pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, the government offers co-investment funding, making apprenticeships accessible and affordable. Under this scheme, schools only contribute 5% towards training costs for apprentices aged 22 or older, while the government covers the remaining 95%. For apprentices aged 16 to 21, the government funds 100% of the training costs, providing fully funded opportunities to develop younger staff.

At Swift Training, we assist schools in maximising co-investment funding by guiding you through the application process, helping you choose the best apprenticeship programmes for your staff, and ensuring you receive full government support.



How Schools Benefit from Apprenticeship Funding?

1. Upskilling Your Current Staff

Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to develop the skills of your existing workforce. Swift Training offers tailored apprenticeship programmes for various roles, including Teaching Assistants, Early Years Educators, and Specialist Technicians. These programmes allow your staff to gain new qualifications while continuing in their current roles, boosting their confidence and enhancing the quality of support they provide.

Offering development opportunities through apprenticeships can also help improve staff retention. Employees who feel supported and have access to career progression are more likely to stay within your school, reducing the need for costly recruitment drives.



2. Recruiting New Talent

Apprenticeships allow schools to recruit and train fresh talent while utilising levy funds to cover the training and assessment costs, helping to address workforce shortages and nurture the next generation of educators. Many training providers, including Swift Training, offer free recruitment services as part of their apprenticeship offering, making it easier for schools to find the right candidates and upskill their staff efficiently.

3. Flexibility in Training Delivery

At Swift Training, we understand the importance of flexibility. Our apprenticeship programmes offer a blended learning approach, combining online learning with in-person support. This ensures that your staff can upskill without causing major disruptions to your school's daily operations.

4. A Cost-Effective Solution

Utilising apprenticeship funding ensures that your school is making the most of the resources available to you. Whether you're accessing funds through the Apprenticeship Levy or Government Co-Investment, Swift Training will guide you in selecting relevant apprenticeship programmes, helping you maximise funding and ensure cost-effective staff development.



Accessing Apprenticeship Funding

A Breakdown by School Type

1. Local Authority Maintained Schools

For local authority-maintained schools, apprenticeship levy funds are usually managed by the local authority. You can liaise with them to understand the amount of levy funding available and how it can be used for apprenticeship training. Swift Training can help you navigate this process and identify the most suitable apprenticeship options for your school.

2. Academies and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)

Academies and schools in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) are responsible for managing their own levy accounts. This is done through a digital apprenticeship account where you can track levy funds and access approved training providers like Swift Training. We can assist you at every stage, from setting up your account to selecting the right programmes for your staff.



3. Independent Schools

Independent schools with payrolls exceeding £3 million have their own levy pots. These funds can be managed through a digital account to develop staff in-house. For independent schools under the levy threshold, Government Co-Investment is available, covering 95% of training costs. Our team at Swift Training can guide you through this process to ensure your school benefits from maximum funding.

4. Schools That Don’t Pay Into the Levy

Smaller schools and those not eligible for the levy can still access funding through the government’s co-investment scheme. This makes apprenticeship training affordable, with the government covering most of the costs. We can help you apply for this funding and select the best programmes for your school’s needs.



£1,000 Government Apprenticeship Grant

In addition to the levy and co-investment funding, schools that employ apprentices between the ages of 16 and 18 are eligible for a £1,000 government grant per apprentice. This incentive also applies to schools hiring apprentices aged 19-24 who have previously been in care or have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan.

This grant provides schools with additional financial support to invest in the training and development of young apprentices, making apprenticeships an even more attractive option for filling critical staff positions.



UK National Insurance (NI) Contributions

Changes to National Insurance contributions are set to impact employers in April 2025. Here's how these changes can affect your school and how apprenticeships can help you mitigate additional costs:

1. Increase in Employer NI Contributions

- The employer National Insurance rate will increase from 13.8% to 15% starting in April 2025.
- Additionally, the threshold at which employers start paying NI will decrease from £9,100 to £5,000. This means that schools will be required to contribute more towards NI for their staff.

2**. NI Exemption for Apprentices Under 25**

- Employers are exempt from paying National Insurance contributions for apprentices under the age of 25, provided they are on approved apprenticeship standards and earn less than £967 per week or £50,270 per year.
- This exemption presents a valuable cost-saving opportunity for schools that recruit apprentices under the age of 25, allowing you to reduce overall payroll expenses.

By taking on apprentices, your school can benefit from this NI exemption, helping to offset the increased employer costs coming into effect in 2025.



Overcoming Barriers to Apprenticeship Funding

Many schools are not fully taking advantage of apprenticeship funding, with recent reports indicating that a significant portion of levy funds remains unused. Barriers such as a lack of awareness, concerns over complexity, and confusion about managing levy accounts prevent schools from accessing this valuable resource.

At Swift Training, we simplify the process. We provide full support to ensure your school can make the most of both levy and co-investment funding. One solution we offer is sharing apprentices between schools, allowing smaller schools with limited funds to benefit from apprenticeship programmes at a reduced cost.



How Swift Training Supports Schools

At Swift Training, we provide a comprehensive range of services to help schools make the most of apprenticeship funding:

- Expert Guidance: We guide you through the entire apprenticeship funding process, from setting up your digital account to selecting the most appropriate apprenticeship programmes for your school.
- SEND Pathway: Our Level 3 Teaching Assistant programme includes a dedicated SEND pathway, equipping your staff with the skills needed to support students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Flexible Training Delivery: We offer a blended learning approach that combines online and in-person support to fit around your school's schedule.
- Recruitment Support: We assist in recruiting new apprentices to fill key roles in your school, as well as upskilling your existing staff.



Take the Next Step

To learn more about how the Apprenticeship Levy and Government Co-Investment Funding can benefit your school, book a free consultation with Swift Training today. We'll provide personalised advice and recommend the best options for your school, ensuring you get the most value from your funding.

By making the most of apprenticeship funding, your school can develop a skilled, confident workforce that is ready to meet the challenges of modern education. Swift Training is here to guide you through every step of the process, ensuring you unlock the full potential of your staff and meet your workforce needs effectively.

Book your free consultation today and start building a brighter future for your school.

