

THE EARWIG

Updates from West Berkshire Training Consortium



wbtc-uk.com



Hello!

It's been a while since the last edition of **The Earwig**, our regular update on life at WBTC. Like most, we have been adapting to remote working, the pandemic and recession. We have been in and out of the office as we were allowed, but find now that a good majority of our provision is delivered online or as a hybrid model.

In this edition, we look forward to the apprentice graduation in October, reflect on our remote Rising Stars Awards held in May 2021 and also round up some amazing learner case studies.

Matt Garvey - *Managing Director*

2021 GRADUATION - HERE WE COME!

After a few false starts, on Wednesday 6th October we will finally be back at Arlington Arts Centre to graduate apprentices and learners. We're so excited! Graduation is always a key event in our calendar, and it's wonderful to see our apprentices and learners celebrating their achievements with friends, families and employers. This event is for learners who completed their apprenticeship between May 2019 and April 2021. Each graduate can bring a guest, and the graduate's employer/supervisor is also very welcome to attend.



Thanks to our sponsors, academic gowns are provided free of charge and the format is:

- Intermediate apprentices – black cap, gown and purple stole
- Advanced apprentices – black cap, gown and gold stole
- Higher apprentices – black cap, gold tassel, black gown with purple and gold stole

If you would like to be part of our graduation please contact Archie Dyson on archie@wbtc-uk.com or call 01635 35975. If you are already confirmed for attendance but haven't booked your academic attire (we need your height and head size) please email Archie.

ADULT MATHS AND ENGLISH

It has been reported that 1 in 6 adults find that not having their maths and/or English qualifications are holding them back. Often these adults are working in jobs but didn't secure the equivalent of O-Level or GCSE A-C in these vital subjects. As a result, access to promotions, better jobs or further study (like a degree) are closed off. Last May we launched our online maths and English functional skills provision and we have built it around:

Being easy to access

It is 100% online in small groups with a specialist tutor. We run workshops for 90 minutes per week in small groups.

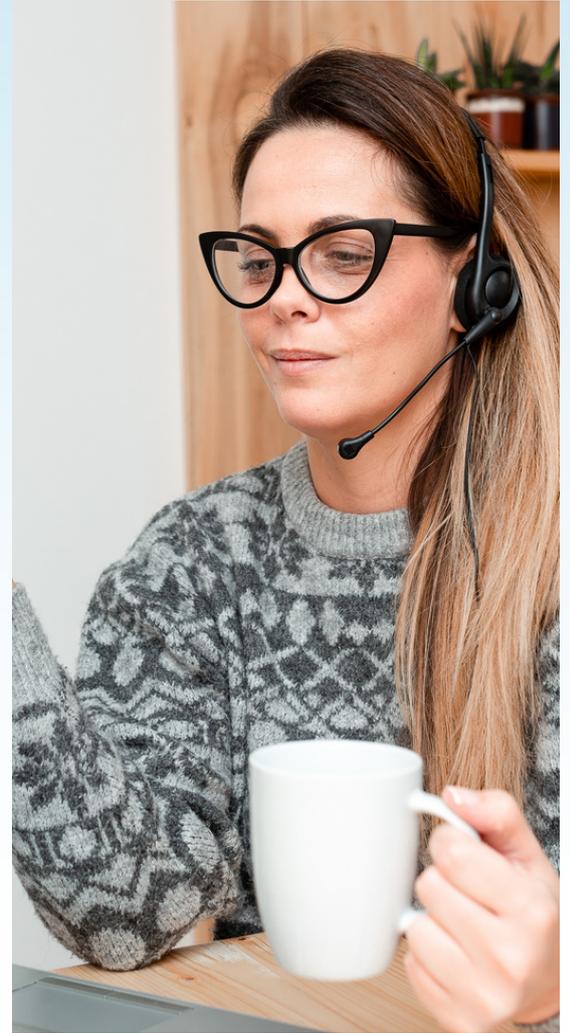
Helpful & friendly tutors

Our super friendly staff know what it is like to return to learning. Don't be frightened! We have helped hundreds of adults to get to grips with English and maths, build their confidence and succeed. Extra 1-2-1 tuition is offered for anyone who needs it.

Great results

Our pass rates are more than 20% above the national average and the feedback from learners is amazing.

These Functional Skills are nationally recognised qualifications equivalent to GCSE or O-Level. Thanks to this being a government priority, this qualification is free to anyone aged 19 or over who needs to achieve level 2 maths/English.



KICKSTART SCHEME TRAINING

**KICKSTART
SCHEME**

The government's Kickstart programme is underway and WBTC is partnering with employers to fulfil their training obligations. As part of the agreement under Kickstart, to qualify for their grant, employers must evidence the provision of high-quality training. Many employers find it easier and more effective to use our customised online delivery.

Kickstart trainees work towards an accredited unit over three half-day workshops. They find themselves with similar aged people on the Kickstart programme and it is a great introduction to what an employer expects in the workplace. It costs £250 payable from the Kickstart grant.

For more information visit wbtc-uk.com/kickstart-scheme-training
or contact Karen@wbtc-uk.com



WELL DONE TO OUR 2021 RISING STARS

Apprentice of the Year (16 - 18)

Sponsored by Benchmark
Emily Richardson – JV Foods

Apprentice of the Year (19+)

Sponsored by Celeros Flow Technology
Julie Blair – CIM

Great Start Learner of the Year

Sponsored by James Cowper Kreston
Finlay Cooper

Mentor of the Year

Sponsored by Bayer Plc
Kay Stockford – Netteam tX

Micro Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Dovetail Group
Opus Accounting

Small Employer of the Year

Sponsored by The HR Department
Beninca Automation UK Limited

Medium Employer of the Year

Sponsored by EJBC Chartered Accountants
Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)

Large Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Newbury Weekly News
Bayer PLC

We couldn't run our usual award ceremony so we have created [this video](#) to recognise the amazing employers and individuals who were crowned WBTC Rising Stars of 2021.

**Head to our [YouTube channel](#)
to watch the full video**



EMPLOYER TRAINING COURSES

Develop your workforce with training courses delivered by our highly experienced, industry trainers. Grow your business and get valuable skills and knowledge for you and your team. Workshops are all free to our partner employers (or £199pp to non-partners) and are all held at our training centre in Newbury or online.

These training courses are aimed at both organisations who want to upskill their staff, and individuals looking to develop their career.

- Health and Safety
- Digital Skills
- Project Management
- Wellbeing
- Mental Health
- Team Leading
- First Aid
- Customer Service
- Time Management
- Presentation Skills

BOOK NOW

LEARNER CELEBRATIONS



We love to see our apprentices complete and hearing their stories of success makes it all worthwhile! We regularly post learner achievements on our [social media channels](#), so be sure to head over to them to take a look! In the meantime, congratulations to Chloe Hitchens from Grey Matter Learning, Martyn Horne from Vectorworks and Elise Kinderman from West Berkshire Council for all completing their apprenticeships recently!

HEALTH AND SAFETY: HYBRID WORKING



Over the last 18 months, there has been a rise of hybrid working as employees work both at home and in the office. If your employees are moving to more hybrid working, have you considered the health and safety implications?

As an employer, you have obligations under the contract of employment to consider the health and safety of your staff, both when in the office and working from home.

Red Cross Training is a great source of information and has the following words of advice:

The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 require employers to provide adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities, and personnel to ensure their employees receive immediate attention if they become ill or get injured at work. When thinking about hybrid working, you need to minimise the risks, examples include:

- Poorly set up workstations resulting in Musculoskeletal injuries
- Anxiety, stress or even depression from badly managed workloads and less support from managers
- Work-related stress from slow internet connections interrupted video calls or other remote working challenges

[Click here](#) to read more.

SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT DUTY

As employers and providers of education to young people, we have a duty to be aware of potential threats to their safety. Recently, the UK government has been moving to proscribe right-wing groups as terrorist organisations, [read more here](#).

This extremist ideology is typically racist, anti-semitic, sexist and homophobic in nature. They use online sites and chat groups to recruit followers and promote their campaigns. These organisations often target vulnerable children and young adults. Particularly at risk are:

- Young white males
- Those excluded from education
- Children from deprived backgrounds or in care

What should we be aware of with the young people we work with?

- Changes in behaviour; they may become withdrawn or disengaged from learning, family and friends
- Spending excessive amounts of time online and being secretive about the sites visited
- Socialising with new individuals or groups who cause concern
- Opinions may become more extreme or divisive; they may become unreasonably defensive to criticism of their views
- Their attire may change

Education and support is often the most effective solution and there is a huge support network. Early intervention can prevent a young person from being drawn into these organisations. If you're an employer, friend or family member of someone you're worried is being targeted, we're here to help. If we can support you directly we will, or we will refer you to a partner agency.

If you would like further advice and guidance on safeguarding or the prevent duty then contact martyn@wbtc-uk.com.