

Protocol

Consultancy Services

FEBRUARY

Employer Newsletter

Welcome to our February 2026 Newsletter!

Dear Employers,

As we move further into 2026, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to developing talent within your organisation. Your dedication to mentoring, supporting and investing in apprentices and learners is what drives real workforce growth and long-term success.

This month's edition includes updates on current training opportunities, workforce development support and how we can assist you with both apprenticeships and work placement programmes. We remain committed to helping you recruit, develop and retain skilled staff through high-quality training solutions tailored to your business needs.

We are also preparing for upcoming changes within the apprenticeship and skills landscape. Our **April newsletter will provide detailed updates on apprenticeship reforms, Growth and Skills Levy developments, National Minimum Wage changes, and other funding updates linked to training opportunities for you and your team.** These changes may impact workforce planning, and we will ensure you have clear guidance and practical support.

Thank you for the essential role you play in shaping future talent. We look forward to continuing our work together throughout 2026.

Warm regards,

Sue Tipton

Managing Director

Protocol Consultancy Services

National Apprenticeship Week 9-15 February 2026

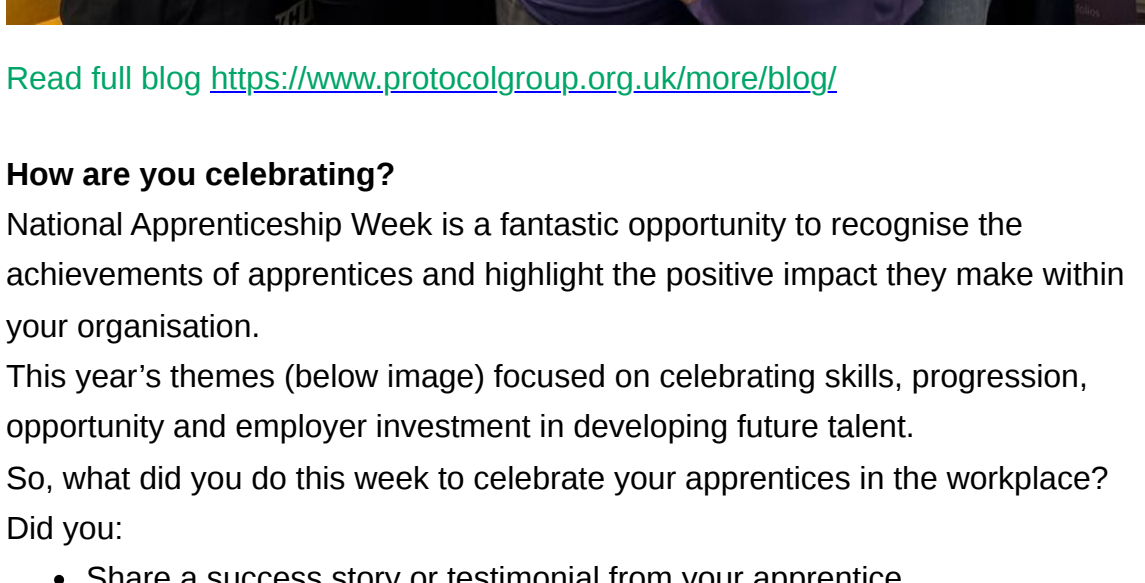
Protocol practises what we preach:

As we celebrate **National Apprenticeship Week 2026**, Protocol Consultancy Services is proud to stand behind the message that apprenticeships drive real business growth, workforce development and long-term career success.

As an established **Birmingham apprenticeship training provider**, we don't just deliver apprenticeship training — we actively invest in it.

We are proud that **90% of our employees are currently undertaking an apprenticeship qualification or have recently passed their End Point Assessment (EPA).**

This commitment demonstrates our belief in the power of apprenticeships to transform skills, confidence and professional progression.



Read full blog <https://www.protocolgroup.org.uk/more/blog/>

How are you celebrating?

National Apprenticeship Week is a fantastic opportunity to recognise the achievements of apprentices and highlight the positive impact they make within your organisation.

This year's themes (below image) focused on celebrating skills, progression, opportunity and employer investment in developing future talent.

So, what did you do this week to celebrate your apprentices in the workplace? Did you:

- Share a success story or testimonial from your apprentice
- Highlight progression or recent achievements (such as completing End Point Assessment)
- Give a shoutout to mentors and line managers supporting apprentices
- Post photos or short videos showcasing your apprentice at work
- Recognise how apprentices are contributing to business growth

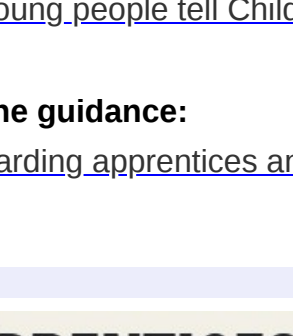
Every post helps to raise awareness of the value of apprenticeships and inspire others to invest in skills development.

Why not tag **Protocol Consultancy Services** in your social media posts so we can celebrate alongside you and reshare your success stories?

The theme for #NAW2026 is Skills for Life.

MON 9 FEB	TUE 10 FEB	WED 11 FEB
SKILLS FOR LIFE Look out for apprenticeship stories from businesses, schools, colleges, training providers and universities or share the launch day post from Apprenticeships and Skills LinkedIn . Celebrate the start of #NAW2026 and share your own social content to help get the week trending!	EMPLOYER TUESDAY Showcase your apprenticeship programmes and demonstrate how they fill skills gaps and grow your business. Hold apprentice open days. Remember to advertise your vacancies through your apprenticeship service account .	APPRENTICE WEDNESDAY Celebrate apprentices and explore opportunities! Ready to start your journey? Visit Find an apprenticeship Look out for activities in schools and colleges delivered by the AAN , BBC , Bitesize and CEC .
THUR 12 FEB	FRI 13 FEB	SAT 14 & SUN 15 FEB
T LEVEL THURSDAY Find out everything there is to know about T Levels for Employers and Learners . OPPORTUNITY THURSDAY Build skills for opportunity and growth so every young person can follow the pathway suitable for them. Skills give people the power to seize opportunity. Discover more	CELEBRATION FRIDAY Host graduation ceremonies and celebrate apprentice accomplishments. Download our Apprentice Celebration Toolkit and Assets	THE NAW WEEKENDER Share NAW Highlights and inspirational stories across all social platforms. Remember to use #NAW2026 and #SkillsForLife. NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK I LOVE APPRENTICESHIPS #NAW2026

Discover our NAW 2026 [Supporters Club and Partners](#) and find out [how you can get involved](#).



What young people tell Childline about apprenticeships

NSPCC Learning has published a blog and guidance on how employers can support and safeguard young people joining the workplace as apprentices. The blog shares insights on what young people have told Childline about apprenticeships. Between April 2024 and March 2025, Childline recorded over 400 counselling sessions that mentioned apprenticeships, with young people sharing concerns about communicating with managers and colleagues; managing the stress of workloads; and navigating the workplace independently.

Guidance on NSPCC Learning outlines simple steps to make the workplace a safe and welcoming environment for young people. These include: assigning a safeguarding lead; assessing the risks; reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures; creating codes of conduct; and getting support and training.

Read the blog:

[What young people tell Childline about apprenticeships](#)

Read the guidance:

[Safeguarding apprentices and young workers](#)

APPRENTICESHIP ESSENTIALS FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Education Training Foundation

Apprentices bring fresh ideas, energy and long-term potential, but supporting them day-to-day can sometimes feel unclear, especially when balancing the realities of running a business. To make this easier, the Department for Education is funding **four flexible eLearning courses designed with SME realities in mind.**

Running across four themes (**Getting Apprenticeships Right from the Start; Managing and Supporting Apprentices in the Workplace; Coaching and Developing a Learning Culture; and Supporting Apprentices through Assessment, Wellbeing and Next Steps**), these courses focus on the practical things that make the biggest difference and help apprentices grow into confident, productive team members.

What the courses offer

- **Practical guidance** on setting apprenticeships up for success from day one
- **Day-to-day support techniques** that keep apprentices engaged and progressing
- **Coaching and communication tools** that build confidence and strengthen learning
- **Wellbeing and assessment support** to help apprentices stay motivated through busy periods
- **Downloadable templates, prompts and checklists** you can use straight away
- **Real SME insights** from employers who've faced similar challenges
- **Fully funded access** no cost to your business

[Find out more: SME Apprenticeship Essentials](#)



Offer a quality work placement to a local 16-18 year old Pre-apprentice

Are you ready to shape the workforce of tomorrow?

By supporting a local young person on a pre-apprenticeship work placement (up to 10 weeks), you can make a significant impact on their career and gain valuable benefits for your business.

What's in it for you?

- **Fresh Perspective and Energy:** Young people bring **enthusiasm, creativity, and a fresh outlook**. This can inspire new ideas and a positive dynamic within your team.
- **Support Workforce Development:** By mentoring and guiding pre-apprentices, you can shape potential future employees aligned with your standards and work culture.
- **CSR and Brand Image Boost:** Offering work placements can enhance your **corporate social responsibility (CSR)** profile and public image, showcasing your commitment to supporting local youth and the community.
- **Potential Long-term Recruitment Solution:** This placement gives you a preview of how a pre-apprentice might fit with your team, allowing you to evaluate their potential for future employment.

Your Commitment

- **No Wages to Pay:** There is no cost for wages. Your role is to provide a supportive environment for the pre-apprentice to develop practical skills and gain workplace experience.
- **Dedicated Mentorship:** Assign a mentor to guide the pre-apprentice, helping them learn and achieve specific goals relevant to their future career.
- **Up to 10-Weeks Duration:** The placement is designed to fit within a 10-week period (**4 days per week with a maximum of 6 hours of employment per day**) , offering young people meaningful insight into your industry without a long-term commitment.
- **Employer Reference:** Provide the pre-apprentice with an employer reference at the end of their work placement.

Why Invest in a Pre-Apprentice?

By offering a quality placement, you're not just fulfilling an immediate need but actively investing in the future of your industry and workforce.

Your role can be pivotal in helping a young person gain confidence, grow their skills, and realise their potential.

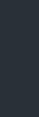
For further information on any of the above please contact a member of the Protocol team on:

Phone: 0121 236 2634

For recruitment and business development contact:

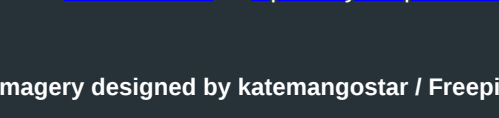
Adrian Hunt – Business Development Manager

Email: ahunt@protocolgroup.co.uk



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