



**Rt Hon Anne Milton MP**

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Dear learner,

I am delighted to hear that you are starting an apprenticeship. It is a great opportunity to give you the skills and experiences you need to get on in work and in your life ahead.

In my role as the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, I have seen first-hand how apprenticeships work in action and the positive impact they have had on those who undertake them. In November 2017, I visited the World Skills event to support Team UK, where I was overwhelmed and impressed by the sheer skills and talent on display from the apprentices participating. I have also met a number of young apprentice ambassadors who have finished their apprenticeships and are now going on to inspire and encourage others to take up apprenticeship opportunities.

Every apprentice counts. No matter who you are, or where you are from, or whatever you want to do, an apprenticeship will open up doors for you. Apprenticeships will let you get the skills you need; skills which you will take with you into your next job. Apprentices gain confidence in their talents, approach new situations maybe outside their comfort zone, new dreams and aspirations are unlocked.

When hiring an apprentice, an employer expects significant benefits for the business: fresh talent, new ideas, and a better-prepared workforce. But you should have high expectations, too, and make sure you get the best deal out of your apprenticeship and the training that you need.

You should be aware that:

- Apprenticeships must be a minimum of 12 months;
- You should receive the apprentice minimum wage, which starts at £3.50 per hour if you're under 19 or in your first year. In your second year, this increases to £5.60 if you're aged 19 to 20, £7.05 if you're 21 to 24, and in line with the national living wage of £7.50 if you're over 25;
- At least 20% of your apprenticeship should involve off the job training; and
- There should be regular assessments of your progress.

New minimum wage rates will come into force in April 2018. If you have any questions about your pay while undertaking your apprenticeship, you can call the confidential ACAS helpline for advice and support on 0300 123 1100. You can get all the details about pay and much more at:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Similarly, your training provider must tell you how you can make a complaint if you are not happy with any aspect of your training. If you remain dissatisfied then you can ask the Education and Skills Funding Agency to investigate the complaint on your behalf.

I wish you the very best of luck as you start your apprenticeship, and all good wishes for the future.

Best wishes  
Anne Milton

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