5   SUPPORTS FOR APPRENTICES

5.1   General issues

Apprentice learners may require particular types of support. Support is required at induction, to ease the change in life status of the new apprentice, as is indicated in the recruitment section above.

As an employee, the apprentice may find that continuity of the employment, or the suitability of the employment, may be at risk. Systems need to reduce the impact of these risks, as indicated earlier. It should be noted that the Coordinating Provider and its partners, cannot and should not guarantee it will find suitable employment for redundant apprentices, in all cases.

The learning supports required for the apprentice were outlined in earlier sections and should include personal and career support. It is particularly important for young apprentices to be integrated into their community of practice, as early as possible.

Membership of a stable community is a significant part of the personal socialisation process for all persons. To that end, where there are multiple off-the-job providers, apprentices should, as far as possible, attend one such provider for all releases, thus maintaining continuity of community, easing integration, and improving learning efficiency by familiarity with library, IT and other institutional systems.

5.2   Duty of care to young apprentices

Some apprentices may be under eighteen years of age. In these cases, the provider should exercise the appropriate duty of care. This is particularly important when young apprentices are away from home during 'off-the-job' phases.

5.3   Integration into off-the-job institutions

Where the off-the-job provider is a large educational/training institution, it is important that apprentice learners be fully integrated into the social, sporting and support systems of the institution as soon as possible, due to the concentrated nature of off-the-job phases. These institutions should also ensure that this support and integration is maintained during the on-the-job phases (for example: library access, IT system access, sport facilities access and such like).

Off-the-job phases may commence at varying times during the academic year and this presents a particular challenge as many activities of institutions are founded on full time attendance. Institutions should take particular cognisance of this and develop mitigating policies, such as the maintenance of access and communication during the on-the-job phases mentioned above.

5.4   Dealing with competing responsibilities

Part-time or mature apprentices may have more family commitments than full-time students. Their employments may require them to move temporarily around the country. These potential disruptions should be allowed for and support provided where possible.

5.5   Special educational and training needs or disabilities

Apprentices may also present with special educational or training needs or disabilities. The employer should share this information with the Coordinating Provider from the outset. Providers should make reasonable accommodations to ensure, as far as possible, that those with disabilities do not face undue barriers in successfully completing apprenticeships.

5.6   Complaints

Clear mechanisms should be established for apprentices to make complaints against their education and training providers, their employers or about the lack of integration of their programme between these parties.