

## Raising the Participation Age (RPA) – Information for Employers

### *What is RPA?*

The Government has changed the law so that all young people will be required to continue in education or training:

- Until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 from summer 2013; and
- Until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday from summer 2015.

The information here will help you to understand what this means for you.

The vast majority of 16 and 17 year olds already continue in some form of education or training. Many of these young people will also be working part-time – in the evenings, at weekends or in the holidays.

When the participation age increases, young people will need to continue to study or train in one of several ways:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider.
- Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.
- An Apprenticeship ([www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)).

For the second option, the training needs to be accredited and must be for a minimum of 280 hours over the course of a year – this is equivalent to around a day per week, but it can be taken flexibly.

### *What does this mean for me...*

**...as an employer of apprentices?** There are no other changes to be aware of as Apprenticeships count as a valid route in themselves for young people to continue their education.

**...as an employer of other 16 and 17 year olds?** There will be no new legal duties on you, but your young employees will be required to take some part-time training alongside their work.

The Government fully funds accredited training for 16-18 year olds. This includes training specific to your business needs, as well as broader skills such as English and maths. Employers are also free to design and fund training programmes of their own and can work with awarding bodies to get these accredited, or consider becoming an awarding body themselves. Find out more at: [www.awarding.org.uk](http://www.awarding.org.uk).

Young people and businesses see the returns on this training for many years. Increasing the proportion of trained workers in an industry boosts productivity, and studies have shown this adds more value than the increased cost of wages they receive. (For example, increasing the

proportion of trained workers by 5% leads to a 4% increase in valued added per worker, compared to a 1.6% increase in wages)<sup>1</sup>.

Many employers already encourage and support their younger full-time employees to train through an Apprenticeship or part-time study taken flexibly alongside their job. Your local council can provide further information about training opportunities in your area. Information about Apprenticeships is available from the National Apprenticeships Service at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk).

### ***I thought I would have to comply with new duties?***

The original 2008 legislation contains two duties for employers: to check that a young person is enrolled in a suitable training course before starting work, and to agree suitable hours to allow them to access this training. We think that employers will encourage young people to train without the need for burdensome new duties and so **we have decided not to commence these two duties in 2013.**

### ***How can I help support my 16 and 17 year old employees to meet their new duty?***

You may want to consider how you can support your young employees to access the training they are required to take. This could be through considering how their working hours can allow them to attend their training or taking time to discuss how it could match your business needs.

Local authorities have a duty to secure a suitable education or training place for all young people. If you are interested in finding out more about how young people's training can best support your business needs, then you may want to contact the local council where you are based. For information about Apprenticeships, and how to convert existing jobs into Apprenticeships, please contact the National Apprenticeship Service ([www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)). You can also contact awarding bodies directly (a list is available at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>). They may have existing courses available that match your business needs, or they may be able to provide bespoke accredited courses too.

### ***What will happen to me if the young person I employ doesn't take up part-time training?***

There will be no duties on employers in relation to RPA, so there will be no action taken against you if your employee fails to undertake part-time training.

However, your employee will be under a legal duty to undertake this training and by failing to do so they will be missing out on fully-funded training that will be beneficial to them as well as to your business. Evidence shows that continuing in education or training and attaining qualifications has positive effects for young people and businesses in the future, increasing their average productivity and earnings. We would expect that as an employer you will be keen to enable and encourage your young employees to fulfil their legal duties.

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<sup>1</sup> Dearden, L. and H. Reed, J. Van Reenen (2000b) *Who Gains When Workers Train? Training and Corporate Productivity in a Panel of British Industries*; Institute for Fiscal Studies, London.

### ***I already provide training for my staff, will this count?***

If a young person is working full-time they must undertake part-time **accredited** training alongside this. We know a lot of training provided by employers is accredited and therefore does count for this purpose. Accredited training means a course preparing people to take a qualification accredited by the qualifications regulator, Ofqual. You can see the full list of these courses at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.

If you don't offer your staff training towards an accredited qualification then you might want to consider doing so, for example by working with an awarding body. Alternatively, you might want to work with local colleges or providers to ensure your employees can access relevant training outside of work.

### ***How much training will my young employees need to undertake? Do I need to give them time off to do it?***

16 and 17 year olds who work full-time will need to undertake part-time accredited training for a minimum of 280 guided learning hours per year, which is the equivalent to one day per week.

You will not be legally required to give your employees time off for this training. However, having a trained and qualified workforce has clear benefits for your business, particularly in terms of productivity, so you may want to consider how you could support them in this learning – for instance, looking at how their shifts can be arranged to allow them to attend training and discussing how it could match your business needs.

### ***What happens when my employee turns 18? Will they have to stop training?***

There will be no legal requirement on the young person to continue their training after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, though we believe young people will recognise the benefits of completing their training. The Government funds a place in learning for all 16-19 year olds who want one. Therefore if a young person begins a course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday they will be funded to finish the course regardless of when their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday falls.

### ***Where can I get more information?***

For more information on raising the participation age, please visit the Department for Education website: [www.education.gov.uk/rpa](http://www.education.gov.uk/rpa).

For more information on Apprenticeships please visit the National Apprenticeships Service website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/National-Apprenticeship-Service.aspx](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/About-Us/National-Apprenticeship-Service.aspx)

For more information on further education and skills and its links to business, please visit the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills website: [www.bis.gov.uk/policies/furthereducation-skills](http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/furthereducation-skills)