

**Edition 2 – April 2026**

## **GROWING FUTURES: TERM THREE APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE**

# NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK – 12.02.2026

We were proud to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week 2026 with another successful and engaging event at Slough & Langley College. This annual highlight brings together employers, apprentices, and prospective learners to explore our apprenticeship pathways and showcases the value of vocational learning and the strong partnerships that help our apprentices thrive.

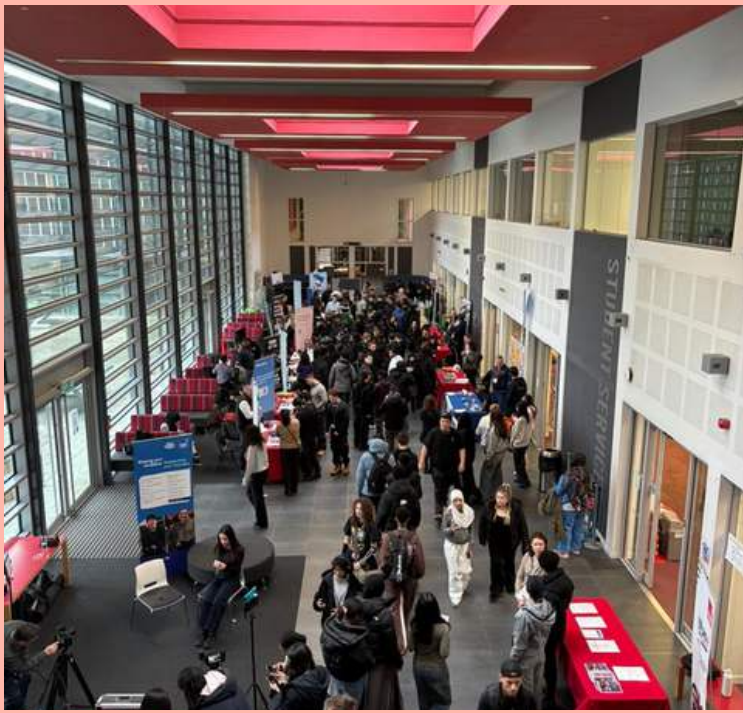
This year's event was one of our strongest yet, with an excellent turnout from industry partners across diverse sectors. We were delighted to welcome representatives from Abri, Art Classes, BBC, Cardo, De Vere Beaumont Estate, Healthcode, Housing Solutions, Microsoft, R&S Recovery, Rushlift, Springbridge, and Sureserve. Their involvement not only showcased the variety of apprenticeships available locally but also demonstrated the enthusiasm and commitment employers have toward supporting the next generation of skilled professionals.



Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to take part in meaningful conversations about career pathways, workplace expectations, and future progression routes. Employers offered valuable insights into their industries, helping learners understand the essential skills and qualities needed to succeed.

Interactive demonstrations, Q&A sessions, and informal networking all contributed to the lively atmosphere. Many employers expressed their appreciation for the college's ongoing support and were keen to highlight how apprenticeships continue to shape and strengthen their workforce. It was fantastic to see so many connections being made, with both employers and prospective apprentices leaving the event with new knowledge, contacts, and a clearer understanding of the opportunities ahead.





We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all employers who attended and contributed to the success of the event. Your time, expertise, and commitment play a vital role in enriching our learners' experiences and helping them prepare for the world of work.

We look forward to welcoming you back for future events and continuing to build our strong partnerships. If you are an employer interested in getting involved in upcoming apprenticeship opportunities, offering placements, or supporting future events, please do get in touch - we would be delighted to hear from you!

## Big Changes Ahead for Apprenticeships in 2026 – Don't Miss This!

There are some exciting updates coming to apprenticeship funding and they could open up fresh opportunities for teams across your organisation. From fully funded training for under-25s to new flexibility in how levy funds can be used, these changes are designed to make developing talent easier and more impactful than ever.

If you're involved in recruitment, upskilling, or planning for future workforce needs, take a moment to dive into the summary document we made – it's a quick read and could help shape your teams in 2026 and beyond.

Click on the flyer to find out more information.

### KEY APPRENTICESHIP & LEVY FUNDING CHANGES FOR 2026

- 1

**FULLY FUNDED UNDER-25 APPRENTICES (SMES)**

Small and medium-sized employers (non-levy payers) now benefit from fully funded training and assessment for apprentices aged 25 and under, eliminating the previous 5% co-investment charge. This significantly reduces barriers to hiring young talent and encourages early-career development.
- 2

**NEW "GROWTH & SKILLS" LEVY**

The Apprenticeship Levy will transition into the Growth & Skills Levy, which offers greater flexibility in how employers invest in skills—particularly through modular, shorter and more targeted training options.
- 3

**LEVY FUNDS NOW EXPIRE AFTER 12 MONTHS**

Unspent levy funds will expire after 12 months, rather than the previous 24-month period. This accelerates the planning cycle and increases the urgency for employers to commit levy funds before they are reclaimed.
- 4

**REMOVAL OF 10% GOVERNMENT TOP-UP**

The automatic 10% top-up that previously boosted levy-paying employers' digital accounts has been removed, reducing the overall spending power available for apprenticeship training.
- 5

**APPRENTICE MINIMUM WAGE RISE & NIC SAVINGS**

From April 2026, the apprentice minimum wage will rise to £8.00 per hour, up from £7.55. Employers are also reminded that apprentices under 25 earning below £50,270 per year remain exempt from employer National Insurance contributions, offering substantial annual savings for businesses recruiting or upskilling young staff.
- 6

**HIGHER CO-INVESTMENT (25%) WHEN LEVY RUNS OUT**

When a levy-paying employer's digital account balance is exhausted, the employer contribution for further apprenticeships increases to 25%, up from the previous 5%.

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# upcoming events

April 2026

## **World Autism Month**

This month, we're celebrating autistic apprentices who are bringing fresh thinking, precision, and creativity to every trade - from engineering and IT to construction and business. We're inviting employers to help champion inclusive apprenticeship pathways, spotlight neurodiverse talent, and open doors to careers where autistic learners can thrive. Together, we can build a skills pipeline that welcomes every future professional.

1 May 2026

## **International Workers' Day**

This day celebrates the apprentices, mentors, and industry professionals who keep our sectors moving - from workshops and garages to construction sites, digital labs, and business hubs.

We're shining a spotlight on the hard-working apprentices building their skills, shaping essential industries, and becoming the workforce of tomorrow.

24 June 2026

## **Slough & Langley Open Evening**

Join us to explore our wide range of courses, meet our industry-specialist tutors and tour our fantastic facilities.

The evening will be running from 4-6:30pm

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOPICS MENTIONED,  
PLEASE VISIT:**

[windsor-forest.ac.uk/apprenticeships/](https://windsor-forest.ac.uk/apprenticeships/)

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