

# British Printing Industries Federation – BPIF Training



## Organisation – Introduction, Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

BPIF Training are the training arm of the employer organisation British Printing Industries Federation who support organisations within the print industry; BPIF Training provide national coverage and are the largest training provider for the sector. They deliver apprenticeships and stand-alone qualifications from level 2 to level 5 in print related areas and business skills; they also have a partnership arrangement with a university to deliver a level 7 programme with plans in place to deliver their own Level 7 programme. They have also been involved in supporting the Kickstart initiative. Much of the current delivery is through apprenticeships for both levy and non-levy companies and cover programmes including print operator and print technician, business administration and management. They have recently introduced a signage technician apprenticeship and are looking to expand their reach, particularly for the business skills area, into other related sectors to the print industry, along with introducing further qualifications such as sales and marketing, warehouse and storage and traineeships.

At the last assessment, a new Managing Director had been appointed and a 'Board of Governors' had been created, both of which are now established. During this time, a re-structure has taken place to create two 'divisions', one focussed on the trade/technical qualifications and the other on business skills qualifications. The delivery team of Training Co-ordinators/Skills Coaches have a background in the print sector and therefore have a high level of sector experience. Each of the Training Co-ordinators are home-based, providing nationwide coverage. New roles have also been introduced, or are shortly to be introduced, to focus on some key areas including employer engagement, learner recruitment, on-programme information, advice and guidance (IAG) and data/compliance. In common with many training providers, over the last 20 months they have delivered programmes remotely and intend to maintain some level of online delivery with a blend of online and face to face.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is described within their policy as being provided at pre-entry, on programme and at exit and that the entitlement to IAG is underpinned by the values of '*impartiality, confidentiality, ownership by the learner, promotion of equality of opportunity, transparency, accessibility*'.

*"They are really good at handling learners as individuals" (partner)*

IAG begins from initial conversations with employers where their needs are explored and information provided on the structure, requirements and expectations of the apprenticeship provision including, funding/funding rules, off the job training, role of the mentor, recruitment of apprentices. Regular 'touch base' calls and meetings are held with employers to provide any further support/information needed. Training Co-ordinators/Skills Coaches are the experts in the qualifications and therefore provide more detailed information on the course, structure, and requirements to both employer and learner/potential learner.

Once on programme along with workshops, which is the training delivery, opportunities exist for learners to gain further support from their allocated member of staff through both formal reviews and ongoing informal support. Career aspirations are considered both initially at the start of the programme, but also through the personal development unit of the programmes. Staff described how 'Topics of the Month' have been developed further with a range of topics provided each month that cover Prevent, British Values, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Mental Health/Wellbeing. These topics are supported by articles developed by both staff and apprentices. Staff spoke of the heightened need to provide mental health/wellbeing support since the start of the pandemic, with learners experiencing anxiety, isolation and concerns relating to job security. Mental

health awareness training was provided to staff, to support not only their learners, but also themselves. A number of examples were provided where staff had referred learners through to the Printing Charity that provides a 24/7 helpline support and access to counselling services; the charity also provides a range of other support including financial and employment advice. Employability support was also increased during this time, for those staff facing redundancy, with staff and learners describing how they had used some of the careers/employability tools on The Skills Hub (see below).

*“...I received a really heartfelt email from [name of staff], I was also told about the Printing Charity. There was no pressure, just gentle reminders. It made me feel I could contact [name] any time. As a result, it has fuelled me to continuing” (learner)*

As mentioned above, a new resource has been developed since the last assessment, The Skills Hub. This includes e-learning topics across a range of areas including career pathways, career assessments and skills development and is being developed to incorporate BPIF specific learning areas. It covers both knowledge and skills development. The use of The Skills Hub is promoted through the training workshops and by staff during contact with learners and further engagement activities to promote the use of the platform are planned for later this year.

The delivery of IAG supports the organisation’s aim to gain a high level of achievement and timely success and this is monitored closely with reviews of caseloads for each Training Co-ordinator and a monthly operations review. It was stated that the introduction of the new role of Head of Data and Compliance has helped to provide greater information to act as an ‘early warning’ system for learner progress. Staff are clear about the link between providing IAG and overall learner success on programme, ensuring that they are on the right course and that they are making progress. They recognised that the need for wider/pastoral support was increased during the pandemic to help learners address any barriers they were facing.

*“We want all learners who start our programmes to be in a better position when they finish or leave” (staff)*

The organisation recognise that the pandemic has had an impact upon their achievement and timely achievement rates, as the situation has had significant impact on some employers. However, since the last assessment there has been an overall increase in achievement rates. Progression and destination data shows 90% of apprentices progressing into a positive outcomes, 98% into paid employment and 2% into further training.

*“It’s about getting learners to see the bigger picture [progression]” (staff)*

As noted above, although staff recognise the link between IAG and achievement rates, however particularly over the last 20 months IAG has been focussed on supporting the wellbeing of learners and helping them to address barriers in their personal life that also impacts upon the progress of their learning. A frequently mentioned area was that of confidence.

*“They really care about me. I’m not just supported as a learner but as a whole person” (learner)*

The organisation has a clear development plan that shows a specific focus on developing the careers IAG to learners, and the development of The Skills Hub is supporting the provision of this aspect of delivery, along with a member of staff who is taking on a role focussing on IAG.

*“It 100% helped me in my job role” (learner)*

*“I am a much better manager for completing the course” (learner)*

*“[name] was impartial, helped me weigh up the pros and cons... It was an independent view, [name] just prompted me about things to think about” (learner)*