



Getting on to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP)



With the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) re-opening on December 12, many [employers](#) and apprenticeship providers will be looking to complete the application to become an Employer Provider, Supporting Provider or a Main Provider. So which route should you choose?

Based on our experience over the past 18 months since the [Apprenticeship Levy was introduced](#), I will explain my views on each of the options and the things to look out for in order to choose the right option for you. My interest here is to help the ongoing development of the sector as a whole and my thoughts are not designed to push employers to go with training providers but to help everyone understand the risks and benefits.

Employer Provider

Many organisations like the concept of being a full Employer Provider directly delivering apprenticeship training to their employees for multiple reasons, some of which are as follows:

- More control and no third-party involvement in the direct training of their teams
- Utilisation of incentives (Provider and Employer) for 16-18 year old apprentices and care leavers
- Development of their own programmes to meet the needs of their business.



Being an Employer Provider is a great option for a large organisation that can invest in the apprenticeship programmes and the systems and processes required to meet all the funding rules of the ESFA.

Not that I want to discourage this option, as it is great when everything is in place, but before considering being an Employer Provider I would also urge you to ask yourself and understand the implications of the following questions:

- Do you have resource to create and manage the submission to the ESFA and stay within the funding rules, including audits from the ESFA?
- How will you [quality monitor](#) your provision to the requirements of Ofsted and awarding bodies if the apprenticeship includes a qualification?
- What will the actual costs of delivery be? Under the funding rules an organisation can only offset the costs of delivering the apprenticeship
- Who will be the Ofsted nominee, and produce the annual self-assessment report and continuous improvement plan? Ofsted has stated that it will inspect all new employer providers within the first three years and it will also undertake monitoring visits to assess progress.
- What e-portfolio system will you use to track the progress and the learning distance travelled by your apprentices?
- How will you deliver the [20% off-the-job training](#) and gain the evidence required?

Alongside the above, one of the trickiest requirements for new providers and Employer Providers is that of the expected progression in English and Maths. Regardless of the [level of apprenticeship](#), apprentices will be required to make reasonable progress towards achieving a Level 2 and all programmes will need to have English and Maths embedded within them.

Employer Providers should not underestimate the commitment to delivering and achieving this as some apprenticeship standards are naturally more attractive to people wanting to take a less academic route and who are therefore more likely to need support with functional skills. Therefore an employer must make sure they consider how they will deliver this as part of their provision and whether they have the qualified teams in place to do so.

Finally, any Employer Provider needs to consider the appointment of an End Point Assessment Provider (EPA) and how they will select the right one to meet their needs. In the



current market this is key to ensuring a successful programme.

In order to become an Employer Provider, the organisation must be confident that they can provide quality training which is fully compliant. Any negative outcomes of an apprenticeship programme can have a significant impact on brand reputation.

Supporting Provider

With the news that no organisation can deliver apprenticeships without now being on the [Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers](#), we will undoubtedly see a big increase in Supporting Providers.

This route allows an organisation to deliver part of an apprenticeship by being a sub-contractor to a main provider. The supporting provider route allows up to £500k delivery per annum (£100k in the first year if no history of apprenticeship delivery exists).

This route allows employers and non-apprenticeship providers to deliver part of an apprenticeship without the direct risks of becoming a full Employer Provider or Main Provider. The benefits of this include:

- Still having control of the specialist training elements with support from a main provider
- Being [quality monitored](#) by the main provider therefore reducing the investment in teams and processes
- Having use of the main provider's infrastructure in systems to record training and claim funding from the ESFA
- Access to Ofsted expertise from main providers to limit risk
- Combining the best of utilising specialist employer training/specialist discipline training with the equally specialist infrastructure of an apprenticeship provider
- Having functional skills delivered by the main provider reducing the risk (and investment) of delivery.

Being a Supporting Provider will still require clear investment (actual costs for employer delivery apply, for example) and regulatory requirements, although these are significantly reduced by working with a main provider. Although this route does have its limitations, namely limiting to £500k delivery and being tied to a Main Provider as you cannot directly



deliver apprenticeship training.

Main Provider / Outsourced Provider

If you are considering becoming a Main Provider all the comments and questions above for the Employer Provider are just as valid. The main difference with being a Main Provider is that you will be able to deliver to other employers.

If you are an employer and are considering your options, outsourcing to a Main Provider is a credible possibility, but ensure you pick the right provider. I strongly advise that you:

- Review their latest Ofsted and ESFA audit documents
- Ensure they [build a programme to your needs](#) and not one that simply drives volume
- Look for a provider that [aligns to your values and culture](#) as you will need to work alongside them.

All the three options I have described above are available to all employers but it is about understanding the risks and benefits of each before making the decision. Look into all the options and consider what you want to deliver and what is best outsourced as even under the Employer Provider model you could choose to sub-contract functional skills, claims administration, Ofsted support and quality monitoring. It's all about making the right choice for your company.

Gregg Scott – National Delivery Director Interserve Learning & Employment

Gregg is the National Delivery Director for Interserve Learning & Employment, operationally responsible for all [apprenticeship delivery](#) including models where Interserve supports Employer Providers, Supporting Providers and delivers as a Main Provider to more than 5,000 new apprentices a year. Much of Gregg's work at Interserve has included building relationships and interpreting the needs of employers. This includes designing a joint delivery model for [passenger transport apprenticeships](#) and supporting [DPG as a Main Provider](#) with



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