

# **THE EMPLOYER & PROVIDER APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY**

**Understanding critical roles and responsibilities of the employer and provider and how they come together**

MARCH 2024

## How to use this resource

**What is this resource for:** This resource is designed to assist colleagues in developing an understanding of the key roles and activities of the employer and provider in apprenticeship delivery and how the two should interplay.

**How to use this resource:** You can use this resource in several ways to suit your needs, for example:

- Add this into your inductions for new staff to help them understand the roles of the Provider and Employer
- Carry out a gap analysis asking 'how does your organisation facilitate each of the roles/activities?'
- Build it into a team activity to demonstrate the importance of strong employer engagement at every stage and the consequences of this not being done well / knock-on effects.

## Resource introduction

The relationship between the provider and the employer in an apprenticeship program is crucial for the success of both the apprentice and the overall program. When designing or reviewing your apprenticeship programme and your operational delivery arrangements, you should consider your provider role alongside what is typically expected of an employer. This document sets out the typical roles of both the employer and provider within an apprenticeship end-to-end.

Here are 6 reasons why this relationship is so important:

### **Skills Alignment:**

The employer knows best what skills are needed in their industry and within their specific company. By collaborating closely with the training provider, they can ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum aligns with the practical skills and knowledge required for the job. This ensures that apprentices receive relevant training that is directly applicable to their future roles within the company and the wider industry/occupation.

### **Work-Based Learning:**

Apprenticeships are designed to provide a combination of off-the-job training and on-the-job training. The employer's involvement is essential in providing real-world work experiences that complement the theoretical knowledge gained through the provider-led on-programme curriculum. The provider and employer must work together to create a structured learning environment where apprentices can apply what they've learned in a practical setting.

**Mentorship and Guidance:**

Employers play a critical role in mentoring apprentices and providing them with guidance and support throughout their training. This mentorship helps apprentices integrate into the workplace, understand company culture and expectations, and develop important soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. The provider can also offer support and guidance to both the employer and the apprentice, facilitating effective communication and addressing any challenges that may arise.

**Quality Assurance:**

Collaboration between the employer and the provider ensures that the apprenticeship program meets quality standards and objectives. Employers provide feedback on the effectiveness of the training and the performance of apprentices, allowing the provider to make adjustments as needed to improve the program. This continuous feedback loop helps maintain the relevance and quality of the apprenticeship experience.

**Retention and Succession Planning:**

Investing in apprenticeship programs strengthens the employer's talent pipeline by developing skilled workers who are already familiar with the company's operations and culture. By nurturing talent from within through apprenticeships, employers can improve employee retention and succession planning efforts, reducing turnover costs and ensuring a steady supply of qualified workers for future roles within the company.

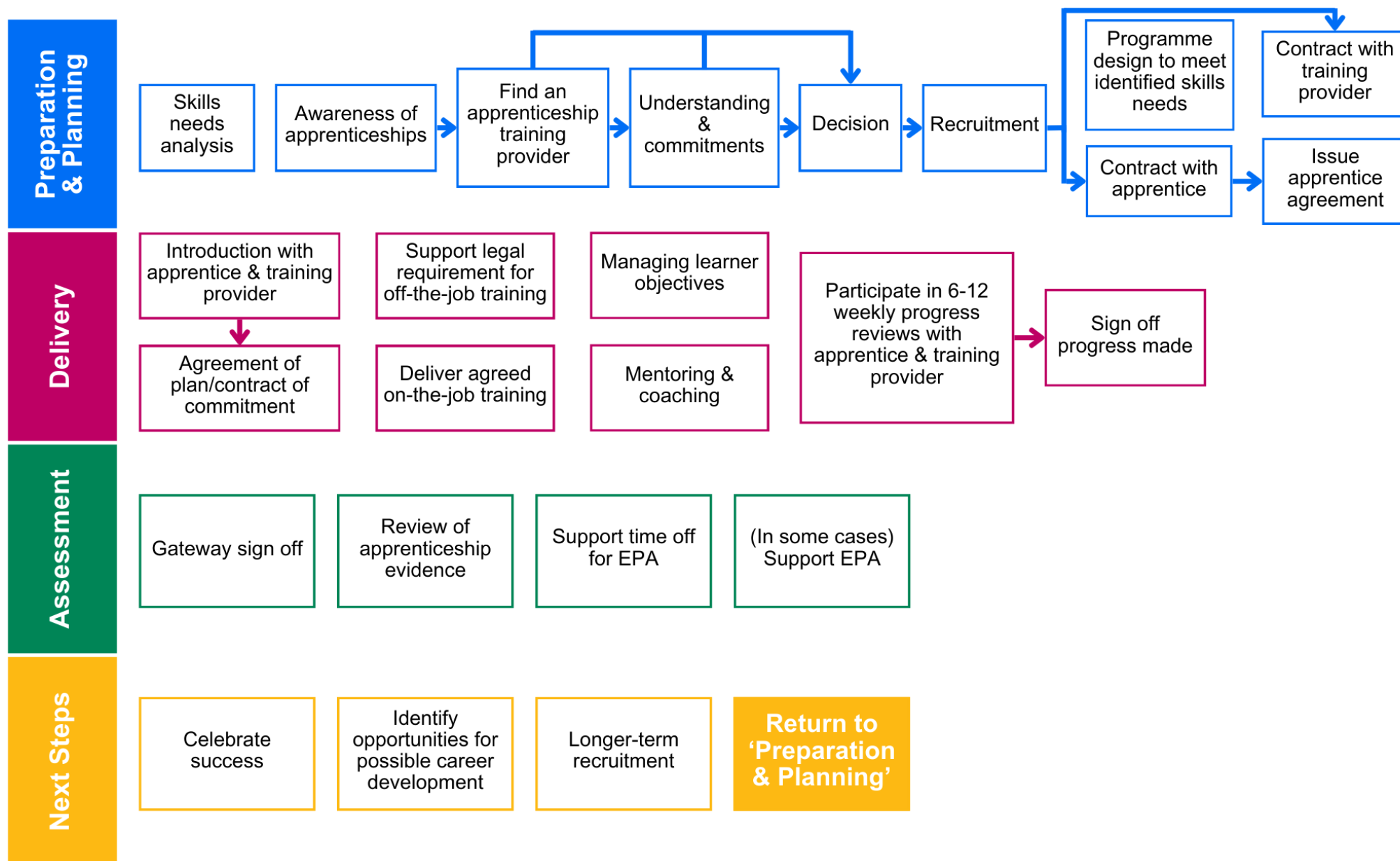
**Long-Term Partnership:**

A strong relationship between the employer and the provider can lead to long-term partnerships that benefit both parties. Employers may gain access to a pipeline of skilled workers, while providers can enhance their reputation and credibility by delivering successful apprenticeship programs tailored to the needs of employers. This collaboration fosters trust and mutual respect, paving the way for future collaborations and initiatives aimed at addressing workforce development needs.

This is intended to cover the key activities within both the employer and provider journeys but is not exhaustive and does not cover all required compliance activities.

In each stage of the journey, we will give you a space to record your reflection and potential actions to take for your organisation.

# A Typical Employer Journey



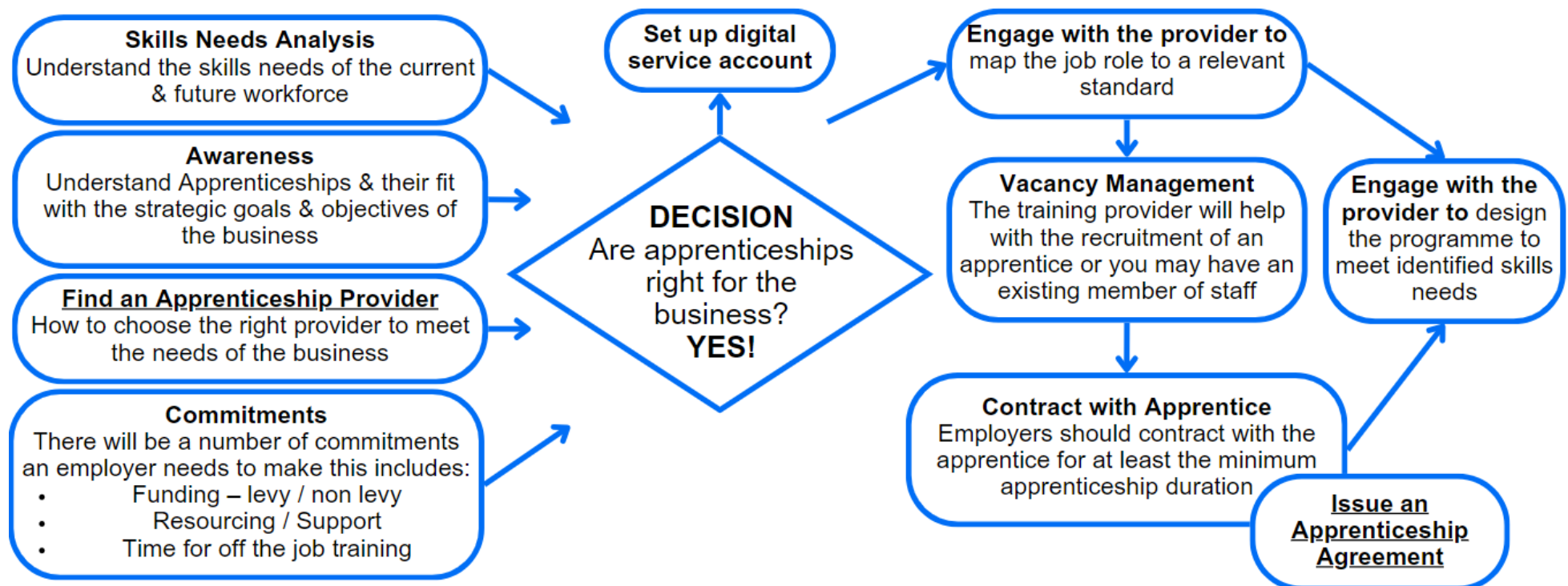
## Preparation and Planning

Employers will plan and prepare for apprenticeships in differing ways, as a provider you may guide an employer through this or they may approach you with their own plans and needs for apprenticeships. Crucially this is the time when employers need to:

1. Fully understand what the commitments and expectations of them, the apprentice and the provider are.
2. Ensure that the apprenticeship standard chosen is the right one for the job role.
3. Know that the apprentice candidate is eligible for funding and suitable for the apprenticeship.

Finding an apprenticeship provider - [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/choose-training-provider](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/choose-training-provider)

Apprenticeship agreement: template - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template)

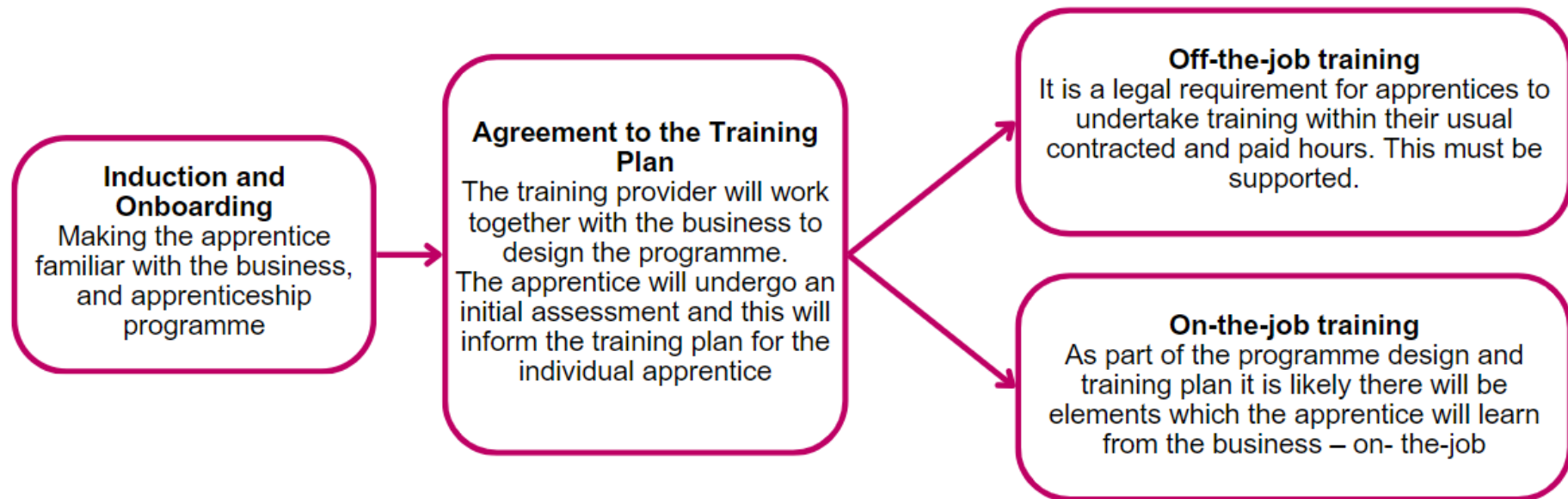


## Reflections and actions

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## Delivery

Employers play a central role in shaping the learning experience and preparing apprentices for successful careers in their chosen fields. By working alongside experienced professionals, apprentices learn practical skills, techniques, and industry-specific knowledge skills and behaviours that are directly applicable to the apprenticeship standard. They provide invaluable feedback, advice, and support to help apprentices navigate challenges, overcome obstacles, and maximise their learning potential. It is important to ensure employers fully understand the training plan and expectations of both the apprentice and themselves in the delivery phase of the programme, having clear plans to include this within your onboarding/induction process will support this.



The following tasks can be completed at any time outside of the delivery process laid out above.

### **Mentoring and Coaching**

Mentoring and coaching an apprentice is crucial for not only imparting practical skills and knowledge but also fostering personal and professional growth, ensuring the continuity of expertise and innovation.

### **Progress reviews**

It is expected that the Line Manager of the apprentice actively participates in the apprentice's progress review which takes place every 6-12 weeks. This will allow the employer (with the training provider) to assess the apprentice's development, provide constructive feedback, and identify areas for improvement and opportunities for further development, ultimately contributing to the apprentice's success and the business' long-term talent pipeline.

### **Reflections and actions**

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## End Point Assessment

Employers should be actively involved in facilitating the assessment process as set out here:



### Gateway Sign-off

This involves verifying the apprentice has successfully met the required standards and competencies set by the apprenticeship standard and is competent within the workplace. This confirms their readiness to progress to their End Point Assessment.

### Support time off for End Point Assessment

The amount of time needed for EPA depends on the standard and assessment requirements. It is critical that apprentices are supported with time off to undertake these assessments.

### Review of Apprenticeship evidence

It is likely an employer will have to review evidence an apprentice has collated and will submit as part of their learning evidence.

### Support EPA

In some cases, there may be a role for the employer within the End Point Assessment itself.

## Reflections and actions

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## Next steps

The completion of an apprenticeship shouldn't be the end of the process, within an employer setting this may mean further discussions with the apprentice about their future career goals and aspirations further career development and opportunities for further development within the organisation, such as progression to a higher-level apprenticeship, ongoing training, or permanent employment.

### **Celebrate success**

Celebrating an apprentice's success not only recognises their hard work, dedication, and achievements but also boosts their confidence, motivation, and sense of belonging within the business, fostering a positive learning environment, and encouraging ongoing growth and excellence.

### **Identify opportunities for further career development**

Is there a progression route for the apprentice following the completion of their apprenticeship?

### **Longer-term recruitment planning**

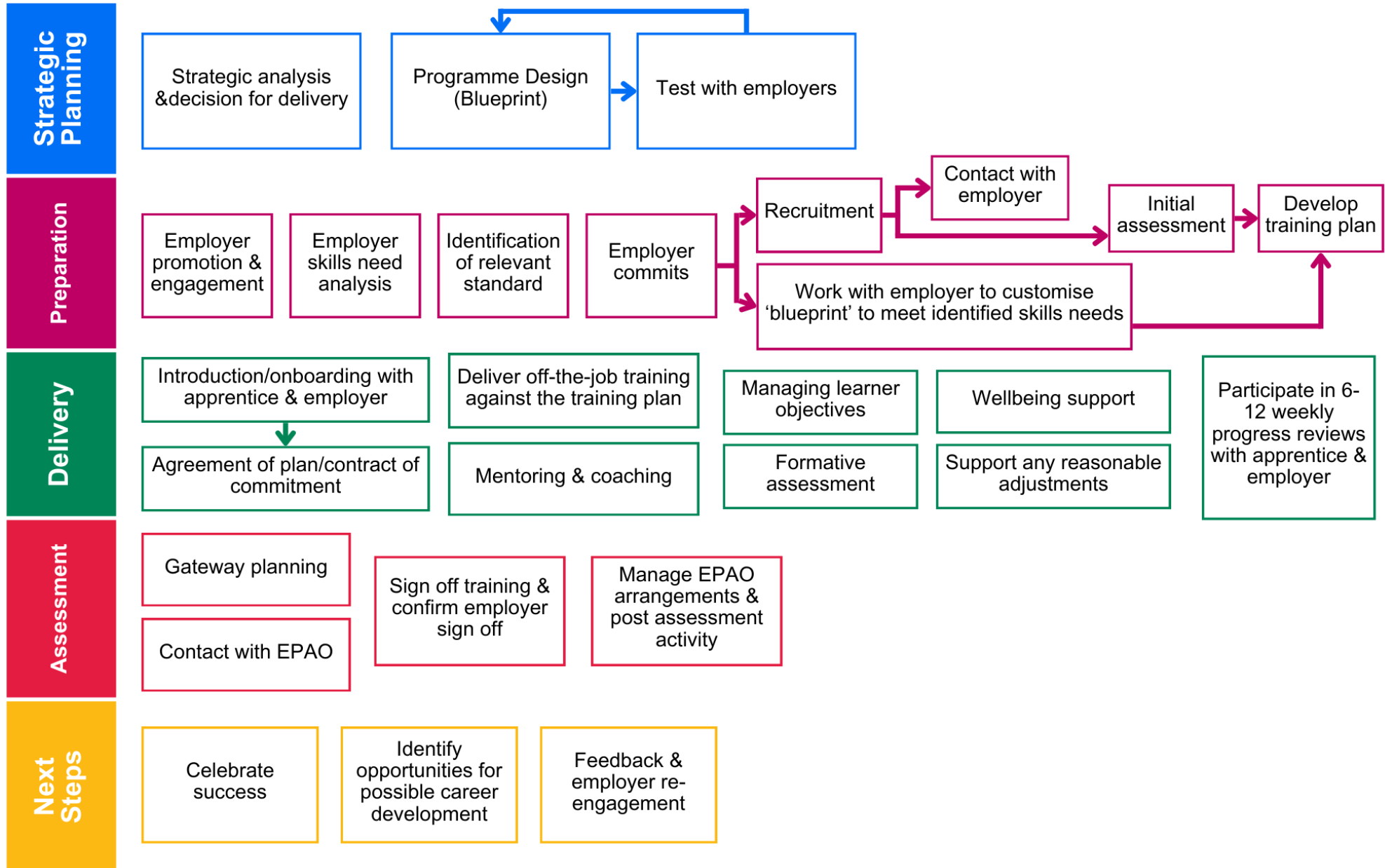
Reflect on how this has contributed to the skills needs analysis and what further recruitment planning is needed.

Employers are likely to reflect on their experience throughout the apprenticeship journey, particularly at the end. Did it meet their strategic objectives and deliver against the skills needs identified, is there an opportunity to grow and expand the apprenticeship offer, was the chosen training provider suitable and did they and the apprentice have a high-quality experience etc. This potentially takes them full circle back to 'Preparation and Planning'.

## Reflections and actions

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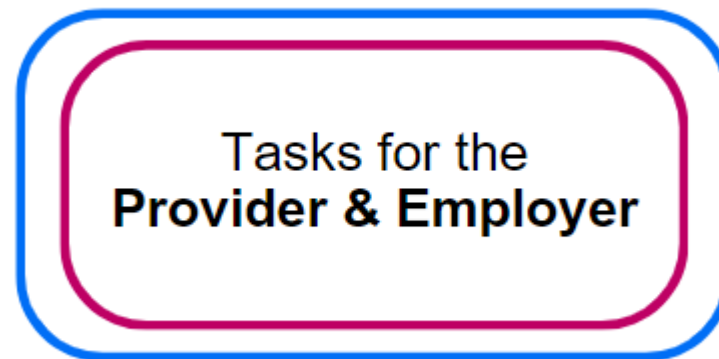
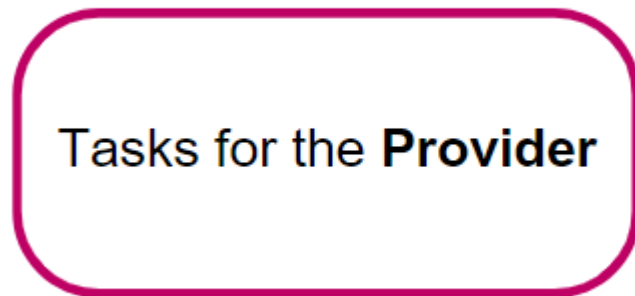
# A Typical Provider Journey



## Working with the employer

In the previous sections of this document, we have explored the role of the employer against the key stages of the apprenticeship journey. As you move forward into the following sections, you will see several diagrams explaining the provider journey.

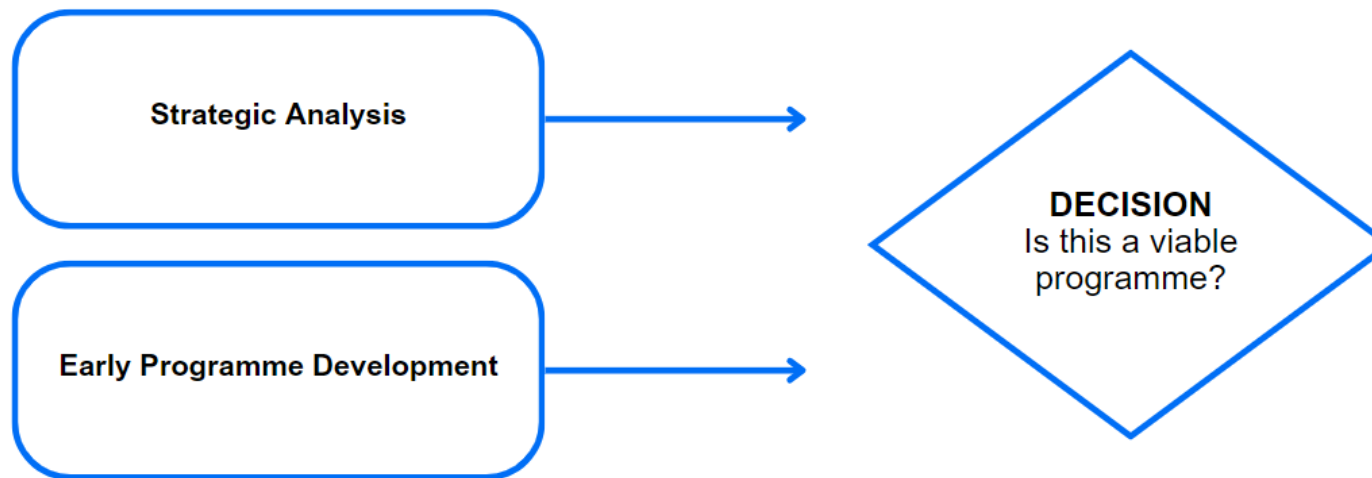
Understandably due to the partnership nature of an apprenticeship the provider and employer journeys are interconnected and there are several stages where the provider and employer will need to work together. This is highlighted in the following diagrams using the boxes; those with a **single outline** denote tasks for the **Provider** to complete and those with an additional **blue outline** denote tasks to be completed by the **Provider and Employer** together.



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## Strategic planning

Strategic analysis and planning are crucial for providers to inform decisions about which apprenticeships to deliver for example providers will want to ensure alignment with market demand, that their offer will be responsive to and meet employer needs and that the programme will be viable.



### Strategic Analysis

1. Conduct an analysis to understand the employer/skills market. Is this a local need? Is it an LSIP priority? Do you have employer connections with potential cohorts?
2. Conduct a costing analysis to understand the financial viability of programme delivery
3. Conduct a capability and capacity analysis to understand what resources you have/need for delivery
4. Conduct a competitor analysis

### Early Programme Development

1. Develop your delivery models and outline the curriculum
2. Test with employers



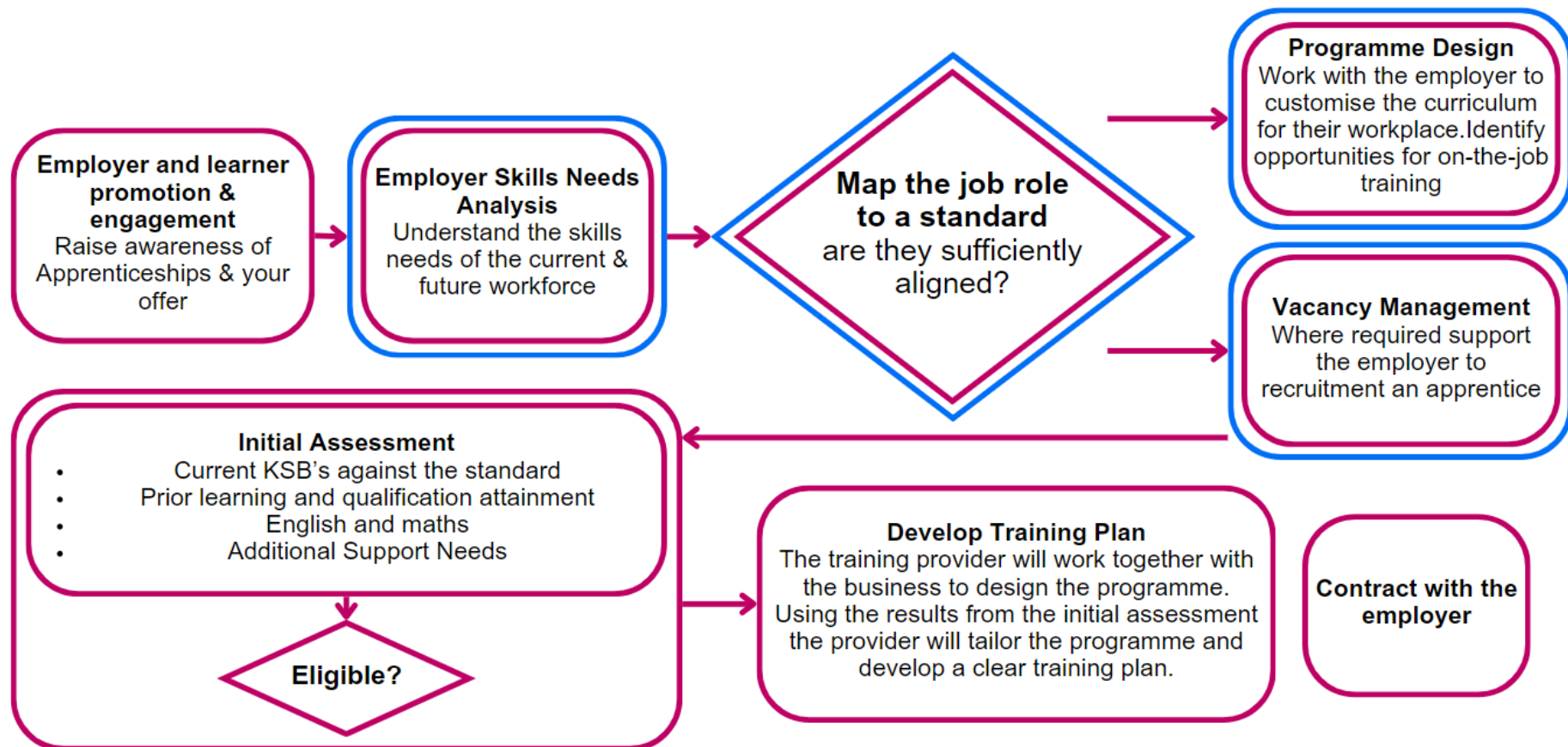
## Reflections and actions

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Preparation

This is a crucial stage for a provider from initial promotion and engagement through to recruitment and developing an individualised training plan this sets the foundations for the delivery of a high-quality apprenticeship. Providers need to be confident that:

1. the apprenticeship standard chosen is the right one for the job role
2. the apprentice is eligible for funding and suitable for the apprenticeship.
3. the employer and apprentice fully understand the commitments and expectations of them throughout the programme

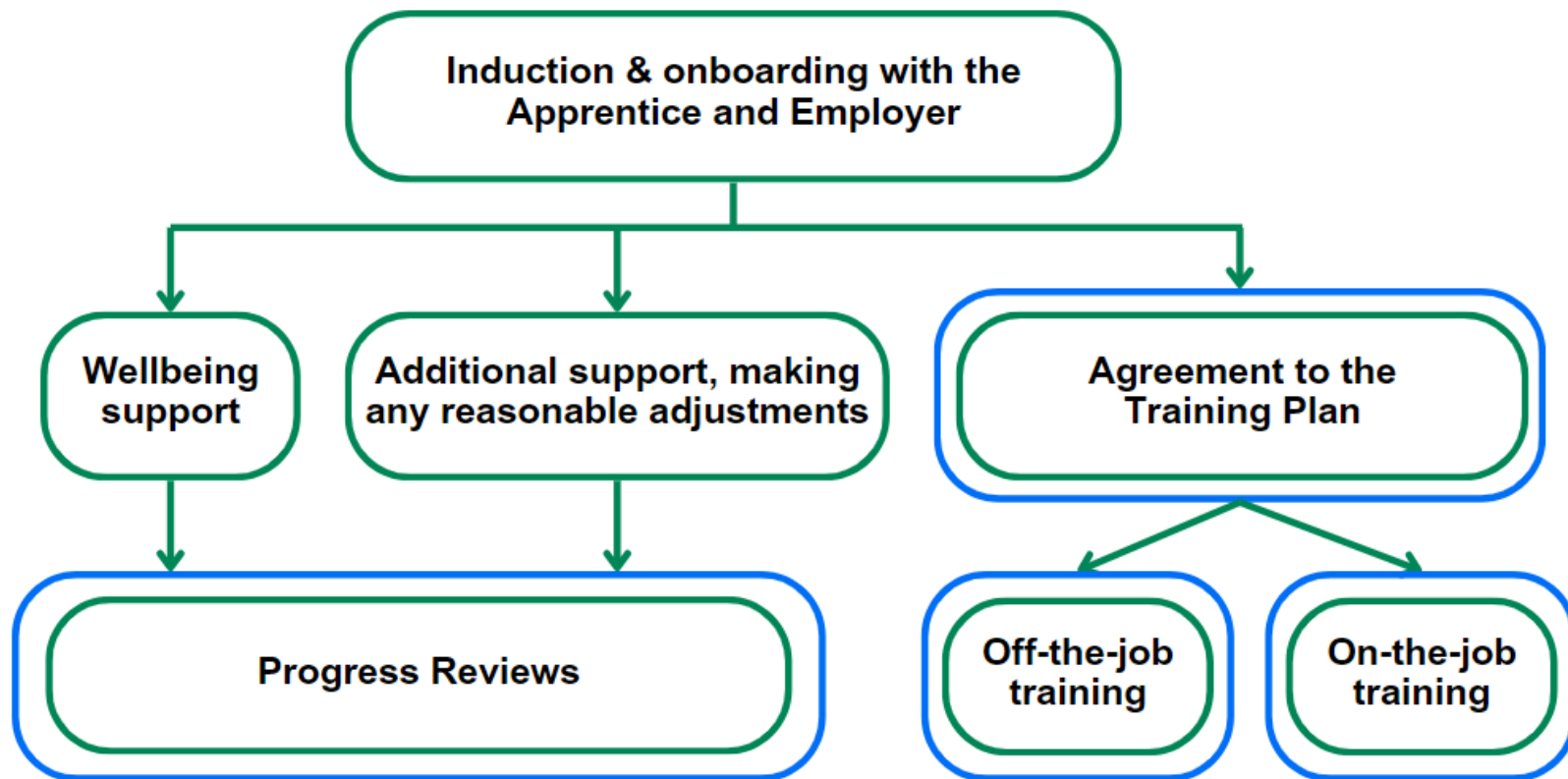


## Reflections and actions

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## Delivery

There's a lot of activity that happens during the delivery or on-programme phase of an apprenticeship, not least the delivery of the training, learning and on-programme assessment. The provider will want to make sure the onboarding and induction phase is carried out efficiently and effectively to ensure the apprentice and employer get off to the very best start on their programme. Throughout the delivery period, all three parties (employer, apprentice, and provider) will be contributing to the delivery of on and off-the-job training and regular reviews.



## **Induction and onboarding with Apprentice and Employer**

- Agree and sign any relevant paperwork
- Establish relationships and learn about one another
- Set expectations/standards for success
- Monitor engagement in the first 42 days
- Confirm the training plan is accurate (this leads you to the 'Agreement to the Training Plan' stage)
- Induction to the training programme
- Confirm tripartite reviews
- Confirm additional support is appropriate (this leads you to the 'Additional support and reasonable adjustments' stage)
- Induction to employer/job role
- Explain off-the-job training and recording
- Induction on safeguarding, welfare/wellbeing policies etc (this leads you to the 'Wellbeing support' stage)
- Careers Advice and Guidance

## **Agreement to the Training Plan**

The training provider will work together with the business to design the programme. The apprentice will undergo an initial assessment, and this will inform the training plan for the individual apprentice.

## **Progress Reviews**

The Apprentice & Line Manager conduct the apprentice's progress review every 6-12 weeks. This will allow the employer & training provider to assess the apprentice's development against the training plan provide constructive feedback and identify areas for improvement & opportunities for further development, ultimately contributing to the apprentice's success.

## **Off-the-job training**

It is a legal requirement for apprentices to undertake training within their usual contracted and paid hours. This must be supported. This is the time during which you will be teaching/facilitating the learning of the apprentice.

## **On-the-job training**

As part of the programme design and training plan, there will likely be elements which the apprentice will learn from the business (on the job).

## Reflections and actions

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## Assessment

The provider should work closely with the employer to ensure that the apprentice is prepared for and understands the end-point assessment process. This includes:

### **Gateway Planning**

Including Providing support and guidance to the apprentice, addressing any areas of weakness or concern, and ensuring they are well-equipped to demonstrate their KSBs. Scheduling endpoint assessments.

### **Contract with EPAO**

The provider is responsible for contracting with the chosen End-Point Assessment Organisation and leading the relationship with them.

### **Gateway Sign off**

This involves you and the employer verifying the apprentice has successfully met the required standards and competencies set by the apprenticeship standard and is competent within the workplace. This confirms their readiness to progress to their End Point Assessment.

### **Manage EPAO and post-assessment activity**

Including arrangements for EPA, submission of evidence, feedback etc.

## Reflections and actions

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## Next Steps

Providers should consider what actions take place upon apprentice completion, as well as giving and collating final feedback this is an ideal time to work with the employer to celebrate the collective success of the apprentice and identify opportunities for further apprenticeship delivery/repeat business.

### **Employer & Provider - Celebrate success**

Celebrating an apprentice's success not only recognises their hard work, dedication, and achievements but also boosts their confidence, and motivation. Where appropriate capture case studies and or engage with local and or national award celebrations.

### **Employer & Provider - Identify opportunities for further career development**

Is there a progression route for the apprentice following the completion of their apprenticeship?

### **Provider – Re-engage**

Is there an opportunity to re-engage the business for another apprentice?

## Reflections and actions

Click or tap here to enter text.

## Support and resources

- Finding an apprenticeship provider - [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/choose-training-provider](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/choose-training-provider)
- Apprenticeship agreement: template - [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-agreement-template)
- Working effectively with employers checklist - [www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Working-effectively-with-employers.pdf](http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Working-effectively-with-employers.pdf)

A wide range of CPD is available for staff across your organisation. This CPD has been specifically developed for apprenticeship providers, to help apprentices stay on programme and achieve their potential. Please do make use of this support and pass this information on to colleagues.

Support is available for:

- Delivery staff
- Managers
- Support staff
- Early Years
- Leaders

[Follow this link for the full selection of events or visit https://learning.etfoundation.co.uk/catalog](https://learning.etfoundation.co.uk/catalog)

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