



Apprenticeship Continuity Plan

Purpose

This plan has been developed to reflect the principles detailed in our Disaster Recovery Plan and the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Funding Rules. This plan is designed to prepare SR Apprenticeships and provide assurance that we have considered a wide range of risks that could impact learners' ability to successfully undertake or complete their programmes and that we have contingency plans in place to eliminate, mitigate or manage these risks. The plan considers those incidents that will have a significant impact on the operation of our Apprenticeship provision following a major crisis or disaster or an event, and which creates the need for short-term closure or suspension of activity.

Policy Aim

The Apprenticeship Continuity Plan applies to all apprenticeship training that is provided by SR Apprenticeships. All training is delivered at the employer's premises; however learner records are held and managed by SR Apprenticeships at all times. The scope includes all stakeholders, directors, tutors and learners.

Continuity of learning is the continuation of education in the event of a prolonged company closure. It is a critical component of emergency management, as it promotes the continuation of teaching and learning despite circumstances that interrupt normal attendance for one or more learners.

All SR Apprenticeships staff and apprentices are asked to ensure that they read and understand the contents of this plan and that they remain aware of its contents in order to act and respond accordingly.

SR Apprenticeships maintains a register of issue of Company policies to all staff and acknowledgment by all staff that the policy has been received including updates resulting from any policy review. Company policies and procedures forms a key part of all new staff induction.

Programme Structure

SR Apprenticeships offers a range of approaches to the delivery of apprenticeship training programmes, in order to best address the unique needs of each employer and their learners. Some programmes have components that are delivered online, at employer's locations or at alternate premises. For this reason, these continuity plans consider a wide range of arrangements that may be drawn on to address the needs of individual employers and their learners, should contingency arrangements need to be implemented.

In turn, SR Apprenticeships acknowledges that individual learners will be affected in different ways if any of the risks detailed in this plan materialise. For this reason, the Apprenticeships team will communicate directly with learners and their employers where additional support, advice or guidance is required and will work with any learners who have approved reasonable adjustments or identified additional needs to ensure actions and options meet their individual requirements.

Continuity of study

SR Apprenticeships will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruptions to learners' studies by:

- Re-scheduling any affected components of study in agreement with learners and employers
- Delivering a modified version of the same course or access to the same course via a different mode of study if required and an appropriate solution to the disruption (e.g. distance learning)
- Providing assistance to affected learners to move to a new training location for sessions that would have been on a pre-arranged site or relocating sessions to employers' premises when appropriate
- Where training sessions were scheduled to be onsite at the employer's premises, arranging to move tutors to alternate locations provided by the employer

Tools to support continuity of learning

Our apprenticeship training is delivered through a blended approach and this provides a level of flexibility and a number of options to ensure the relevant training continue to be delivered to our learners.

The methods of training include face to face delivery, virtual, directed and supervised learning activities, and webinars, online-coaching, telephone coaching, set reading and feedback, work-based learning assignments and work-based assessments.

The following list also includes a range of tools and methods for facilitating distance learning, including those with no, some, or great levels of technological sophistication.

- **Instructional Packs.** In the event of a prolonged closure absence, tutors and assessors can prepare hard copy instructional packs that learners may use at home to continue their learning. Hard copy pack may include worksheets; calendars or schedules of work to be completed; directions for homework, projects, or written assignments; excerpts from textbooks or other reading materials; and sample assessments.
We may take two different approaches when developing packs:
 - Generic packs that can be used at any point that promote learning according to level and subject-specific standards, or
 - Unit-specific packs that are based on the planned curriculum and integrate with the learners' current learning at their workplace or off the job training.
- **Tutor and assessor Check-ins and Tutorials:** A variety of technologies (telephone, email, web conferencing, VLE) can be used to facilitate one-to-one, or teacher-and class interaction or lesson delivery between learners and tutors/assessors
- **Telephone and Video Calling.** Tutors and assessors can hold group and individual discussions, or teach lessons, with learners in a secure and private setting.
- **Email.** Use existing email service provider to send, receive, and track messages. In the event this service provider is not operating, response teams can use other online systems that all provide quick distribution of multimedia content to a mass audience. There are a variety of free email services providers on the Web, including Google, Yahoo, and Hotmail, most of which support document sharing, scheduling and web chats.

- **Web Conferencing.** A variety of free web conferencing services are available on the internet. SR Apprenticeships will consider setting up an account for use in cases of emergency, when distance learning methods are needed, and may want to conduct workshops or learning sessions using one of these services for ease of use in the event of an emergency.
- **Social Media.** Many learners, parents, and staff use social media on a daily basis, but it can also serve as a vehicle to send announcements about lessons, staff absences, and other information related to continuity of learning. Social media can be useful during both short- and long-term closures, particularly because they are easy to access on different devices, including mobile phones, tablets, and computers.
- **Access to resources and portfolios.** All our apprenticeship programmes and corresponding learner work and portfolios are accessible via the Virtual Learning Environment which remains available to learners via several media forms.
- **Ensuring Accessibility.** Not all learners may have access to the Internet, phone lines, TV or radio at the same time, or at all, during a prolonged closure or absence. Therefore, it is important to offer a variety of methods of distance learning. SR Apprenticeships will abide by the Disability Act and ensure materials will be provided in alternative formats, when necessary.

Travel

Learners are required to make their own arrangements to attend their place of work and study. Where a change of location of study is required for contingency reasons, SR Apprenticeships would seek to provide an alternate location that is as close as practicable to the original place of study. Where alternate arrangements have to be made that could not easily be accessed by the usual forms of transport, SR Apprenticeships will work with the employer to consider the nature and impact of alternate transport arrangements on individual learners and agree an appropriate solution.

SR Apprenticeships recognise the primary source of transportation for its remote staff is via car. As such, expenses are paid to contribute towards the cost of fuel and general upkeep of the vehicle to enable staff to maintain this source of transport. Staff, learners, partners and suppliers use the SR Apprenticeships parking facilities as necessary, however should this become unavailable; there is alternative parking facilities offsite directly next to the building. As an alternative, SR Apprenticeships recommends the use of public transport such as buses or trains, and private transport such as taxis or car sharing where appropriate.

All staff are issued with portable IT equipment to enable them to work remotely, negating the need to travel in the event of an emergency. Remote visits can be completed using mobile phone, email and software such as Skype.

All staff are required to have appropriate insurance and breakdown cover, which is monitored annually, to ensure that in the event of an incident, suitable support is available.

Redundancy

In line with ESFA Apprenticeship Funding rules 'Redundancy' 251.1, there may be circumstances where, if an learner is made redundant, SR Apprenticeships must make reasonable efforts to find the learner a new employer. In addition to our Apprenticeship's team, we have a specialist SR Apprenticeships recruitment service that is at hand to assist learners with identifying career opportunities as well as preparing them to apply for positions.

SR Apprenticeships also has well established relationships with a large number of levy employers working across varying sectors. Where appropriate, these relationships can be leveraged to identify

opportunities for displaced learners. While assisting to secure alternate roles for learners who have been made redundant, our recruitment service can provide assistance in updating CVs, interview techniques and personal branding so that learners are well positioned to secure alternate roles when they become available.

Risks of continuity of study

SR Apprenticeships ceases to operate:

Where viable, SR Apprenticeships will implement contingency plans which will allow existing learners to continue to complete their current programmes of study. The measures SR Apprenticeships has in place to manage this risk means the likelihood of an imminent closure of SR Apprenticeships is low. SR Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

- Financial reserves that would allow us to continue to operate for a suitable duration
- Business plans that are reviewed by our Investors, Managing Director and Business Heads Group
- Annual external auditing of finances that provides independent assurance of our business's performance and forecasts
- Engagement of legal and financial advisors

Where viable, SR Apprenticeships will maintain key academic and administrative staff to allow current learners to complete their programmes of study via the enrolled mode and timeframe. Where necessary, following consultation with employers and their learners, learners may be transferred to an SR Apprenticeships' run distance learning mode of study for the same programme, with SR Apprenticeships drawing on its existing experience and expertise in delivering our programmes via a distance learning mode of study.

Failure to secure or maintain Registered Training Provider status

In the event of termination of agreement with the ESFA as a result of SR Apprenticeships being removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and therefore becoming unable to continue the delivery of apprenticeship programme, SR Apprenticeships will engage with the ESFA to make arrangements for effective exit to minimise the disruption to both learners and employers.

The detail of all apprentices, their apprenticeship programme, progress made, registration with awarding organisations and evidence that is required to contribute towards successful completion of their end point assessment would be made readily available.

The primary goal of SR Apprenticeships is to see every apprentice through to successful completion of their apprenticeship standard and every effort would be made under such circumstances to enable this to happen.

Withdrawal of programmes or modules

SR Apprenticeships might make a strategic decision to withdraw a programme or module of study if it has been superseded by a new programme or module, if it cannot be resourced, the content is no longer fit for purpose or current, or if insufficient numbers can be achieved.

The ongoing viability of programmes is monitored via the annual monitoring and quality assurance processes of SR Apprenticeships. As programme closure is a strategic, planned event with the process defined in operational policies, the risk is considered low.

SR Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

- Withdrawal of Programme and Module policy where every effort must be made to ensure that stakeholders are consulted, not disadvantaged in any way, have every opportunity to complete any programmes or modules they have been registered for or that suitable arrangements are made where the withdrawal of a programme or module is required;
- A process of consultation with those affected including employers and learners and with delivery staff on the potential impact of withdrawal of programmes and modules;
- A tested ability to successfully manage a programme teach-out process

The withdrawal of programmes or modules is managed via SR Apprenticeships' Withdrawal of Programme and Module policy that ensures the impact of any proposal is assessed and managed and that key stakeholders are consulted as a core part of the process.

Where viable, a teach-out process will be proposed where current learners would be given the opportunity to complete their current programme of study. The timing of the implementation of any proposed withdrawal would also consider prospective learners and where in the recruitment cycle they were.

All proposals would be considered by SR Apprenticeships' Board of Directors and could not be implemented without Board oversight and approval of the teach-out and impact management proposal.

Subcontracting

All subcontract arrangements are considered carefully so that in the event of a subcontractor being unable to fulfil their full obligations under the terms of the contract:

- The apprenticeship arrangements can be modified to encompass delivery directly in-company, initially on a short-term basis and then possibly into the future. SR Apprenticeships already has a range of associate assessors on board which could be utilised or the base broadened quickly;
- Alternative organisations that may be approached that have already been through the initial desk-based quality checks, for example through OFSTED report analysis and local reputation checks.

An analysis would be conducted to ensure an on-boarding process that will ensure a non-stop process flow, so not to disadvantage the learner and employer.

Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified delivery staff

The impact of an inability to recruit suitably qualified staff is low given our programme specialties are not niche and that SR Apprenticeship has both an employed delivery team and network of experienced associate staff to draw on for temporary cover while permanent replacement staff are secured.

SR Apprenticeships manages this risk by having in place:

- A Talent Management Strategy and Succession planning;
- A Remuneration and Nominations Committee who regularly reviews pay and benefit packages to ensure that SR Apprenticeships is positioned well to recruit and retain suitably skilled staff;
- Regular systems of appraisal and career development opportunities;
- SR Apprenticeships will seek to fill gaps in staffing as quickly as possible by initially drawing on suitably skilled and experienced temporary staff;

- Where necessary, SR Apprenticeships will draw on the network of associates who have worked for SR Apprenticeships in recent years to undertake contract roles until permanent members of staff can be recruited.

IT infrastructure

SR Apprenticeships uses an IT Contractor to maintain its IT infrastructure and has in place processes and protocols for the ongoing monitoring and management of risks to our systems such as malicious attacks or hacking but remains as vulnerable to these and new threats as other organisations.

SR Apprenticeships manages these risks to business critical systems and the back-up and restoration of data by having in place:

- Full database and system replication including student virtual learning environments (VLE);
- Firewall protection and a skilled and up-to-date team of IT specialists who monitor system risks and maintenance;
- Regular Business Continuity testing to ensure business systems can be supported from one or other site;

SR Apprenticeships will implement its business continuity plans to reinstate IT services as soon as possible. Remote classes or workshops that were scheduled during a system outage will be rescheduled and recordings and/or additional support material provided for learners who were unable to attend sessions due to an SR Apprenticeships' IT system issue.

System enabled contingencies daily back-up of our business-critical systems ensures restoration of data can be achieved. We use OneFile and PICS for organisational collaboration and storing of relevant programme data which is also backed up every 24-hour.

Communication

SR Apprenticeships hold both the work and personal contact details of learners on our secure information systems and have learner's calling tree contingencies. In addition, we hold contact details for the learner's employer organisations including the teams responsible for overseeing apprenticeship programmes and the line managers of learners who can enact their internal emergency contact procedures.

Through our training systems and available communication channels we have the following options to communicate with SR Apprenticeships Training staff and our learners: our VLE, email, by telephone and by our designated Twitter and 'Facebook' groups. We also have the employer contact details for each learner involved in our apprenticeship programmes. We use OneFile and PICS for internal, organisational collaboration and storing of relevant programme data which is also backed up every 24-hours and can be accessed remotely as well as on-site.

Roles and responsibilities

Key emergency contacts and functional responsibilities (these include staff responsible for managing any crisis between the centre and the learner. The ESFA will be informed of any break in learning.

Nadine Hughes, Operations Director

- Overall responsibility for the continuity of apprenticeship training

- Incident Officer
- Chair Crisis Team meetings
- Co-ordination of the response
- Liaise with Prime Funding organisations (where appropriate)
- Liaise with employers, partner providers, Awarding Bodies (where appropriate)
- Allocate resources
- Responsible for external liaison
- Be prepared to answer questions from the media

Gary Petley, MI, Audit and Compliance Manager

- Responsibility for managing disruption in the provision of administrative services, assessment arrangements and physical premises
- Meet and greet emergency services as they arrive, with a floor plan of the building if necessary.
- Ensure all significant occurrences and decisions are recorded, together with reasons for decisions made.
- Follow up communication

Kevin Foreman, Operations Manager

- Responsibility for dealing with issues relating to learners' work placement and the ongoing checks of insurance and health and safety
- Responsibility for dealing with issues associated with learners' apprenticeship training and timely progression
- Responsibility for dealing with issues relating to personal and pastoral support
- Agree key information to be given to apprentices by tutors and assessors

In case of a significant incident emergency, various contact details are available in the learner and employee handbooks. These include:

SR Apprenticeships Head Office: 0194920976

Operations Director: Nadine Hughes, 07833583163 or Nadine.hughes@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Gemma Brown, 07866491210 or safeguarding@sr-apprenticeships.co.uk

ESFA Service desk contact information Telephone: 0370 2670001 or [ESFA Contact Form](#)

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