

RPA



Continuing in learning: information for EMPLOYERS in 2015

RPA FROM SUMMER 2015

From summer 2015, RPA is all about engaging in education or training until your 18th birthday.

RPA stands for **Raising the Participation Age**. The Government has raised the age at which young people need to continue in education or training. It **isn't about raising the school leaving age** and it **doesn't mean you can't get a job**. It's all about **continuing in learning** – and you have lots of choice about how to do this in the way that suits you best.



WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Most 16 or 17 year olds already continue in some form of education or training so RPA is not a big change for them.

But **ALL** young people should have the chance to develop the skills you need for adult life. Continuing in learning will give them as much chance as possible to get the qualifications, the knowledge and the practical skills they need to help them succeed. This is true whether you are thinking of going into further or higher education, going for an Apprenticeship, or looking for a job. There is evidence that getting qualifications at this age can help you earn more over your whole lifetime – for example young people with two or more A Levels earn around 14% more than those without. Research has also suggested that, over the course of their career, those with an Apprenticeship earn £100,000 more than those without.

WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S OPTIONS?

■ Studying full-time

This could be A Levels or other further education courses, and it could mean staying at the same school if it offers post-16 education, or moving to another school or college.

■ An Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships give young people the chance to train for an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) while earning a wage and learning the skills for a particular type of job. The training part of an Apprenticeship means that they would be continuing in learning which is the idea behind RPA.

■ Study Programme

If a young person is not yet sure about continuing in full-time studying or going for an Apprenticeship, the new Study Programme may be their best option to move forward. If they are 16 or 17, they would have a mixed programme with at least one significant qualification, an internship or other sort of workplace experience, continued study of English and maths towards a good GCSE grade, and study skills and other development opportunities.

■ Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training

RPA still means young people can choose to get a job or do volunteering if they decide that is the best option for them. "Full-time" means for 20 or more hours each week. But they would have to continue in "accredited learning" alongside their employment or volunteering – this could be in work-based learning or by attending college as well as going to work. The training needs to be for at least 280 hours over a whole year. This is equivalent to about a day each week but it can be arranged flexibly to suit the young person and their employer or the place where they are volunteering.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW AS AN EMPLOYER?

If you are an employer of Apprentices, there are no changes because Apprenticeships already count as a valid route for young people to continue learning.

If you employ other 16 and 17 year olds, there are no **new** legal duties on you but the young people concerned will need to be taking part in some form of suitable learning or training alongside their employment. We encourage you as a responsible employer to consider how best you can support any 16 or 17 year old employees to access the training they are required to take. This could be through considering how their working hours can allow them to attend their training, or taking time to discuss how their training could match your business needs – beneficial to you as well as the young people.

Whether or not you already employ any young people, or have any Apprentices, could YOU offer any form of work experience or tasters to young people in Birmingham? This could be invaluable in helping shape a future workforce which has a meaningful idea of what work is like as well as academic and/or vocational qualifications.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

The Statutory Guidance for Local Authority is available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training

Information about Apprenticeships is available from www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-employment-and-training

For more information on further education and skills and its link to business, please visit the **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills** website at www.bis.gov.uk/policies/furthereducation-skills

Birmingham City Council email for queries: rpa@birmingham.gov.uk

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