

HOW TO PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENTS

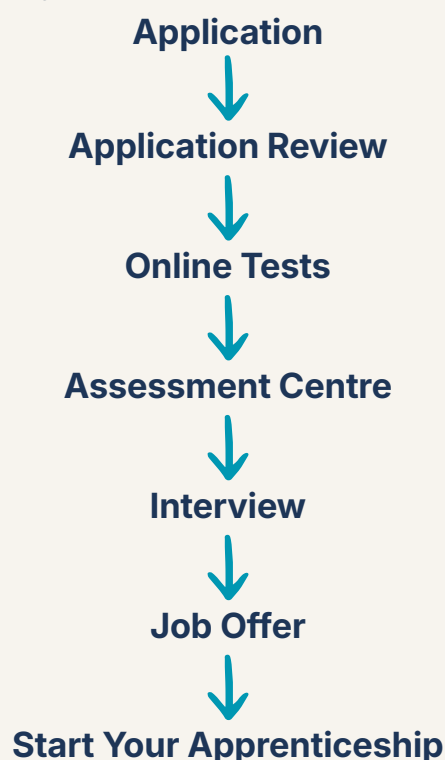
Apprenticeship recruitment often includes **more than just a single interview**. Employers use different methods to understand your skills, attitude, and potential. Knowing what to expect helps you feel calm and confident.

HOW EMPLOYERS ASSESS

Recruitment activity:		What employers are looking for:
Application Form	→	Attention to detail, motivation and communication
Group Exercise	→	Teamwork, listening and influencing
Presentation	→	Confidence and communication
Role Play	→	Judgement, empathy and professionalism
Psychometric Test	→	Reasoning ability and potential
Interview	→	Motivation, transferable skills and attitude

UNDERSTANDING THE RECRUITMENT JOURNEY

Every employer has a slightly different recruitment process, but many apprenticeship applications follow a similar journey.



1

FORMAL 1-TO-1 INTERVIEW

What it is:

A traditional interview with one manager or recruiter asking questions.

What they look for:

1. Communication skills
2. Motivation
3. Transferable skills
4. Understanding of the role

HOW TO PREPARE:

- Practise common questions (e.g. "Tell me about yourself")
- Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- Give real examples from school, college, Post 16 provider or life



**QUICK
TIPS**

Speak clearly and don't rush your answers - it's okay to think first.

2

PANEL INTERVIEW

What it is:

More than one interviewer (e.g. manager, HR, team member).

What they look for:

1. Communication skills
2. Motivation
3. Transferable skills
4. Understanding of the role

HOW TO PREPARE:

- Make eye contact with everyone, not just one person
- Stay calm and take your time answering
- Treat it like a conversation, not a test



**QUICK
TIPS**

Don't let the number of people intimidate you, they are all there to get to know you and learn more about you.

If you're unsure where to direct your eye contact, focus mainly on the person asking the question, while naturally glancing around the rest of the panel to stay inclusive and engaged.

3 ASSESSMENT CENTRES

Some employers may use assessment activities as part of the apprenticeship recruitment process. This helps them see how you approach tasks and whether you are a suitable fit for the role.

What it is:

A group session with tasks, activities, and sometimes interviews.

What they look for:

1. Teamwork
2. Communication
3. Leadership potential
4. How you behave, not just what you say

HOW TO PREPARE:

- Be respectful and listen to others
- Contribute ideas, but don't dominate
- Stay positive even if tasks are challenging

THINGS YOU MAY DO:

Group exercises

Problem-solving tasks

Psychometric Testing

Short presentations

Role plays

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Some employers use an assessment centre as part of their apprenticeship recruitment process. Rather than meeting you in one interview, employers give you the opportunity to complete a range of activities designed to show your skills, behaviours and potential.

REMEMBER

Assessment centres are not about being perfect. They are designed to help employers understand how you work with other people, solve problems and communicate in different situations. Everyone attending is likely to be nervous, so try to stay calm, be yourself and enjoy the experience.



A TYPICAL ASSESSMENT CENTRE

Every employer is different, but your day might look something like this:

09:00 - Registration and welcome

09:30 - Employer introduction

10:00 - Group exercise

11:00 - Break

11:15 - Presentation or role play

12:00 - Psychometric tests

1:00 - Interview

2:00 - Questions and finish

REMEMBER:

Not every employer will use every activity. Some assessment centres may last only a couple of hours, while others may take most of the day.

QUICK
TIPS

ASSESSORS WANT TO SEE:



Listening carefully to others



Problem-solving



Sharing ideas respectfully



Willingness to learn



Working as part of a team



Respect for different opinions



Positive communication



Confidence to contribute

Helping your team succeed is often more important than trying to stand out on your own.

QUICK
TIPS

INTRODUCTION TO GROUP TASKS:

Group tasks give you the opportunity to demonstrate how you communicate, collaborate and solve problems as part of a team. You'll be encouraged to share ideas, listen to others and work together towards a shared outcome.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID:

Talking over other people



Staying completely silent



Trying to lead every activity



Giving up if something feels difficult



Focusing on being "right"



INSTEAD:

Listen first and then contribute



Share your ideas when you have something useful to add



Encourage everyone to take part



Stay positive and keep trying



Employers are usually interested in how you think, not just your final answer



Remember people's names if you can.

Simple comments like: *"That's a good idea, Sam."* show teamwork and active listening.



**QUICK
TIPS**

GROUP EXERCISE EXAMPLE:

Imagine your team has been given **£10,000** to improve your local community.

YOUR TASK:

- Discuss the options as a group
- Decide which three projects should receive funding
- Be prepared to explain the reasons for your decisions
- You do not need to spend the full £10,000, but you should consider how your choices provide the greatest benefit to the community

CHOOSE FROM:

New sports equipment

Community garden

Outdoor gym

Youth wellbeing project

New bus shelter

Technology for local schools

TIME AVAILABLE:

- 20 minute discussion
- 3 minutes feedback

At the end of the exercise, one member of your team should present your decisions and explain:

- Which three projects you selected
- Why they were chosen
- How they will benefit the community

ASSESSORS MAY OBSERVE:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Collaboration and teamwork | • Active listening |
| • Respect for different viewpoints | • Ability to influence others constructively |
| • Problem-solving and decision-making | • Leadership and facilitation |
| • Time management | • Ability to reach consensus |

REMEMBER:

There is no perfect answer.

The discussion is often more important than the decision.



**QUICK
TIPS**



ONLINE / VIDEO INTERVIEW

What it is:

Interview done via video call or recorded answers.

What they look for:

1. Professionalism on camera
2. Clear communication
3. Preparation



**QUICK
TIPS**

HOW TO PREPARE:

- Dress smartly (even at home)
- Check your camera, lighting, and sound
- Look at the camera, not the screen

Practise speaking out loud before recording, it helps confidence massively.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- You may be given a set amount of time to prepare before each question
- You may only have one opportunity to record your answer, depending on the platform being used
- Questions may cover your experience, interests, strengths and how you would approach different situations
- You may not be able to see the interviewer while answering, so speaking naturally and confidently is important

REMEMBER:

- Take your time. A short pause before answering is completely fine.
- Don't aim for perfect answers. We want to hear your genuine thoughts and personality
- Use real examples from school, college, work, hobbies, volunteering or everyday life
- Practise, but don't memorise. Your answers should feel natural rather than rehearsed
- If you make a mistake, keep going. One small stumble won't define your interview



**QUICK
TIPS**

5 INFORMAL INTERVIEW / CHAT

What it is:

A relaxed conversation, sometimes in a workplace setting.

What they look for:

1. Personality
2. Interest in the role
3. Cultural fit



QUICK TIPS

Even though it feels casual, you are still being assessed.

HOW TO PREPARE:

- Be friendly and engaged
- Ask questions about the job
- Show enthusiasm

No matter the interview type, you must remember:

- **Employers are not trying to "catch you out"**
- **They want to see your potential, not perfection**
- **Transferable skills matter just as much as experience**
- **Preparation = confidence**

6 WORK TRIALS

Some employers may use work trials or assessment activities as part of the apprenticeship recruitment process. This helps them see how you approach tasks and whether you are a good fit for the role.

What is it?

A short period where you complete real or simulated tasks related to the job.

What they look for:

- See how you handle real workplace tasks
- Understand your attitude and work ethic
- Check how you work as part of a team
- Assess your communication and problem-solving skills

You might be asked to:

- Complete practical tasks linked to the job
- Work with other applicants in a real life group activity
- Take part in a short skills assessment on the job
- Answer questions about how you would handle situations at work



HOW TO PREPARE:

- Be on time and dress appropriately for the role
- Listen carefully to instructions
- Ask questions if you are unsure
- Work well with others and show teamwork
- Stay positive, even if tasks feel challenging
- Ensure phone ringer is silent and notifications are switched off during the work trial

REMEMBER:

Employers are not expecting perfection - they are looking for potential. Show enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and a positive attitude.

7 PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

What is it?

Structured assessments used by employers to understand how you think, behave, and solve problems.

What they look for:

Employers use psychometric tests to:

- Identify potential beyond grades or CV experience
- Compare candidates fairly using standardised measures
- Predict how someone might perform in training and the workplace
- Assess suitability for specific roles or working environments
- Reduce unconscious bias in recruitment decisions

WHY?

Psychometric tests are particularly useful where an individual may have limited work experience. Many employers also use psychometric tests during recruitment. These are designed to understand how you think, solve problems and make decisions.

TYPES OF PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS:



Numerical reasoning



Verbal reasoning



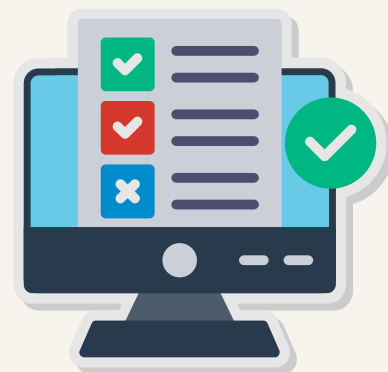
Situational judgement tests (SJTs)



Aptitude (or ability) tests



Personality questionnaires



**QUICK
TIPS**

- Keep calm and manage your time carefully
- Don't spend too long on any one question
- If unsure, make your best reasoned choice and move on
- Use elimination techniques where appropriate
- Ensure you are in a quiet environment with a stable internet connection
- Avoid overthinking questions or trying to second guess what assessors want. Give genuine, consistent responses



Psychometric tests are not designed to trick you. They are used to give employers a fairer and more consistent picture of your strengths and working style. With practice and preparation, most candidates become more comfortable with them over time.



Remember... Employers are choosing someone they can train and grow with the company, not someone who already knows everything.



Numerical Reasoning

Example question:

A warehouse packs 240 parcels each day. 60% are dispatched before midday. How many parcels are dispatched before midday?

A. 96

B. 120

C. 144



D. 180

Working out: $60\% \times 240 = 144$

Verbal Reasoning

Read the statement:

"All apprentices attend weekly training sessions."

Now answer the question:

Tom is an apprentice.

Tom attends weekly training sessions.

True



False

Cannot say

REMEMBER:

Always base your answer only on the information provided.

Situational Judgement

Imagine this situation:

You are helping a customer when another customer becomes upset because they have been waiting.

A. Ignore them

B. Tell them to wait

C. Politely acknowledge them and seek support from a colleague if needed



D. Walk away

These questions help employers understand how you approach situations in the workplace.

Personality Questionnaires

Personality questionnaires are different from other psychometric tests.
There are no right or wrong answers.

Employers use them to understand:



Your preferred way of working



How you communicate



How you approach different situations

The best advice is simple...

Be honest.

Trying to guess the "correct" answer can give an inaccurate picture of who you are.

Here are some realistic examples of personality questionnaire items:



EXAMPLE ONE: AGREEMENT SCALE

"I enjoy taking the lead when working in a team."

Select one:

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Neither Agree no Disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly Disagree

☐

EXAMPLE TWO: WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR

"I prefer to plan tasks in advance rather than deal with issues as they arise."

Select one:

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Neither Agree no Disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly Disagree

☐



EXAMPLE THREE: INTERPERSONAL STYLE

"I am comfortable giving constructive feedback to others"

Select one:

Strongly Agree

☐

Agree

☐

Neither Agree nor Disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Strongly Disagree

☐

EXAMPLE FOUR: FORCED CHOICE

Which statement is most like you?

A. I enjoy analysing data and solving complex problems.

B. I enjoy building relationships and working with people

When completing a personality questionnaire:

- Read each statement carefully before answering
- Answer based on how you would naturally behave, not what you think sounds best.
- Try not to overthink your responses
- Some questions may seem similar or be worded differently, this is intentional
- There is no need to prepare specific answers in advance, the most important thing is to be honest and consistent

REMEMBER:

Every stage of the recruitment process gives you another opportunity to show your potential. One activity does not define your application. Prepare well, stay positive and be yourself.



QUICK
TIPS