



Vocational Training Services Care Sector Limited

Employer Handbook

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Dear Employer,

Welcome aboard!

We are delighted that you have chosen to support your employee(s) in achieving an apprenticeship with us.

Our mission is to provide high quality training and assessment to apprentices. This commitment is underpinned by our belief that equality of opportunity widens participation and is essential to employers and potential apprentices, whilst recognising that the quality and value of our training delivery is dependent on the qualifications, experience and on-going professional development of our own staff.

We pride ourselves on offering the highest quality support and opportunities to not only our customers, but also to our staff. We, of course, expect the highest standards of commitment from our apprentices, and in return we will provide a challenging and stimulating environment, a friendly and helpful workforce, and good learning opportunities.

We appreciate that as an employer of an apprentice, there will be certain documents and record keeping systems which we will ask you to complete. These are not always straightforward at first and so we have produced this handbook to help you. It contains lots of information about how the apprenticeship works, plus visual guides to help you navigate around your apprenticeship service account (DAS) and the Learning Assistant E Portfolio platform.

The tutor assigned to you will have explained how the programme will be run, but if you ever have any queries then feel free to contact our Marketing Executive, Elizabeth Richards on 01702 353557 and she will be able to answer any questions you may have.

On behalf of all the staff here, may I take this opportunity to once more welcome you to VTS and I hope you enjoy working with us.

Best wishes

Emma Henigan
Managing Director
emmahenigan@vts.ac.uk

A BRIEF HISTORY

To help you understand where we have come from, below is a brief history of VTS.

VTS was established in May 1994 and has always offered Health & Social Care and Children and Young People’s Care apprenticeships. We have tutors working across Essex to help individuals achieve apprenticeships, with a mixture of ‘on the job’ and ‘off the job’ training in their workplaces.

In recent years we have expanded our provision and in addition to the above, we now offer apprenticeships in Early Years Education, Adult Social Care, Healthcare Support Services, Management, and Teaching Assistant, all at various levels ranging from level 2 to level 5.

VTS operates from 2 sites; the head office/training centre is situated in Westcliff-on-Sea and a further training centre is located in Colchester. The Westcliff-on-Sea office is continuously manned through office hours, and the Colchester office is used for testing and 1:1 learning sessions only.

OUR TEAM



Our team of Tutors and Administrators with our Managing Director Emma Henigan (Centre right) our Westcliff Office in Essex.

CONTACT DETAILS

Vocational Training Services
Chalkwell Lawns
648-656 London Road
Westcliff on Sea
Essex
SS0 9HR

01702 353557

Vocational Training Services
Wellington House
90-92 Butt Road
Colchester
Essex
CO3 3DA

Office Opening Hours
09.00-17.00 Monday to Friday

The Westcliff office is open on a full-time basis, so please direct any communication, verbal or written to there in the first instance.

The Colchester Office is available to be used for testing and 1:1 learning sessions only.

THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

To help you understand the apprenticeship programme, below is some brief information:

Structure of an apprenticeship Standard

An apprenticeship standard is a job specific qualification designed by a group of employers with your industry experience. All apprenticeships will have a set of learning outcomes laid out clearly in a standard document supported by a detailed assessment plan.

Apprenticeships may or may not include formal industry qualifications. If you wish to see if there is a formal qualification included in the course your apprentice is enrolled on, please refer to their training plan. The training plan can also be used to see the full details of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that will be acquired during the apprenticeship course. At the end of the planned period of learning, your apprentice will undergo a formal independent End Point Assessment (EPA) to judge whether or not they have achieved all the learning outcomes and are occupationally competent.

The role of the Tutor (QA) and Internal Verifier (IQA)

Our tutor will meet with your apprentice regularly, usually during the working day either in your workplace or via video calling, to provide them with learning activities and guidance; they will also observe and assess your apprentice for competence.

The internal verifier will check the tutor has met required standards by verifying your apprentice's work on a regular basis.

The benefits of apprenticeship training

A highly skilled and motivated workforce will ensure the quality of service you give to your customers, enhancing your reputation within your industry and increasing demand for your services.

DELIVERY OF THE CURRICULUM

During enrolment, it will be established how the apprentice will build their portfolio of evidence; our default method is via the e-learning cloud-based platform 'Learning Assistant' (see page 12). For a few apprentices without access to a computer or smart device, this may not be appropriate, and we will offer a traditional paper-based approach.

Once the assigned tutor has completed the first stage of the enrolment process with the apprentice and the application has been received, you will be sent the curriculum plan for the course that the apprentice will follow. The plan may have been adapted to accommodate the apprentice's existing knowledge, and this is the stage in which you have the opportunity to contact us with any amendments or adjustments you wish to make to the curriculum plan in order to suit your needs as the employer.

Your apprentice will follow a study plan given to them at enrolment which will explain the topics covered each month and will also include the off the job activities which will need to be carried out. The study plan will also include the number of hours that need to be spent each month on the off the job training.

Your apprentice will be presented with an observation plan at enrolment which will clearly explain which observations will need to be planned to enable them to be competent. The tutor will discuss the off the job activities with your apprentice and the named contact in your workplace and will confirm each month with both parties that this has taken place. Your named contact will also have a log in to your apprentice's e-portfolio where the off-the-job hours are logged and will need to be acknowledged by yourselves. This includes all the activities and hours undertaken the previous month.

Your apprentice will be visited monthly for approximately 1 hour unless additional support is required, in which case it may be more frequently. During the visit, your apprentice's tutor will deliver learning for the next unit and will give your apprentice a lesson plan detailing all the tasks they need to do for that month. This can include answering questions, gathering work products, pre planning of verbal questioning or professional discussion and planning observations.

The plan for your apprentice may also include functional skills (mathematics and/or English) tasks to be carried out, if necessary, plus the off the job tasks they need to complete that month and any tasks which work towards their EPA. Functional skills (mathematics and/or English) are embedded into our curriculums (either at level 1 or 2 depending on the apprenticeship), however not all apprentices will need this, it will depend on their prior qualifications. Our tutors will use standard lesson plans but during the visit these will be adapted to ensure they meet your apprentice's individual needs and circumstances.

Enrichment Module

Throughout your apprentice’s course, they will complete an enrichment module. The apprentice will have their tutor’s guidance and support to complete the tasks set.

We are here to support your apprentice and enable them to complete their apprenticeship, however, it is also important to us that we equip your apprentice with the skills and knowledge to support them in the wider concept of well-being and at work.

The enrichment module will include:

Careers

Throughout the course, your apprentice will be asked to reflect on their career goals and qualifications. Their tutor will support them to reflect on these and to complete tasks which will identify if these have changed, and if the apprenticeship is helping them to reach their goals.

Maths and English Life Skills

These skills are important at work but also in everyday life; it can be surprising how many times in our lives we draw upon Maths and English skills. Every month, your apprentice’s tutor will support them to develop key Maths and English skills which they will use at work and at home.

Personal Safety

It is important to us that your apprentice understands how to keep themselves safe. They will watch key videos and complete relevant tasks to further support their understanding in the key areas. These are: Online Safety, Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Radicalisation, and Healthy Relationships.

Employability

Throughout your apprentice’s course, they will be guided and supported on how to write a CV and cover letter, professional conduct in the workplace, and their rights as an employee.

Progress Reviews

A formal progress review between your apprentice and the tutor will be conducted every 12 weeks where your apprentice’s progress will be evaluated and new targets will be set. The tutor will confirm that your apprentice is meeting the required deadlines and if there is any cause for concern, then measures can be put in place for future support and an action plan can be devised if necessary. Your input would be greatly appreciated, so please do attend if you are able to do so. The reviews will be prearranged between your apprentice and their tutor.

End Point Assessment

Once the practical teaching period has ended, your apprentice will then be ready for their EPA process to go ahead. This is known as ‘gateway’.

In order for your apprentice to proceed to their assessments, the following will need to have been achieved:

- The qualification needs to have been completed and been through our internal IQA process.
- Any further industry specific workplace requirements.
- A completed showcase portfolio.
- A completed gateway declaration signed by your apprentice, yourselves, and by us.

Additionally, for an apprentice aged 16-18 years old:

- Mathematics and/or English functional skills (if included in the curriculum) need to have been achieved and certificated. If the functional skills have not been embedded into the course, we will need to have the certificates for your apprentice's previously existing mathematics and English accredited qualifications.

Employer support and involvement

Apprenticeships work best when we all work together. We will plan all the necessary training and ask you to support your apprentice(s) as they progress. There will be certain guidelines to follow, but we will explain this and support you every step of the way.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

At VTS, we aim to provide an inclusive environment where we celebrate diversity and ensure equality of opportunity for everyone, regardless of their background, gender, age, culture, disability, sexual orientation, political beliefs or marital status. You can read our approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion by taking a look at the policy on our website.

OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING

Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for any apprenticeship and is embedded within an apprentice's course. Off-the-job training involves the teaching of new knowledge, skills, and behaviours that are directly relevant to the apprenticeship course. This training will be carried out during your apprentice's normal (contracted) working hours but must be separate to their normal job role. There may occasionally be exceptions, for example working in an evening or at the weekend for an apprentice that normally works Mon-Fri 9-5, however your apprentice must agree to this and be compensated for this time. The majority of the programme must not be delivered in this way.

The current required amount of off-the-job training is set at 6 hours per week (based on a 30-hour full-time apprentice). If your apprentice works less hours than 30 per week, their course length will be adjusted accordingly to ensure that the off-the-job requirement is met.

Your apprentice's assigned tutor will discuss and arrange within the study plans, the appropriate off-the-job activities that will be required each month. These will vary according to the specific course that your apprentice is enrolled on and will be adapted to the apprentice's work environment in order to be achievable and count towards their required knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Off-the-job training must deliver new skills that are directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard. It can include the following:

- The teaching of theory (e.g., lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning and manufacturer training).
- Practical training, shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and participation in competitions, where the activity has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan.
- Learning support and time spent writing assignments.

To find out more information, please visit the following website: [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

To find the most recent and updated apprenticeship funding rules, please visit the following website: [Apprenticeship funding rules - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Your apprentice's tutor will confirm with you and the apprentice each month that the required off-the-job training has taken place. You will also be asked to acknowledge these activities and hours spent training each month via the Learning Assistant portal (see page 12 for more details). This is very important for validity, as it replaces 'wet signatures' which we no longer use.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

During the monthly lessons, your apprentice's tutor will consider their Health and Wellbeing as this is the foundation of their ability to study, focus and learn.

If the apprentice does have any Health or Well-being concerns, their tutor will support them by putting personalised measures and strategies in place to help.

Should their tutor feel that more support is needed, they will refer the apprentice to our Mental Health Support Officer, Jade Hutchinson.

SAFEGUARDING

We have a duty of care for all our apprentices and ensure that we adhere to all safeguarding legislation and necessary requirements.

It is of utmost importance to us that all our learners feel safe and know how to report concerns. This is achieved through the completion of the enrichment module and within regular progress reviews.

All the VTS tutors are fully DBS checked and undertake an in-depth and up-to-date induction training session to identify apprentices who could be vulnerable, including potential signs of safeguarding issues. All tutors have yearly update training, and this includes PREVENT.

Our detailed safeguarding policy can be found on our website:
[Safeguarding - VTS - Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd](#)

Should you feel concerned about one of your apprentices please contact:
Rosie Hamilton (Designated Safeguarding Lead) - rosiehamilton@vts.ac.uk
Jade Hutchinson (Designated Safeguarding Officer) - jadehutchinson@vts.ac.uk
Charlotte Bunce (Designated Safeguarding Officer) - charlottebunce@vts.ac.uk

Or email safeguardingconcerns@vts.ac.uk

DIGITAL APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE ACCOUNT

All apprenticeships in England are managed through your apprenticeship service account via the government digital apprenticeship service (DAS). To enrol your apprentice onto a course, you will be required to set up an account. Below is the process to set up an account and enable us to complete the enrolment of your apprentice.

Before setting up your apprenticeship service account you'll need:

- An email address you have access to.
- The Government Gateway login for your organisation (or you can use the accounts office reference number and employer PAYE scheme reference number if your annual pay bill is less than £3 million and are therefore a non-levy organisation).
- Authority to add PAYE schemes to the account.
- Authority to accept the employer agreement on behalf of your organisation.

To setup a Digital Apprenticeship Service account:

Go to <https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index>

For screenshots of this process, please see Appendices 1-1.9

1. Follow the steps to create an account.
2. Please enter all of the details required.
3. You will then have been sent a code to the email address you supplied. Input the code and click 'continue'.
4. Once you have inputted your code, you will be taken to the next screen. Click on the option that says 'Use accounts office reference number and employer PAYE Scheme reference' if you are a non-levy organisation. If you are levy-paying, you must add your PAYE scheme using your government gateway log in.
5. You will then be able to check your organisation's information. If any of the information is incorrect, click 'Change' and edit the information. If all the information is correct, click 'These details are correct'.
6. You will be able to view your employer agreement. Click 'I'll view it now'.
7. Please ensure that you have read through the apprenticeship agreement.
8. You are then able to download the agreement by clicking on the 'Download the agreement' link. Once you have read the agreement, please click 'Yes, I accept the agreement' and then 'Continue'.

How to give Vocational Training Services the correct permissions on the Digital Apprenticeship Service account:

1. Once logged into your account, click on 'Your Training Providers'.
2. Click on 'Add Training Provider'.
 - Our UKPRN number is 10009450.
 - Our official training provider name is Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd.
3. Confirm these details and continue.
4. Return to the 'Your Training Provider' page.
5. Click on 'Change permissions'.
6. Click 'Yes' for both create cohort and recruitment.
7. Then click 'Set permissions'.

We will now be able to add apprenticeship details on your behalf. We will not have access to your account in any way and any changes we make will be agreed by you.

LEARNING ASSISTANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Learning Assistant is an online system that allows your apprentice to be able to complete parts of their course online. This reduces the paperwork involved and delivers a more tailored approach that results in immediate learning benefits.

Every apprentice will be granted access to their own account, and you will also be given access to a tailored version enabling you to acknowledge each monthly visit as well as off-the-job training. We ask you to complete these acknowledgements as they have replaced wet signatures, which we no longer collect.

When your apprentice has completed their monthly off-the-job training, their tutor will document this on their Learning Assistant account. The off-the-job training is required to be signed off by yourselves, and we call this the acknowledgements.

How to acknowledge on Learning Assistant:

For screenshots of this process, please see Appendices 2-2.4

1. When you login, you will see your home page, on the left-hand side you will see 'learners', please click here.
2. Click on the red 'Search Learners' button, and all of your apprentices will be listed.
3. Click on the apprentice you need to view.
4. There are two grey tabs underneath the apprentice's name. Click on 'contact'.
5. On the right side of the next screen underneath 'Info' you can see two green ticks. When you have logged in this will say 'Needs acknowledgement'. Click on 'Needs acknowledgement' and this will turn into a green tick.

If you wish to view your apprentice's lesson plan, this will be attached to the visit and can be accessed by clicking on the paperclip.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

How to make a complaint

We have a complaints process which is available on our website at www.vts.ac.uk. If your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction, ultimately you are entitled to contact the DFE via the apprenticeship helpline on 0800 015 0400.

Policies and Procedures

We have a comprehensive set of policies and procedures which are constantly updated due to legislation changes.

You can find the most up-to-date versions of these documents on our website <http://www.vts.ac.uk> This includes:

- Appeals procedure
- Customer complaints
- Safeguarding & Prevent Duty
- Confidentiality
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Information, advice & guidance
- British Values & Personal Development
- Health & safety
- Manual handling responsibilities for employers & employees
- Privacy & Data Protection

If you would like paper versions of any of these documents, please ask your apprentice's tutor, or alternatively contact the Westcliff Office.

Useful links & Numbers

At times we can all find ourselves in need of support or advice and it isn't always obvious where to go for help. We have compiled a list of useful numbers and links which you can find on our website at www.vts.ac.uk

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

To setup a Digital Apprenticeship Service account:

Go to <https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index>

Appendix 1.1

Please enter all the details required.

You will then have been sent a code to the email address you supplied. Input the code and click 'continue'. If you did not receive the code, click on the 'You can request another email' link.

Appendix 1.2

Appendix 1.3

Add a PAYE Scheme

We need you to add the PAYE scheme for your organisation.

You can do this by using either of the following:

- the Government Gateway login for your organisation
- your accounts office reference number for your organisation

▶ [Find your Government Gateway details](#)

▶ [Find your accounts office and PAYE scheme reference numbers](#)

You can add a PAYE scheme later if you need more time, we can still create your account for you.

- Use Government Gateway log in
- Use accounts office reference number and employer PAYE scheme reference. **You should only use this if your payroll for your organisation is under £3 million.**
- No, I'll do this later

! Before you continue, you must make sure you have authority to add PAYE schemes to the account for this organisation

Once you have inputted your code, you will be taken to the screen above. Click on the option that says, 'Use accounts office reference number and employer PAYE Scheme reference'.

Appendix 1.4

Accounts office reference number

For example, 123PA12345678

Employer PAYE scheme reference

For example, 123/AB12345

Continue

[Skip this step for now](#)

You will then need to add your Accounts office reference number, your employer PAYE scheme reference and then click 'Continue'.

Appendix 1.5

Check your details

Organisation	ACCOUNTANT LIMITED	Change
Address	9 High Street Coventry West Midlands CV1 2WT	
Companies House number	05072050	
PAYE scheme	001/AC00696	Change

These details are correct

You will then be taken to the screen above where you will be able to check your organisation’s information. If any of the information is incorrect, click ‘Change’ and edit the information. If all the information is correct, click ‘These details are correct’

Appendix 1.6

When do you want to view the employer agreement?

This agreement is between ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

- I'll view it now
- I'll view it later, after I've created an account
You can skip the agreement and view it when ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED is ready to get or reserve apprenticeship funding.

Continue

You will then be taken to the screen above where you will be able to view your employer agreement. Click ‘I’ll view it now’.

Appendix 1.7

The points to note and guidance notes are not part of the employer agreement.

Points to note

ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED must:

- only use the funding made available through their apprenticeship service account to train and assess apprentices
- have a contract with their training provider, so the provider can carry out apprenticeship training
- follow the apprenticeship funding rules

ESFA will:

- consider an application by ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED and / or their training provider for funding in accordance with the apprenticeship funding rules
- pay the funding directly to ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED's training provider (if they are eligible)

ESFA can:

- suspend payments, claim back funding or close ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED's account if they breach the terms of the agreement
- vary the terms of the agreement - if this happens, ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED can accept the new terms or close their account (by giving ESFA 30 days' notice)

Please ensure that you have read through the apprenticeship agreement.

Appendix 1.8

[Download the agreement](#) (PDF, 304KB)

! The agreement is legally binding. If ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED breaks it, we could close their account and stop them running apprenticeships.

Do you accept the agreement?

By accepting, you confirm that ACCOUNTANCY LIMITED agrees to the terms and conditions and is entering into a legally binding agreement with ESFA.

- Yes, I accept the agreement
- Not yet, I'll finish creating an account first

Continue

By scrolling down to the bottom of the page, you are then able to download the agreement by clicking on the 'Download the agreement' link.

Once you have read the agreement, please click 'Yes, I accept the agreement' and then click 'Continue'.

How to give Vocational Training Services the correct permissions on the Digital Apprenticeship Service account:

- Once logged into your account click on ‘Your Training Provider’.
- Click on ‘Add Training Provider’.
- Our UKPRN number is 10009450.
- Our official training provider name is Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd.
- Confirm these details and continue.
- Return to the ‘Your Training Provider’ page.
- Click on ‘Change permissions’.

Appendix 1.9

Set permissions

You can allow TRAINING PROVIDER LIMITED to do tasks on your behalf, this can include creating vacancies, reserving funding and adding apprentice records.

Permissions

Create cohort Yes No

Recruitment Yes No

[Set permissions](#)

You will then be taken to the screen above. Click ‘Yes’ for both create cohort and recruitment.

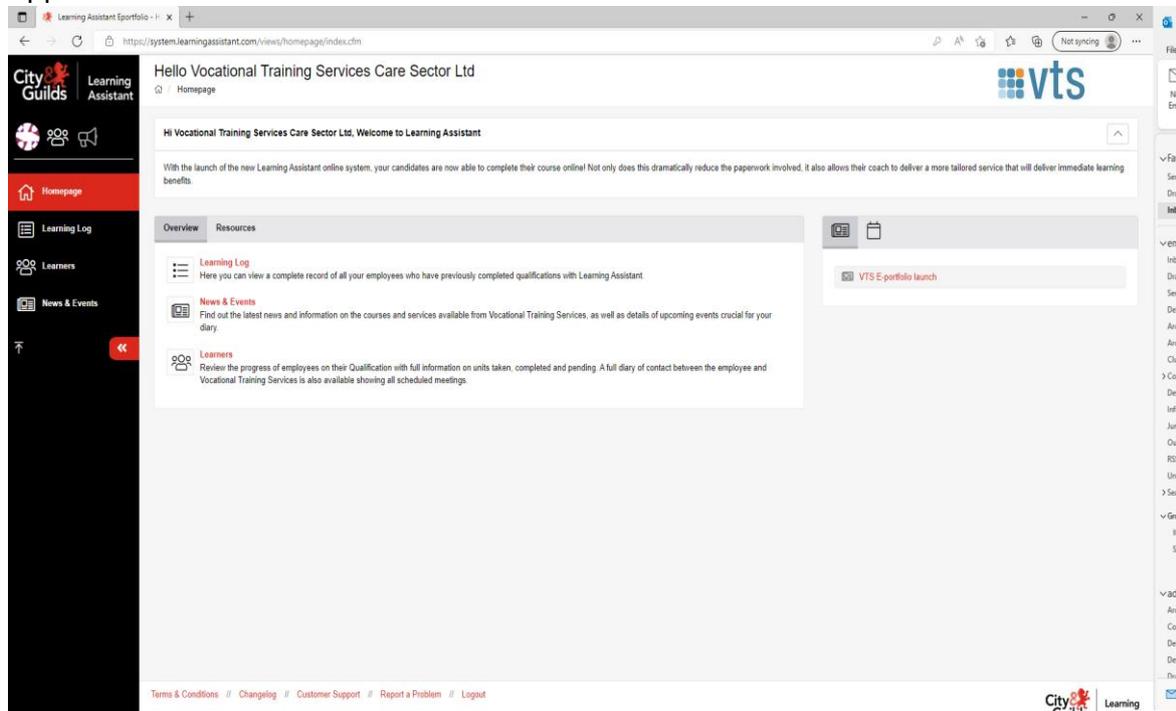
Then click ‘Set permissions’.

We will now be able to add apprenticeship details on your behalf, we will not have access to your account in anyway and any changed we make will be agreed by you.

APPENDIX 2

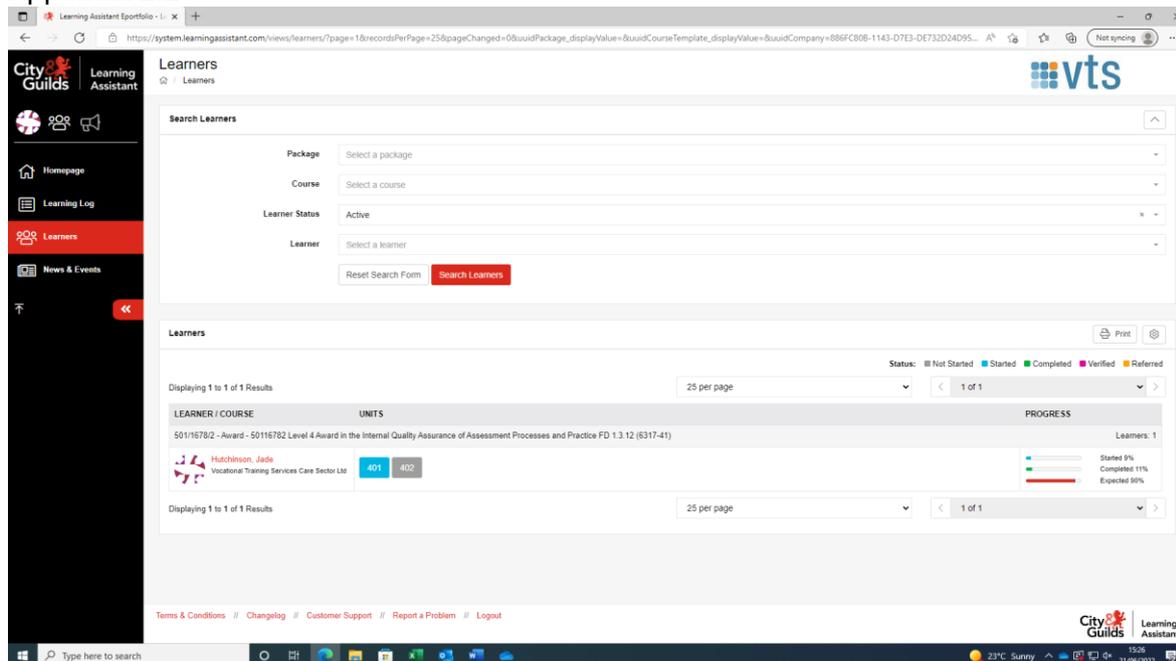
How to acknowledge on Learning Assistant:

Appendix 2.1



When you login this will be your home page, on the left hand side you will see learners, please click here.

Appendix 2.2



Click on the red 'Search Learners' button and all of your apprentices will be listed. Click on the apprentice you need to view.

Appendix 2.3

You will now see the page above. There are two grey tabs underneath the apprentice's name. Click on 'contact'.

Appendix 2.4

You will be taken to the screen above, on the right side underneath 'Info' you can see two green ticks.

When you have logged in this will say 'Needs acknowledgement'.

Click on 'Needs acknowledgement' and this will turn into a green tick.

If you wish to view your apprentice's lesson plan, this will be attached to the visit and can be accessed by clicking on the paperclip.