



NI APPRENTICESHIP
WEEK 2024
5-9 FEBRUARY

Apprenticeship Opportunities

Mid And East Antrim
Manufacturing Task Force
February 2024

#MEA_MTF

MID AND EAST ANTRIM
Labour Market Partnership
Working Together



Mid & East Antrim
**Manufacturing
Task Force**

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INTRODUCTION

 Apprenticeships play an important role in the manufacturing, production, engineering, construction and agri-food sectors, offering a unique approach to learning, blending classroom based learning with practical, hands-on experience.

Companies in the Manufacturing Task Force have come together to provide an insight into how apprenticeships work for them and the opportunities available in Mid and East Antrim.

I hope you find this booklet useful and if you require any further information, please contact Council's Invest and Place team by the following email address: invest@midandeastantrim.gov.uk 

Graham Whitehurst MBE
Chair of Mid and East Antrim Manufacturing Task



WHAT IS THE MANUFACTURING TASK FORCE (MTF)?

The MTF is a company led network of over 65 businesses and stakeholders, which support the local manufacturing, production, engineering, construction and agri-food sectors in Mid and East Antrim. A key element of this is support for the development of skills and employment opportunities including:



Focusing on supporting employment growth;



Upskilling and reskilling programmes; and



Promotion of all pathways to employment, including higher level apprenticeships.

MID AND EAST ANTRIM LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

Mid and East Antrim Labour Market Partnership (LMP), funded by the Department for Communities, comprises of Council, statutory and local employment stakeholders working together to address unemployment and improve labour market conditions within the Borough.

The LMP was established in March 2022, to ensure that citizens of the borough could access support to reach their full potential.

The partnership consists of a range of representatives from Department for Communities (JBO), Northern Regional College, MEA Manufacturing Task Force, Galgorm Resort and Spa, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Gallaher Trust, CITB, Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment, Local Enterprise Agencies, MEA Inter-ethnic Forum, and the Education Authority.

This close collaboration enables the LMP to deliver:

- ✓ Support for those seeking employment
- ✓ Upskilling support for better employment
- ✓ Improved access to the labour market for those with disabilities
- ✓ Promotion of skills pathways for all ages

LMP has delivered a wide range of sector-specific:

- ✓ Employment Academies
- ✓ Transport and forklifting
- ✓ Manufacturing and engineering
- ✓ Tourism and hospitality
- ✓ Health support services
- ✓ Administration
- ✓ Classroom assistance and childminding

Bespoke Programmes for:

- ✓ Women returners
- ✓ People with disabilities or long-term health conditions

The LMP also supports a range of careers outreach to schools and is proud to support Northern Ireland's Science Summer School and a wide range of inspiring employer/education engagements. The Science Summer School project has strengthened the relationships between schools, employers, parents and stakeholders to support young people to take advantage of the fantastic career opportunities available to them.

The work of the partnership is funded by the Department for Communities as part of Employability NI. Employability NI (ENI) was established by the Department for Communities to design, procure and implement a fresh suite of employability provisions and initiatives to support people into meaningful employment.

For more information about **#MEALMP**, please visit www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/LMP

If you would like to find out more about participating in any of our LMP funded academies, please contact us via:

E: imp@midandeantrim.gov.uk or
T: **028 2563 3345**

MID AND EAST ANTRIM
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APPRENTICESHIP INFORMATION

Why apprenticeships?

An apprenticeship gives you hands-on experience of the workplace, a salary and the opportunity to gain qualifications while you work.

Types of careers available

- CNC Machining
- PLC Programming
- CAD Design
- Quality Control
- Multi-skilled Maintenance
- Technician Roles / Project Engineers
- Butchery
- Engineering
- Plumbing
- Joinery
- Brickwork
- Electrical Installation
- Motor Vehicle
- Sales
- Marketing
- HR
- Accountancy

How much you will get paid?

Employers will typically pay in accordance with at least the national minimum wage per week and salaries often increase annually throughout your apprenticeship based upon performance.

National minimum wage guidance:
www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

Who is suitable?

Anyone aged 16 or over, including workers, job seekers, school leavers and career changers. It doesn't matter if you are just leaving school or wish to start a new career; but you must be living in Northern Ireland and not in full-time education. There may be other specific entry requirements depending on the apprenticeship and industry. The Construction, Engineering and Manufacturing sector are encouraging more females to enter the sectors as a career choice.

Apprenticeship levels are equivalent to:

- Level 2 (5 GCSEs)
- Level 3 (2 A-Levels)
- Level 4 and 5 (Foundation Degree)
- Level 6 and above (Bachelor or Master's Degree)

When can I start?

Apprenticeships typically start in September of each year with recruitment taking place all year round.

Benefits of apprenticeships

There are many benefits for students and employers from participation in an apprenticeship:

- you earn while you learn
- you work alongside experienced staff
- you receive off-the-job training specific to your apprenticeship
- you gain qualifications

RR The apprenticeship programme at GES Group offers more than just an insight into each career. The students have one on one support, no college fees and the opportunity afforded by the experience they gain as they put theory into practice, they can shadow professional engineers with years of experience, which is invaluable.

We work in partnership with Northern Regional College producing award winning Apprentices, the experience a GES Group Apprentice gains across all divisions is second to none. GES Group believe that there is nothing more valuable than gaining hands on experience, this a proven model for learning and the reason why we produce such a high calibre of Engineers time and time again. DD



Maeve Cuning
HR Manager, GES Group



HIGHER LEVEL

What is a Higher Level Apprenticeship?

In addition to the traditional apprenticeship scheme there is also a Higher Level Apprenticeship which is a nationally accredited work-based programme similar to traditional apprenticeships (Level 2 or 3) but at a higher level (Level 4 or 5). It is designed to meet the needs of employers for higher skill levels and leads to qualifications equivalent to university.

How Can Your Career Benefit from a Higher Level Apprenticeship?



Employability

You will be employed for two years gaining valuable knowledge and practical skills and work experience as your employer mentors you throughout your employment period. Time will also be spent, usually one day a week studying for your academic qualification.

This combination can help increase your future employability, boost your CV, and help you progress into new career opportunities.



Recognised Qualification

You will gain an internationally recognised qualification – Level 4 Higher National Certificate or Level 5 Foundation Degree which is a stepping stone to university.



Earn While You Learn

You will gain valuable work experience within your chosen area from your employer as well as gaining a recognised professional qualification and earning a regular salary (at least the national minimum wage).



Debt-free

The Higher Level Apprenticeship programme will allow you to start your highly-skilled career without the student debt that your university peers will have accumulated during their degree course – providing a real alternative to university.

What Higher Level Apprenticeships are available?

Higher Level Apprenticeships are currently available in a range of occupational areas such as Accountancy, Learning & Development (Leadership and Management Pathway), Computing, Construction, Construction Engineering with Surveying, Engineering and Supply Chain and Logistics.

How To Become a Higher Apprentice

You must be at least 18 years old on or before 1 July in the year you start your course and must satisfy general entry requirements. Third country nationals, including European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss Nationals and their family members, are eligible to undertake a HLA provided they have a right to live and work in the UK.

Getting an Employer

Employers advertise and recruit directly for positions. It will be competitive and there are likely to be a number of people applying for each Higher Level Apprenticeship vacancy, so you will need to sell yourself and convince the employer that you are the right person for the role.

MTF led Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA)

Through the MTF, new courses are being developed in response to company requirements. This includes the HLA in Supply Chain and Logistics developed in conjunction with Northern Regional College (NRC).

HLA – Supply Chain and Logistics

Course Title	Supply Chain and Logistics
Awarding Body	Ulster University (UU)
Provider & Campus	NRC, Newtownabbey
Level	4 or 5
Entry Requirement	GCSE or Essential Skills Maths and English. UCAS points 64.
Course Duration	2.5 years, full time
Method of Study	Four days working/One day study
Qualification	Ulster University Foundation Degree in Supply Chain & Logistics
Links	https://www.nrc.ac.uk/apprenticeships/higher-level-apprenticeship



Where can I find out more information on the range of apprenticeship courses available?

There are a wide range of apprenticeship courses available across many disciplines in Northern Ireland starting at level 2. A full list can be found here

www.online.economy-ni.gov.uk/Training_Apprenticeships_Ext/Home.aspx

Apprenticeships applicable to the manufacturing, engineering and construction sectors:

LEVEL 2

- Engineering
- Motor Vehicle
- Plumbing

LEVEL 3

- Civil Engineering
- Electrical Installation

HIGHER LEVEL

- Construction
- Advanced Manufacturing Engineering
- Construction Engineering with Surveying

BUSINESS RELATED DISCIPLINES

- Computing
- Sales
- Marketing
- HR



COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES



Joshua Wylie

Role: Engineering Apprentice

Course: Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering Level 2



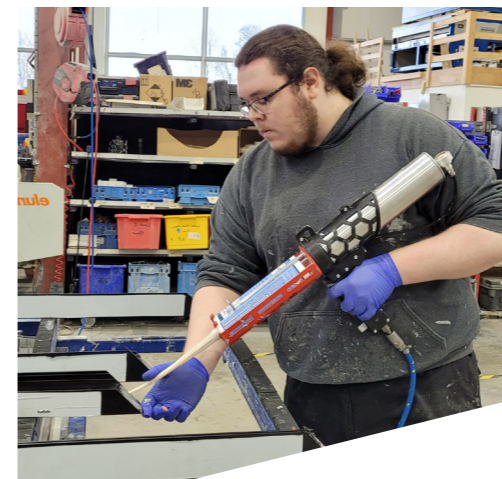
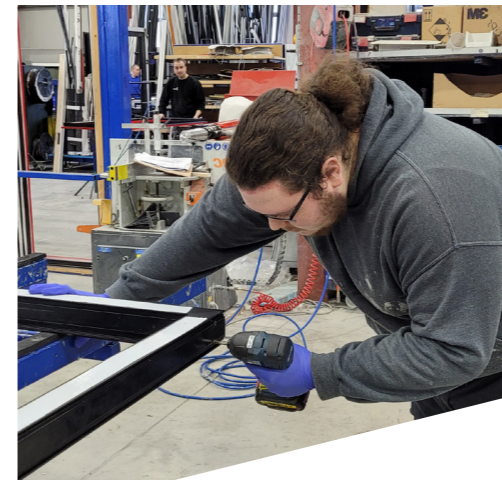
www.appeer.co.uk

Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

I wanted to begin a sustainable career. I left secondary school and I went to the Northern Regional College (NRC) and gained a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment. Although this offered great opportunities at that stage I wasn't sure if it was a career for me. After a break from education and a role as an Assistant Manager in retail I became interested through family and friends about their experiences as trades people. The ability to have a job that isn't stuck behind a desk all day but still being intellectually stimulating is unparalleled. Having the ability to work, earn and gain an education is just incredible, even more so that at 21 years old it is still obtainable!

What skills have you learned?

Although I am a first year apprentice there is so much that I have learned already from both college and work. In college learning the technical aspects of mechanical manufacturing, getting hands on experience using Mills, Lathes and CNC Mills, learning from the ground up, from knowing how to properly measure dimensions using a micrometer, building and installing tools into the machines, reading and following technical drawings to complete jobs, the experience is priceless. Whilst at work learning the hands-on aspects of manufacturing and assembly, learning what makes up a window, rooflight or a door, learning the different types of windows, the materials they are made from and how to assemble each of them.



What do you enjoy most about being an Apprentice?

There isn't much I don't enjoy. Learning new skills every week, being up and active all day doing hands on work is something I really enjoy. I know it's more of a general statement but if you're the type of person that enjoys making things, doing things and building stuff with your hands then an apprenticeship is perfect.

How do you balance work and studying?

The work-education balance is surprisingly simple, you get a day out to go to college where I do a NVQ in Mechanical Manufacturing so most of my education at the moment is practical based with not as much theoretical work right now. All classes are balanced and the lecturers at the NRC are extremely informative and helpful. Theory work is completed in college in good time but if you need to do coursework outside of college hours everything is accessible online via your NRC Office 365 account.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship and why?

Yes, Apprenticeships are perfect for people who want to become skilled workers, gain great work experience while still getting an education, meet great people that you otherwise never would have met and so much more!

What is next for you in work & college?

Next year I will begin my Level 3 Apprenticeship which will take two years, I want to gain the best education I possibly can while striving to improve my skills daily in my field of work. I want to learn as much as I can about engineering and build upon my skills in work long after I finish my Apprenticeship.

COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES



Philip Crummey

Role: Fully Qualified Electrical Installation Engineer

Course: Electrical Installation Apprenticeship



www.ges-group.com

What inspired you to become an engineer or technician?

When choosing a career, engineering always sparked an interest, I knew it was an everchanging industry. I was always interested in understanding how equipment operates, which attracted me to electrical engineering/installation. I liked the thought of being able to travel with your trade, the opportunities and experience throughout journey. Engineers are in high demand and will continue to be so in the future.

Can you describe your career in engineering so far?

I began my 4-year Electrical Installation Apprenticeship in 2019, I worked in a range of departments within GES Group, including panel building, installation and reactive breakdowns. Now I am full qualified, I have moved into installation and reactive breakdowns in a wide range of industries including pharmaceutical, food and beverage, manufacturing plants and many more well know companies throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland.

What has been your biggest success in your career?

My biggest achievement to date throughout my time in my career is becoming fully qualified and successfully completing my Level 3 Award in Electrical Installation, 18th Edition and AM2 in 2023. I am now in charge to manage my own work on a wide range of projects.

What does the future look like and what are your goals?

I would like to continue my career by improving my skills and knowledge in industrial engineering. I want to become the best I can be in my field, in particular become a more skilled reactive engineer for breakdowns. I am keen to continue training, complete additional courses to learn more. Long term goal is to continue working with GES Group and obtain additional qualifications whilst passing on my knowledge to our apprentices.



Leanne Crawford

Role: Supply Chain Specialist

Course: Higher Level Apprenticeship – Supply Chain & Logistics



www.wrightbus.com

Why did you choose to enrol on a Higher Level Apprenticeship?

I chose to enrol on this course as I wanted the opportunity to study part time alongside my current role and to progress my career with Wrightbus. I aspired to gain new knowledge of the entire supply chain and not solely from a purchasing perspective which was my previous role.

How will the apprenticeship benefit your role within Wrightbus?

I have started Year 1 of my apprenticeship and we have been studying processes such as demand planning, sales and operations planning in addition to information on logistics and transport. I feel this will benefit my role within Wrightbus as I can use this knowledge to help with projects that I am currently working on. It is a great opportunity to be able to apply this theory in a working environment as well as to be able to learn new things from other colleagues and peers.

How do you balance working and studying?

This can be a challenge as my current role is very fast paced but what I've learned is to complete all coursework and study gradually before the given deadlines and to prioritise my workload on the days I am not in college.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship?

I certainly would. I believe it is extremely beneficial to gain hands on work experience alongside academic learning and to be able to apply theory from what I've learned to benefit the workplace. It is also great to acquire knowledge from other people's skills and experience.

COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES



Zak Smyth

Role: Butcher

Course: Butchery Academy



www.cranswick.plc.uk

Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

I wanted to earn a wage and have job security, the pay in the meat industry is very good and there's also excellent career progression, the work is very enjoyable and I get a lot of job satisfaction from it.

What skills have you learned?

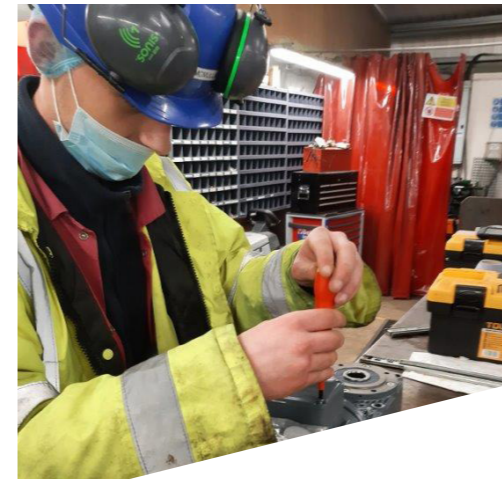
One of the things I struggled with at school was Maths, as part of the Apprenticeship I was required to complete Level 2 essential skills in Maths, at college I really enjoyed it, I've also learnt various knife jobs and enjoy sharing my skills with other new staff.

What do you enjoy most about being an apprentice?

The money is a big factor as I'm able to do quite a bit of overtime, I really love working as a team and have made lots of new friends, it's an enjoyable experience and my friends are quite envious as I'm earning a good wage and have recently bought my first car.

What next?

I've recently been appointed as the new trainer for our boning department, I've worked very hard to achieve this and I'm extremely proud of all the new skills I have acquired, I would like to continue my journey and hopefully some day become a Department Manager or even the Factory Manager.



Ryan McMullan

Role: Trainee Dual Skilled Engineer

Course: Electrical and Mechanical Engineering



www.cranswick.plc.uk

Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

The apprenticeship route offers great career prospects, the opportunity to earn an excellent wage and it means I have job security from a young age. Learning new skills on a daily basis with the support of a dedicated mentor is an excellent way to learn and develop in the role.

What skills have you learned?

I've been changing blades on the various machines and learning how they are operated, I also do pre start safety checks as Health & Safety is vital in the industry.

What do you enjoy most about being an apprentice?

Dealing with mechanical breakdowns and looking at various electrical issues, schematics are very interesting and I get a lot of satisfaction when I am involved in problem solving.

COMPANY APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES



Cahal Hargan
Civil Engineering Apprentice

I started my apprenticeship in 2018 on the Level 3 Civil Engineering course. I am on the route to chartership as a Civil Engineer and I am currently undertaking a Masters at Ulster University. The big advantage for me is that I have been able to learn while working, putting me in a great position to progress my career. I have already been given the opportunity to oversee my own projects, something that would not have been possible this early without the apprenticeship opportunity here at Moore Concrete.



www.moore-concrete.com



Niamh Begley
Construction and the Built Environment Apprentice

I joined Clarke in 2022 through their Growth Academy Scheme and I'm completing a Level 5 HND at Ulster University in Construction and the Built Environment. The apprenticeship route for me has been brilliant as I've been able to experience first-hand large scale construction projects and identify my flair for health and safety which I am now pursuing at Clarke. I love the mix of office, site, and travel, it's great to add to the female numbers in the construction sector and I've brilliant support from my team!



mclarke.co.uk

A wide range of companies in Mid and East Antrim offer apprenticeship places each year.



Wrightbus, Ballymena

Wrightbus has been leading the way in the transportation industry with innovation and unwavering commitment since 1946, and in recent years the company has raised the bar with its zero-emission fleet. Wrightbus is on a journey of innovation and environmental consciousness under the leadership of Jo Bamford and is now home to the world's first hydrogen double-deck bus, and the world's most efficient battery-electric double-deck bus. The recent introduction of two new single-deck zero-emission vehicles means it is the only company in the UK to offer four zero-emission vehicles to the market. The company has become an inspiration around the world with its visionary thinking and enjoys continued success and growth. As a result the company has a number of apprenticeship opportunities available.



Cranswick PLC, Ballymena

A world leading pork production company who take on at least eight apprentices each year across their Butchery and Engineering divisions.



McCue, Carrickfergus

McCue works in partnership with NRC to develop and mentor apprentices in the specialist trade of bespoke joinery. McCue currently has 18 apprentices employed with the company, ranging from first to fourth years, which make up 21% of its total workforce.



IPC Mouldings, Carrickfergus

Is an aerospace company that employs a range of apprentices in Mechanical Manufacturing and Engineering.



Moore Concrete, Ballymena

A family owned construction firm with projects spanning the UK and Ireland. They employ over 10 apprentices each year in a range of disciplines from Civil Engineering to Welding.



Ryobi, Carrickfergus

A Japanese owned automotive company who make engine blocks for some of the top car manufacturers in the world including Jaguar, Land Rover, Peugeot and Volkswagen. Ryobi currently employ 30 apprentices in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering.



There are a wide range of local companies who offer apprenticeship places each year. Get in contact with Council for further information on these. For further information email invest@midandeastantrim.gov.uk.

Other local MTF companies who employ apprentices include:



Gary Purdy
Managing Director
McCue
www.mccue.com

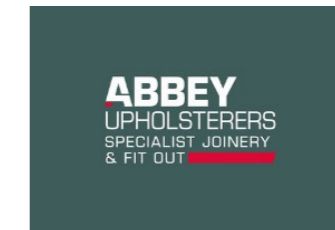
Our apprenticeship programme involves the apprentices undertaking on-the-job training mentored by our highly-skilled crafts people at McCue, combined with occasional study this culminates with a recognised qualification. It is fundamental for us as a business to develop the skills of our people who become an integral part of our workforce and add real value. Our apprentices develop important relationships and have the opportunity to excel in a trade that there is a high demand for.

My own personal experience as an apprentice with McCue has certainly shaped my career path, and allowed me to progress throughout the company and contribute to my current role as Managing Director.



Wilbert Moore
Managing Director
Moore Concrete
www.moore-concrete.com

Apprenticeships are an integral component of our workforce. We have built up the number of apprentices we employ over the last number of years and the number of different job roles covered by apprenticeships. We have apprentices at level 2, 3 and Higher Level, our expectation is to increase the numbers going forward. There are obvious benefits for the apprentice – the opportunity of earning and learning, as well as getting hands on experience on exciting projects and working alongside leading technical experts in a supportive work environment. Taking on apprentices is an important way to grow the company.



MANUFACTURING TASK FORCE – SKILLS INITIATIVES

Science Summer School NI 2024



Over 400 secondary school students were inspired to consider careers in STEAM subjects after attending the prestigious 'Science Summer School' event in Ballymena in January 2024. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council alongside the Manufacturing Task Force worked together to inspire and support the future skills pipeline.

For further information on how you can be involved at future events, contact Rhonda Lynn at Rhonda.lynn@midandeastantrim.gov.uk



Manufacturing Academy

Funded by



This is a unique opportunity to take part in an intensive five-week training programme. Students have the chance to put theory into practice and experience a range of manufacturing processes and procedures. The course includes skills to prepare for interviews and the workplace. MTF companies are involved through company visits and presentations and provide guaranteed job interviews to those completing the course. Qualifications are not a requirement to take part in the Academy but age restrictions and location may apply.

For further information on any upcoming opportunities email invest@midandeastantrim.gov.uk

In partnership with



Delivered by



APPRENTICESHIP LOCAL TRAINING

Visit Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week 2023 to find out more about apprenticeships and the opportunities they present.

You can find out more at:



www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships

A wide variety of training providers deliver apprenticeship programmes across Northern Ireland. This includes all Further Education Colleges as well as private and social enterprise providers. These include:

Centre/Provider

Key Areas

Link to find out more

NORTHERN
Regional College

- Built Environment
- Engineering
- Construction
- Construction Engineering with Surveying
- Motor Vehicle

www.nrc.ac.uk/Apprenticeships

People^{1st}

- Business Administration
- Construction
- Food and Drink
- Logistics
- Plumbing

www.people-1st.co.uk/programmes/apprenticeships-ni

belfast
met

- Computing and IT
- Construction
- Engineering
- Electrotechnical
- Software

www.belfastmet.ac.uk/apprenticeships/

Centre/Provider

Key Areas

Link to find out more

BCW
TRAINING LTD

- Retail
- Plastering
- Bricklaying
- Business Administration

www.bcwtraining.co.uk/949-2/#

CRAFT
train : develop : work

- Bricklaying
- Business Administration
- Food Industry
- Furniture Production
- Joinery
- Meat and Poultry Skills
- Warehousing and Logistics

www.craftrecruitment.com

Rutledge

- Business
- Stores and Warehousing
- Joinery
- Customer Services

<http://rutledgegroup.co.uk/training/apprenticeshipsni-programme/>

Centre/Provider

Key Areas

Link to find out more



- Catering
- Hospitality

www.bctl.org/courses



- Agriculture
- Land Based Engineering
- Food Technology and Science
- Food and Drink

www.cafre.ac.uk/student-courses/



- Business Administration
- Electrical Power Engineering
- Food and Drink
- Logistics/Warehousing

www.ghskills.com/course

Centre/Provider

Key Areas

Link to find out more



- Motor Vehicle
- Bus and Coach

www.transport-training.com/apprentice-sign-up



- Maintenance and Repair
- Mechanical
- Vehicle Repair

www.riverparktraining.com/courses



- Customer Service
- Digital Media
- Joinery
- Plumbing

www.springvalelearning.com/what-is-an-apprenticeship/



- Administration
- Construction
- Engineering
- Finance
- IT
- Manufacturing
- Sales

www.workplus.app/get-hired



You can find out more about apprenticeships at:
www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships

For more information about the apprenticeships available through the MTF or about the MTF please contact:
invest@midandeantrim.gov.uk

#MEA_MTF

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