



The BUZZ

The latest training and recruitment news

February 2024, Issue 3



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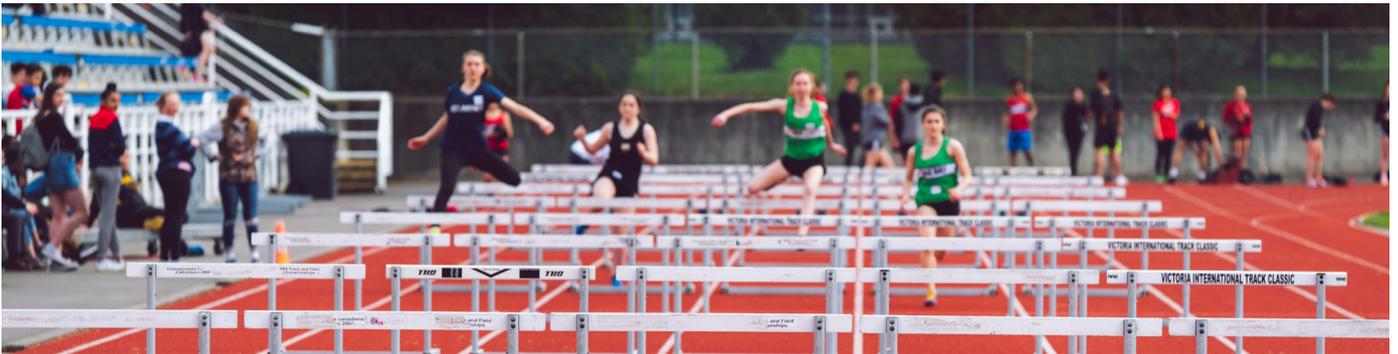
Safeguarding at Swarm

We nurture growth and celebrate success



Welcome to the February 2024 issue of The BUZZ and our first one of the new year. Impact is one of our key Swarm values and it sits at the heart of everything we do as an organisation. As a national education provider, we pride ourselves on the impact we have with both our learners and employers, but more importantly we get to see the impact our apprentices have within their own organisations. In this edition of Buzz you will hear us celebrate our apprentices because of the outstanding impact they have made on their employers and their own colleagues and peers. This is the most rewarding feedback you can have as a training provider and it's a privilege to be part of their career journeys.

As we head into National Apprenticeship week 2024, it's really important to highlight the positive impact apprentices can have within an organisation so that we can encourage more people of every age to look at apprenticeships as a way to further their career. We are here to support more organisations in providing this most valuable opportunity. **Chris Perry, CEO of Swarm Group**



Support from Swarm will get you over the line!

One of our values is **IMPACT**. Fantastic feedback like this really does lift our spirits as it demonstrates the impact we are having on our learners. We have built a team of dedicated professionals, who really do have the apprentice's best interests at the heart of everything they do. From helping them to achieve the necessary Functional Skills qualifications, to facilitating the achievement of goals and development of life long skills; all the while maintaining a close eye on their personal needs and mental health. Each apprentice's journey is tailored for them. So although there may be hurdles along the way, we'll get you over that finishing line!

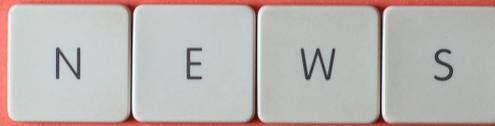
"I started my Business Administration level 3 apprenticeship in November 2021. Even though I struggled at first with balancing work and study, I have finally passed my apprenticeship. I had incredible tutors to help me to achieve my goals and support me through my journey.

I would like to say a big thank you to my English tutor Rebecca Carruthers for being extra supportive, helping me with English GCSE. With late evening calls, fun learning and knowledge you gave me an amazing experience and showed me how easy and achievable that is!

Secondly, I wish to say a big thank you to Rebecca Evers, my Business Tutor, who supported, encouraged and kept pushing me to go forward. Rebecca always checked on my mental health and led me to the end of the apprenticeship.

Overall, I would like to recommend Swarm, if you are considering starting an apprenticeship. Even if you stop believing in yourself there is a whole team believing in you and ready to support you!

Sarune Zalepugaite- Level 3 Business Administrator- Sanctuary Personnel



NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) takes place between **5 to 11 February 2024** and is an opportunity for the education and skills sector to celebrate the achievements of apprentices around the country and the positive impact they make to communities, businesses, and the wider economy.

This year's theme is **#SkillsForLife**.

We will be showcasing the work of our apprentices and letting the business community know how Swarm Training can support them with our tailored approach. So keep your eye on our social media channels. We're also offering live events via Linked In where you can meet members of the Swarm Team who will be happy to answer your questions. See below.

In addition, our Engagement Team will be out and about that week, flying the flag!

You can see Helen Vernon, our Engagement and Development Manager, at the Apprenticeship Fair at Wythenshawe Forum, Manchester, on 8 February. If you would like us to talk to your organisation about the benefits of apprenticeships, do [get in touch](#).

Find more details about NAW here, [click here](#).

SKILLS FOR LIFE

#NAW2024

Monday 5th February
Click to book

Live from Linked In

10am: How to Find and Apply for an Apprenticeship

1.30pm: How to Find the Right Apprentice

Paul Riddock, Managing Director of Swarm Recruitment will be sharing his years of experience and offering advice to both businesses and potential apprentices in a morning and afternoon event. Join in via Linked In.



Tuesday 6th February
Click to book

Live from Linked In

1.30pm: Upskilling for Career Progression

The theme of this year's National Apprentice Week is Skills for Life. Our Marketing Lead, Suzanne Hodnett, will be sharing advice on how an apprenticeship can help your career progression. If you are currently in work, but want to gain a qualification to further your career, join us for this live event via Linked In.



Friday 9th February
Click to book

Via Google Meet

121 Drop In Sessions

Do you have some burning questions about how to move forward in your career?

Suzanne Hodnett is offering Drop-In sessions to discuss career planning. Book your 30 minute slots (online) for an in depth chat and come away with some sound advice.

CELEBRATING OUR APPRENTICES

Someone once said, there is a time to let things happen, and a time to make things happen.

When 17 year old, Business Administrator student, Pippa, heard that an apprenticeship opportunity she'd applied for had been withdrawn due to a lack of interest, she didn't give up.

Certain that she wanted to begin her career in the workplace rather than the classroom, she applied to a job vacancy with East Anglia Motor Auctions.

Although the role was not initially an Apprenticeship, armed with information, Pippa persuaded the employer that incorporating the Business Administrator course as part of her role would be beneficial to them and to her development.

She chose Swarm Training as her provider and put us in touch with her employer.

East Anglia Motor Auctions were really impressed with Pippa's drive and initiative and so far she has exceeded all expectations!



We are delighted to announce that one of our engineering students is a finalist in the Apprenticeships Norfolk Awards 2024!

Krasimir Stoyanov is a level 2 General Welder apprentice in Colin Lucas's group. Kras works for David Utting Engineering which produces mobile spray booths that are leased across the country within the automotive and film industry.

Kras joined [Swarm REAGIT](#) (The Revamped East Anglian Group for Industrial Training) in October 2023 and quickly developed a great range of skills and displayed an amazing set of behaviours which quickly became noticed by the teaching team and his peers alike. Within the workplace, Kras is known for his great work ethic as witnessed by his Managing Director, David Utting.

Kras also supports his parents and his young family outside of his studies and work commitments.

With this approach to life at such a young age, Krasimir will have a long and successful future and we are so very proud of being on his journey with him!



It's wonderful to hear an apprentice receive recognition within their own workplace.

Ellie Thornton was nominated in no less than 3 categories for [Activate Group's](#) Annual Awards. On 27 January, the entire company of over 700 staff voted for those employees who have shone in 2023.

The awards Ellie was nominated for include the 'Make it Happen' Category: 'Someone who works fast and can always be relied on to get things done. This person's positivity helps them overcome obstacles and inspires others.'

From what we have seen in her training, Ellie is certainly a deserving winner of this award.

Her line manager, Pete, adds "She's a real credit to the team and company!"



TUTOR SPOTLIGHT



Tutor: Helen Vernon

Subject: Business Administrator & Events Tutor, & Engagement Development Manager

“Helen has provided proactive support for our apprentice who has a number of challenges that could affect his ability to progress through the course. By organising a dyslexia screening test for him, this raised awareness for both us as an organisation and his apprenticeship tutor of this potential barrier. We now have a better understanding of his needs and can provide more tailored learning support to ensure he is not disadvantaged in any way.”

Callum Webster, Research and Insight Officer, at Active Lancashire

How long have you worked for Swarm?

It was a year in December 2023.

What was your career prior to tutoring?

I was a business owner - in partnership with a fellow Swarm tutor. I have also been a teacher for 15 years.

What do you enjoy about your role at Swarm?

I love getting to know the learners, hearing about how they implement what they learn into their role. I enjoy watching their confidence grow and seeing how far they have come since starting. I like to hear how they are carving out the career they want.

For my other role, as Engagement Development Manager, I enjoy liaising with our business partners to see what help we can offer to further develop their apprentices. Occasionally I actually get to leave my desk and attend events ‘in real life’ - which I love! I’m looking forward to forging links with the community at the forthcoming National Apprenticeship Week.

What are the challenges of your role?

Preparing them for EPA and going on to completion!

How do you spend your spare time?

I love reading! Cooking and yes, singing and dancing, much to the dismay of my children!

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about inclusion. I believe everyone deserves an equal opportunity not dependent on class, race, culture, age or gender.

Tell us something that may surprise us about you?

I have performed in many West End musicals including Cabaret!



OUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MARKET

As we know, the economy is pretty flat at present, with an element of uncertainty plus the difficult few years that we've just been through, you can appreciate the caution out there. These are our observations on the current market:

- Sectors wise, it's a mix with some sectors flourishing whilst others are struggling.
- Not all, but on average companies are taking longer to make decisions and hiring managers are concerned they get things right.
- Candidates have a vast amount of reason for moving, but once again you might find job seekers a little cautious to move, especially if salaries are not significant rises and the role/company are seen as less established.
- Multiple offers and counteroffers are still an issue when hiring new staff.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A BUSINESS OWNER OR HIRING MANAGER?

- Focus on attracting candidates in your adverts, pay fairly for living costs and give security, vision and confidence to a potential new starter.
- Ask if job seekers are interviewing elsewhere or would they consider an increase from their existing employer if it was offered (if no for various reasons, you can remind them when the cheque book is out with their current boss).
- A good recruiter will help you navigate this and get great hires. There are some many great people out there, your job is to find them and court them.

Swarm Recruitment can help you with that! Do get in touch.



CV feedback

We can support apprentices with developing their CV.



Candidate Search

If you want to recruit an apprentice, we can help with the search for the right one.



Job Advertising

Ask for our expertise to help to write your job advertisement and spec.



Amy Sobkowiak, Business Administrator Apprentice at Swarm Training.

Course: [Business Administrator L3](#)

Duration: 12 Months

Requirements: **Apprentices without level 2 English and Maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the end-point assessment.**

Business administrators have a highly transferable set of knowledge, skills and behaviours that can be applied in all sectors. This includes small and large businesses alike; from the public sector, private sector and charitable sector.

The role may involve working independently or as part of a team and will involve developing, implementing, maintaining and improving administrative services.

Business administrators develop skills and behaviours to support their own progression towards management responsibilities.

If you'd like to know more about this course, please contact us.

Email: enquires@swarmgroup.org.uk

Phone: 0800 0868199

How long have you worked for Swarm, Amy?

I have been working at Swarm for 14 months. I am Head of Administration and Enrolment.

What does your role in Administration involve?

My role at Swarm involves overseeing the entire process of setting up new applicants and organisations, including sending out relevant forms, verifying requirements, converting applicants into learners, and handing them over to tutors for the commencement of their learning journey.

I collaborate with other departments at Swarm to provide updates, generate reports, gather data, and manage the funding for our apprentices. I am accountable for addressing any issues that may arise during the process.

Why did you embark on the Business Administrator Apprenticeship?

To enhance my skills and knowledge, I enrolled in an Apprenticeship. It has provided me with valuable insights into better ways of communicating, recognising the importance of attention to detail, and understanding the fundamentals of business.

How has Swarm Training supported you during your Apprenticeship?

My tutor has been an invaluable source of support, providing me with the necessary resources to complete each assignment. As a result, I have been able to improve my time management skills, meet critical deadlines, and streamline data handling through the development of a new spreadsheet that I created.

Swarm offers a range of personal development sessions that have proven to be very insightful and interesting. These sessions have contributed significantly to my professional and personal growth.



SAFEGUARDING with Rebecca Rivett

As the Operations Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead at Swarm Training, I take great pride in ensuring the safety and well-being of all our learners in both our engineering college, Swarm Reagit, and our Swarm Business program.

Through my leadership and the implementation of successful measures for managing referrals and their case management, I have helped to create a culture where our learners can thrive and achieve their goals.

With my Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Teo, and my onsite Safeguarding Officer at the engineering centre, Pete, we work tirelessly to ensure that the safety and well-being of our learners are handled with care and dignity, quickly and effectively.

The unwavering confidence and courage of the Swarm team in raising concerns, no matter what the situation, fills me with immense pride and appreciation.



SAFEGUARDING WEBINAR

Ensuring the safety and well-being of your workforce is paramount in fostering a healthy and thriving workplace.

Highfield will be offering a free webinar, entitled Spotting the Signs - a Guide to Safeguarding in the Workforce.

The speaker for this webinar is Swarm's very own Rebecca Rivett, Operations Director and Designated Safeguarding lead at Swarm Training and her colleague Teodora Apan, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Together they will be discussing the knowledge signs that point towards a safeguarding issue, what to do in a safeguarding situation and how to handle the situation in wider context. **You can book via [this link](#).**



Did you know that the leading cause of death for young people under the age of 35 is suicide?

As part of our Personal Development program, we offer webinars to support our apprentices on various enrichment topics.

In December, we welcomed the charity Papyrus who shared information about their work in preventing young suicide. Papyrus provides support, resources, and are advocates for change. They operate Hopeline - a confidential 24/7 phone line for young people struggling with suicidal thoughts and those concerned about them. We highly recommend inviting PYPYRUS to your organisation for their 30-minute SPARK talk.

