

Apprentice Protection & Business Continuity Plan



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Publication no.	1.1
Creator	Mark Green
Job title	Director
Email	mark@arenalearning.co.uk
Phone	01942 230 292
Date created	April 2022
Date Reviewed	April 2023
Next Plan Review	April 2024

Arena Learning Apprentice Protection Plan for the period 2022-2025

This Apprentice Protection Plan sets out the measures we have in place to protect you as an apprentice in the event that a risk to the continuation of your studies should arise.

The measures contained in this plan apply to all apprentices studying for a directly funded qualification provided by Arena Learning.

These events may be triggered by situations such as (but not limited to):

- a decision to close Arena Learning has been taken
- a strategic decision by Arena Learning to close a course or venue
- a decision has been taken not to run a course for the subsequent year
- loss of accreditation from regulatory bodies, e.g. ESFA, Ofsted
- loss of accreditation from awarding body (regulator)
- withdrawal of designation for student support purposes
- changes to regulatory framework affecting a specific course
- disruption of Arena Learning activity
- industrial action by Arena Learning staff or third parties
- unanticipated departure of key members of Arena Learning staff

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your apprentices, how those risks may differ based on your apprentices' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise.

Risk 1- Closure of Business/Venue

Arena Learning forecasts an ESFA financial health rating of Outstanding.

We have robust business continuity arrangements in place including plans to deal with a range of incidents.

The risk of Arena Learning closing is low as it has a long track-record of delivering programmes and running its business successfully. It has long term partners relationships with large employers and SME's.

Arena Learning also has a written strategy and business plan covering the next 3 years, which is review annually.

This risk is monitored through risk management and our Governance team, and any instance of this will be managed in accordance with the Arena Learning policies.

Likelihood: Extremely Low

Risk 2- Loss of Regulator (external body)

The risk that Arena Learning loses one of its regulator (current ABO is Highfield) is to be considered as low for the following reasons:

- The successful outcomes of all validation and revalidation events that took place on all programmes delivered at Arena Learning
- Arena Learning has not been subject to any special measures imposed by one of its awarding bodies, such as loss of accreditation or loss of direct claim status, due to poor quality, management or malpractice
- The successful outcomes of all Quality Assurance Reviews (see previous)

Likelihood: Low

Risk 3- Loss of Accreditation

The risk that Arena Learning loses the accreditation from one of its regulators (ABO, Ofsted or ESFA) to deliver a particular programme is to be considered as low for the following reasons:

- Each programme delivered at Arena Learning is subject to a thorough awarding body validation/EPA process that includes a detailed assessment of Arena Learning resources, capacity and expertise to deliver the course as well a well- established targeted market.
- The rigorous Quality Assurance mechanisms and strong governance is in place to ensure compliance with awarding bodies and external regulators (ESFA/Ofsted) requirements.

Likelihood: Low

Risk 4 - Programme Discontinuation or decision not to run a course the following year

The risk that Arena Learning decides to discontinue a specific programme on timescales that directly affect apprentices is low because any course discontinuations in FE are planned at least one year in advance to allow current apprentices to complete their studies.

The risk that we discontinue or do not offer programmes due to insufficient enrolment and programme take-up or continuation is low. We regularly review the suite of programmes we offer to ensure that we keep pace with apprentice demand and may choose to close a programme to future cohorts where demand is low or as part of a refresh of our wider portfolio.

There is good staff coverage in terms of teaching capacity and capability at Arena Learning.

Likelihood: Low

Risk 5 - Change of Qualification/Course content

The risk that the qualification an apprentice obtain ends up significantly different from that for which the apprentice enrolled is low because all our directly funded courses are off the shelf qualifications (Apprenticeships Standard) and are subject to the awarding body rules and regulations. Our quality department and internal monitoring processes ensure that the rules of combination for the off the shelf courses are complied with and checked.

We retain the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to a standard's content year on year, as part of quality enhancement and in response to apprentice feedback.

Our review and quality enhancement processes are informed by apprentice consultation, and we endeavour to communicate planned changes in a timely and helpful manner. These minor amendments in themselves do not warrant the triggering of apprentice protection measures.

Likelihood: **Low**

Notification, advice, and support

Arena Learning Commitment to Apprenticeships

We commit to:

- communicating any changes to apprentice as early as possible, with clear information
- being open and transparent with all apprentice should any risk to the continuity of their programme of studies arise, and inform them in a timely manner
- taking reasonable steps to protect apprentice normal studies completion should we discontinue a programme, close a department or discipline, close a venue where a programme is taught, or should Arena Learning close altogether
- consulting with apprentices and considering apprentices views in a timely manner before deciding to implement any substantial changes to their programme or discontinuing it, or closing a department or closing a location
- taking into consideration the needs of all our apprentices and the impact on them of any proposed changes and protective measures
- Should the Apprentice Protection Plan need to be triggered, apprentices will be notified by the Head of Education and Skills via email and telephone calls.
- Free advice and support will be offered in the first instance by the Head of Quality and supported by the Head of Education and Skills.
- Additional, non-academic, advice and support is available from Student Support Services (or delegate) and ESFA.
- What can students do if they have a complaint? There are several channels
- If you have any immediate views, concerns or feedback in relation to this plan, please contact the Head of Education and Skills via complaints@arenalearning.co.uk

- If your complaint is about your course then you should follow the complaints procedure available online.

This can be found on <https://www.ngtc.co.uk/about-ngtc/student-services/comments-compliments-and-complaints/>

For any other types of complaints or query, students can contact us directly on <https://www.ngtc.co.uk/contact/>

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise.

In all cases, we will inform apprentices of any changes, which may affect their studies in a timely manner.

Risk 1A: Arena Learning closure

Where Arena Learning has no option, other than to close, it may consider measures such as those below to protect apprentice experience:

- where possible, closing in a gradual way, over a period that would allow current enrolled apprentice to complete their studies.
- where possible, Arena Learning will use its existing network partners such as the colleges, local employers to source the necessary facilities to allow the completion of studies
- where possible, Arena Learning will hire spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby) to allow completion of studies.
- Arena Learning will provide the necessary transport arrangements to allow students access the new site
- where the above is not possible, in supporting apprentice to transfer to appropriate programmes at other providers, Arena Learning would continue with access learning resources and portfolios via our virtual learning environment NewGen and BKSB, the e-portfolio would continue to be provided OneFile.

Risk 1B: Closure of Arena Learning's venue

Where one of Arena Learning premises or outreach centres is unusable for activities involving apprentices, Arena Learning will typically consider actions such as:

- Relocating provision to an alternative location, this may include using an employer premises or hiring spaces for programme delivery (where possible nearby)
- Revising timetabling to allow all of the scheduled teaching to take place in the available facilities. This may include apprentice contact sessions being held outside of normal office hours. Where such an approach is taken, appropriate consultation will normally be conducted with stakeholders who may be affected; appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken

Risk 2: Loss or disqualification by regulators

Ofsted/ ESFA/ End Point Assessment (EPA)

In the event of Arena Learning losing one of its regulators, the following steps will be taken:

- Arena Learning will work with Ofsted/ESFA directly to regain approval. This would require specified actions agreed with the Ofsted/ESFA and carried out by the centre within agreed timescales.
- If the relationship with the specialist End Point Assessment (EPA) organisation breaks down, Arena Learning will support apprentice transfer to an alternative EPA
- In case of apprentice non-agreement, Arena Learning will try to source an alternative Awarding Body with similar specification and work with apprentices to achieve alternative assessment measures. This approach will require full agreement from all apprentices registered initially

Risk 3: Loss of accreditation

In the event of Arena Learning losing its accreditation from one of the awarding bodies and if we are unable to deliver a programme in the following year, our immediate response would be to seek to use those elements of our apprentice protection measures that were most easily within our control.

We will take one or more of the following measures to protect apprentices' continuity of study.

- All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise the disruption to those services and to affected apprentice by, for example:
- offering affected apprentice, the chance to move to another course
- delivering a modified version of the same course
- providing assistance to affected apprentices to switch to a different provider
- consultation with stakeholders who may be affected to ensure appropriate equality impact assessments will also be undertaken
- future applicants will be notified, allowing time for apprentices to source an alternative suitable programme.

Risk 4: Programme discontinuation or decision not to run a course the following year

- Where a programme is discontinued, we would close the programme to new recruitment and ensure that current apprentice cohorts complete their full qualification
- Arena Learning is committed to put the necessary resources to ensure that existing students complete their programme. We have experience of managing this process successfully

Risk 6- Change of qualification/course content

- All of our programmes are subject to validation by the awarding body and therefore this risk will not happen without the full re-validation process taking place.
- Apprentices on the course will not be affected by these changes as transitional arrangements are always made to cater for existing apprentices.
- We retain the right to make minor adjustments and improvements to a programme's content year on year, as part of quality enhancement and in response to apprentice feedback, without changing the qualification title.
- Our review and quality enhancement processes are informed by apprentice consultation and we endeavour to communicate planned changes in a timely and helpful manner. These minor amendments in themselves do not warrant the triggering of apprentice protection measures.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your apprentice and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

Policies relating to refund and compensation are available on Arena Learning website.

The compensation and refund policy can be found <https://www.ngtc.co.uk/terms-and-conditions/>

4. Information about how you will communicate with apprentices about your Apprentice Protection Plan.

We will publicise our Apprentice Protection Plan to current and future students by :

- Making the plan available on our website
- Referencing it appropriately in our communications with apprentices during the recruitment and admissions process.
- Ensuring that all apprentices are at induction sent an electronic copy of the plan reviewing the plan

Arena Learning will

- Ensure that staff are aware of the implications of our Apprentice Protection Plan (staff development) when they propose programme changes by including a reference to the Apprentice Protection Plan in our programme approval and amendment documentation.
- Review the plan annually with senior management
- Regularly seek views on this plan from our apprentice representatives as part of our apprentice engagement processes.
- The plan will be presented to the Governance Team for final approval prior to publication on the website

Capturing Apprentice Views

Arena Learning has a variety of mechanisms in place to capture apprentice voice on all aspects related to apprentice life (learning, teaching validation of courses, continuation, progression, accommodation, transport, student services).

Arena Learning intends to use the same mechanisms to seek apprentice views on this Apprentice Protection Plan.

Director Policy Approval:

Mark Green - Director

Date: 01/08/2022

Sign:

Annex 1: Business Continuity Plan

Arena Learning is required by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to develop plans to manage business continuity in the event of a range of disruptions to services.

This plan should be read in conjunction with Arena Learning's other evacuation plans and emergency procedures that deal with the immediate response to an emergency situation.

This plan deals with no-notice disruptions most likely to occur loss of premises (through fire, flood etc); loss of utilities (electricity, gas, water, fuel); failure of IT and telephony; failure of supply; staff shortage; issues such as pandemic 'flu.

The impact of any serious disruption may manifest itself in terms of delivery of education, safety/welfare, financial consequences; reputation damage; environmental consequences.

This plan should be reviewed annually.

1. Aim of the Plan

The aim of this plan is to provide guidance and support to enable Arena Learning to tackle the impact of severe disruptions due to a variety of one-off, but credible, causes.

The plan is designed to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- a. To safeguard the safety and welfare of students, staff and visitors.
- b. To resume provision of education services at the earliest opportunity and, where possible, secure a continuation of learning.
- c. To maintain the community and identity of Arena Learning.
- d. To return Arena Learning to normality.

2. Notification

During working hours, a site disruption is likely to become apparent to all staff and students very quickly: alarm activation, word-of-mouth etc.

Outside working hours, a site disruption may be notified by the emergency services to Arena Learning's Managing Director or Offices Manager.

3. Plan Implementation

The responsibility for implementing this plan lies with the Managing Director or, if not available, other designated senior member of staff.

4. Initial Actions & Emergency File

Evacuation is dealt with in Arena Learning's Emergency Evacuation Plan

Upon activation of this plan, Arena Learning Managing Director, or his/her nominated deputy, will form a Business Continuity Management Team (BCMT) with responsibilities as listed in Item 7.

The primary objective of the BCMT is to manage the developing situation and minimise harm and danger to:

- Students
- Staff
- Visitors to HO
- Building, contents, and other assets and Arena Learning's ability to provide education.

Emergency files will be stored in the HR's Manager's office. The files should contain the following items:

- A copy of this plan
- A copy of Arena Learning's evacuation and contingency plan
Site plans
- Any other critical items

Up-to-date contact information for parents/carers will be available via any internet enabled computer.

The file should be taken out of Arena Learning building by the nearest person, **only if safe to do so!**

The emergency file will be checked termly for accuracy of information by the HR Manager

5. Assessment/Containment

As soon as practicable, the BCMT will meet to consider what resources are available to continue normal business as far as possible. Potential resources are:

- staff, vehicles
- equipment still at the scene
- Staff vehicles
- equipment located elsewhere
- current IT and telephony capability

If the disruption has resulted in the loss of Arena Learning site, the BCMT meeting should be held at Mercure Hotel, Wigan.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Functional roles include, but are not limited to the following (dependant on resources available, individuals may be called upon to fulfil more than one role):

Incident Officer: Managing Director

- Chair Team meetings
- Co-ordination of the response
- Liaise with DFE
- Liaise with HR Manager
- Allocate resources.
- Be prepared to answer questions from the media
- Responsible for deciding whether or not staff should be sent home.

Staff and Communications Officer: HR Manager

- Meet and greet emergency services as they arrive, with a floor plan of the building, if possible. Ensure all significant occurrences and decisions are recorded, together with reasons for decisions made.
- Provide clerical and practical assistance to the Office Manager.
- (Immediate!) Instruct staff not to leave the rendezvous point until told to do so. Liaison between Emergency Team and staff.
- Imparting factual information to staff.
- Agree key information to be given to students by tutors.

Welfare: Student Services (Apprentices/Student)

- Ensure all apprentices, students, staff and visitors are safe and accounted for.
- Marshalling of apprentices, students, staff and visitors at the evacuation rendezvous point. Arranging for transfer of everyone to place of safety.
- Arrange for warm, dry shelter for everyone in the short term.
- Deal with immediate welfare matters: distress, injuries, domestic responsibilities, etc.
- Co-ordinate the sending home of apprentices, students and immediate care of those whose parents cannot be readily notified.

Premises: Office Manager

- Building security.
- Turn off gas, electricity etc, if this can be done safely.
- Salvage of critical documents/equipment if this can be done safely. The nominated person should be in possession of a list of critical items.
- Signs and notices for doors/boundaries. Liaison with neighbours.
- Identification/transfer to alternative premises.

Continuity and Recovery: Managing Director

Arrange for opening up of alternative premises. Co-ordinate fitting out with furniture and equipment. Liaise with Arena Learning insurance companies Liaise with DFE as necessary

Data Recovery: Missing Link IT Support

Organise the retrieval and restore of data from back up external systems

NB: It is tempting during the initial phase of an incident, when children and staff are accounted for and Staff are, for instance, milling around outside the premises and it is obvious that no work will be conducted for the rest of the day, to send them home. Before taking this decision, however, it should be borne in mind that they may be available to assist one of the BCMT members, and that, once released, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to make contact with them again until at least the following day.

7. Potential Disruptions

Loss of Premises

If in the event, Arena Learning Head Offices is out of action. Arena Learning staff would activate the ability to work-from-home.

Loss of Utilities/ICT:

Utilities/ICT	Name of Supplier	Telephone Number
Electricity	Scottish Power	0800 027 0072
Gas	National Gas Emergency Services	0800 111 999
Water/Sewerage		
Telephones	See under 8.4	08455159037
IT	See under 8.4	08435159037

Virtual/Remote Teaching:

If there is a serious disruption to education work can still be submitted by students and accessed by teachers via Arena Learning's, MS Teams, NewGen (VLE), BKSb and Onefile

Loss of Communication Telephone:

Telephone lines and equipment have support contracts with:

- BT - 08455159037

In the event of total loss of telecommunication mobile phones and walkie talkies can be used until phone system is repaired /replaced

Computers:

In the event of replacement computers being required Arena Learning will contact main suppliers and assess which contractor can replace equipment at the quickest/cheapest rate

- Dell: 01344 373 047
- Viglen: 01727 201 800
- MISCO: 0800 038 8880

Technical specifications to be based on the spec of the last summer order?

Network Infrastructure:

The network is currently maintained by: Arena Learning IT Support Team with support from Integrated Data Needs (IDN). In the event of major disruption IDN can refit/replace/install network cabling

- IDN: 08449 808008

Server Infrastructure:

There are currently 2 servers off-site. The servers are cloud-based.

Internet Access:

Provided by BT - 08435159037 Maintained by Missing Link IT Support 01257 473445

Internet access is provided through to a BT Fibre on Arena Learning site to RM Proxy server. In the event of a total loss SCC will be contacted support Arena Learning in restoring service

- SCC IT Support: 01823 355090

Loss of Data

Office 365 as a service has the ability to restore anything within the core environment. In the wake of a catastrophic failure, Microsoft will ensure our data is restored and available through one of the many data centres that it runs specifically for this purpose.

Data Back up

Arena Learning operates a Microsoft 365 infrastructure, all external servers are backed up to the cloud by IT Support.

Staff Shortage

The most likely scenarios involving a significant loss of staff are outbreak of disease (e.g., influenza pandemic/COVID-19).

Fuel Shortage Industrial action

In all of these events, there is likely to be a period of notice in which arrangements may be made to mitigate the effects:

Epidemic/Pandemic

Arena Learning HR Manager (Pandemic Manager)

An influenza pandemic (COVID-19) or similar occurrence may jeopardise staffing levels, directly through staff illness, or indirectly through fear of infection or through caring responsibilities for sick relatives.

What Arena Learning's pandemic manager should do:

It is essential that information is disseminated about how to identify symptoms of flu and what to do in the event of a member of staff becoming ill with suspected flu.

Fuel

In the event of a widespread fuel shortage, options will include:

Increased use of public transport, car sharing walking, cycling or work from home.

When information indicates that a fuel shortage is expected, a list of staff living remotely from their place of work and with particular difficulties in accessing any of the above options will be compiled.

Industrial Action

As far as possible, without attempting to influence staff members' legal right to take industrial action, managers should try to estimate the proportion of staff that may be available to work in order to plan work in accordance with priorities.

8. Recovery

Long-term recovery may be affected by decisions made during the assessment/ containment phase, so recovery issues should be taken into account by the BCMT from the outset. Dependent on the nature of the incident recovery may take months or even years to achieve (for instance if a full rebuild is required after a fire, or if injuries or deaths occur) and will include ways of keeping Arena Learning community together during any period of dispersion or commemorating the event on anniversaries.

9. Emergency Contact Details

Insurance Services:	Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd: 020 7448 6000
ESFA	Contact no: 0370 000 2288 helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk
SCC Civil Contingencies Unit	Email: emergencyplanning@wiganmbc.gov.uk Contact no.: 0845 345 9188

Guidance on Wigan's Emergency Plan closures is available at:

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Docs/PDF/Resident/Crime-Emergencies/Business-continuity-plan-template.pdf>