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# Horticulture Apprenticeship 2025-2027 - England

Callout for employers and prospective apprentices to form part of a pilot cohort.

## Deadline to register interest: February 24th

The Landworkers' Alliance has been working with Plumpton College in East Sussex to develop their horticulture apprenticeship as a training route for the agroecological sector. We're now seeking employers and prospective apprentices across England to form part of a pilot cohort, ready for the start of the 2025 growing season.

**N.B** The apprenticeship will run subject to there being a minimum cohort of 12 apprentices.

### Key information

#### How is the apprenticeship structured?

- Apprentices will be enrolled on the L3 Crop Technician apprenticeship. It will last **24 months** and the apprentices must be employed on a contract for a **minimum average of 22.5 hours per week** for the whole duration (this means they can work more in summer than in winter).
- Apprentices are required to spend 20% of their contracted hours completing 'Off the Job' (OTJ) training. This doesn't necessarily mean that they're away from their place of work - it's about doing things that increase their knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their job and apprenticeship e.g. workplace shadowing, mentoring, on or off-site training, college attendance, research, webinars, on-line training, portfolio work.
- The total minimum number of hours employment across the year is  $22.5 \times 52 \text{ weeks} = 1170$ . The minimum total number of required OTJ training hours is therefore  $1170 \times 0.2 = 234$
- The majority of training is delivered by the employer, however apprentices will also receive training from Plumpton College on the following dates:
  - 25/03-28/03 (at Plumpton)- 24.5hrs
  - 24/04 (Online)- 7hr
  - 20/05-23/05 (at Plumpton)- 24.5hrs
  - 12/06 (Online)- 7hr
  - 10/07 (Online)- 7hr
  - 11/09 (Online)- 7hr
  - 14/10-17/10 (at Plumpton)- 24.5hrs
  - 18/11-21/11 (Online)- 24.5hrs
  - 16/12-19/12 (Online)- 24.5hrs
  - 2026 dates TBC, however they will be structured similarly to 2025 to avoid the peak of the summer season.

- These sessions form part of the apprentice's off-the-job training. They include a 1 hour unpaid lunch break each day, so the total number of college hours for which the apprentices need to be paid in 2025 is **128.5**.

### Who is eligible for an apprenticeship?

Anyone aged 16 or above who is living in England and not in full-time education is eligible. Employers can recruit and select their own apprentice.

### What training and support will apprentices receive?

- **Employers** will provide the majority of the apprentice's practical training, with guidance and support from Plumpton College in order to map out an apprentice's training needs. They can structure this in a way that is convenient for their business, and will focus on the skills and knowledge needed for the apprentice to fulfill their role
- **Plumpton College** will deliver the course curriculum and will prepare students for assessment in the following subjects:
  - Plant science
  - Health and safety
  - Plant health
  - Protected cropping
  - Harvesting, grading and storing
  - Machinery use and maintenance
  - Soil science
  - Record keeping
  - Crop planning
  - Business skills for regenerative enterprises
  - Environmental issues and legislation
  - Soil cultivation and crop establishment
  - Crop management
  - Water and irrigation
  - Please note, this apprenticeship also currently includes a module in pesticide application, which apprentices must complete in order to obtain the qualification. However, this is taught exclusively by the college and Plumpton do so using only water, so that no pesticides are actually used.
  - By the end of their training, apprentices will obtain an accredited qualification.
  - Plumpton College will provide ongoing support for the apprentice, including regular quarterly reviews, 1-2-1 as needed and learning support for students with learning difficulties
  - As students at Plumpton College, apprentices will also receive support with [welfare](#), [careers](#) and [personal development](#).
- The **Landworkers' Alliance** will play a supporting role and will:
  - Provide an introduction to the social and political aspects of agroecology through the 'Agroecology as a Movement' module which has been co-developed by the Landworkers' Alliance and Emma Cardwell at Lancaster University.
  - Offer access to the New Entrant Support Scheme business training resources for regenerative enterprises.
  - Co-ordinate 4 site visits (2 per year in 2025 & 2026) to agroecological farms for the cohort of apprentices, which will complement the learning aims of the curriculum and enable peer-to-peer networking (travel on these visits can be subsidised and food will be provided)
  - Contribute as a third party towards monitoring and evaluation, through regular feedback from apprentices and their employers, for the ongoing development of the training.

### What is the cost to the apprentice?

- The cost of food, accommodation and travel to Plumpton College for in-person learning weeks will need to be taken into account. The college offers food and accommodation for £58 per day (apprentices can arrange their own food and accommodation if preferred). Plumpton advises that the apprentice's employer should contribute as much as they can to these costs, however, it's ultimately down to the apprentice and the employer to agree between themselves how they will be covered at the start of the apprenticeship.

- Apprentices will also have to ensure that they can access accommodation in proximity to their place of work, and cover their living costs.
- If eligible for state benefits, apprentices can still receive these whilst completing their qualification.

### **Which businesses can employ an apprentice?**

- In order to obtain their qualification apprentices will need to demonstrate competency in machinery use. As apprentices will be assessed in their workplace, this means that only businesses which utilise some machinery e.g. tractor driving for soil cultivation, seed drilling or weed control, are eligible to take on an apprentice on this programme.
- Employers can be based anywhere in England

### **What do employers receive?**

- Apprentices develop into highly skilled staff who contribute to the value and profitability of the business.
- Hiring an apprentice is a cost-effective way to train a new employee, since they can be paid at a lower rate during the early stages of their training.
- As well as being employed, the apprentice will be gaining new skills and knowledge through their training with the college, which they will bring back to their place of work.
- Employers who are taking on an apprentice will be able to take part in the LWA's one day 'Train the Trainer' workshop, which focuses on skills development for land-based trainers and teaching methods rooted in agroecological principles
- As the training provider, Plumpton College will support employers to deliver effective training, helping them to map out the training needs of the apprentice.
- The college will also provide safeguarding, health and wellbeing support for the apprentices.
- Employers will receive a consultation fee of £300 for the equivalent of 1 day's work per year, spread across a series of online group feedback and discussion sessions. This will help us to monitor and develop the apprenticeship so that it can best meet the needs of our sector going forwards.

### **What is the cost to employers?**

- Employers are required to pay the apprentice's salary. They can be paid the Apprentice's Wage (as a minimum), at an hourly rate of £6.40 (increasing to £7.55 from April 2025), for the first 12 months. After that, apprentices will need to be paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age (£12.21 from April 2025 for apprentices aged 21 and over).
- Employers are generally required to contribute 5% (£750) of the apprentice's total training costs (the remaining 95% is government funded) to the college. However, small businesses are commonly able to avoid paying this fee by receiving a 'levy transfer' from larger businesses which pay into an apprenticeship levy and often have surplus funds. Plumpton will offer guidance to employers on how they can seek a transfer of funds in this way.
- If accommodation is provided to the apprentice by the employer, this must comply with 'accommodation offset' legislation, and must therefore not be charged at more than £9.99 per day (£10.66 from April 2025). This must include rent as well as all associated utilities/ bills.
- The cost of food, accommodation and travel to Plumpton College for in-person learning weeks will need to be taken into account. The college offers food and accommodation for £58 per day (apprentices can arrange their own food and accommodation if preferred). Plumpton advises that the apprentice's employer should contribute as much as they can to these costs, however, it's ultimately down to the apprentice and the employer to agree between themselves how they will be covered at the start of the apprenticeship.

Please contact [chloe.broadfield@landworkersalliance.org.uk](mailto:chloe.broadfield@landworkersalliance.org.uk) for further information or to register your interest.

# Horticulture Apprenticeship 2025-2027 (Wales)

Callout for employers and prospective apprentices to form part of a pilot cohort.

## Deadline to register expression of interest: March 4th 2025

The Landworkers' Alliance has been working with Coleg Cambria to establish their horticulture apprenticeship as a training route for the agroecological sector in Wales. We're now seeking employers and prospective apprentices to form part of a pilot cohort, ready for the start of the 2025 growing season.

### Key information

#### How is the apprenticeship structured?

- Apprentices will be enrolled on the production horticulture pathway of Coleg Cambria's Horticulture Apprenticeship (L2 or L3 depending on prior experience).
- It will last **24 months** and apprentices must be employed on a contract for **a minimum of 16 hours per week** for the whole duration.
- The majority of training takes place on the job with the employer and practical assessments will be carried out in the workplace.
- The college provides support with theoretical learning and this can be concentrated in the winter months.
- Apprentices will be assessed in line with the City & Guilds Work-Based Horticulture Curriculum (see below). Coleg Cambria will work with employers to select the units most relevant to their business/ apprentice.
- Employers are encouraged to allow apprentices time within their contracted hours to complete their coursework.

#### What training and support will apprentices receive?

- **Employers** will provide the majority of the apprentice's practical training on the job.
- **Coleg Cambria** will provide support with theoretical learning and will prepare students for assessment in a selection of the following units:

Level 2 / 3	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Preparing ground for seeding and planting</li><li>➤ Establishing plants or seeds in soil</li><li>➤ Installing drainage systems</li><li>➤ Maintain drainage systems</li><li>➤ Use and maintain non-powered and hand held powered tools and equipment</li><li>➤ Establishing crops or plants in growing medium</li><li>➤ Monitor and report on the growth and development of crops and plants</li><li>➤ Maintain moisture levels for crops or plants</li><li>➤ Provide nutrients to crops or plants</li><li>➤ Remove unwanted plant growth to maintain development</li><li>➤ Carry out harvesting operations</li><li>➤ Store harvested crops</li><li>➤ Plant nomenclature, terminology and identification</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Collect and prepare propagation material</li><li>➤ Establish propagation material</li><li>➤ Propagate plants from seed</li><li>➤ Monitor and record environmental conditions for protected crops</li><li>➤ Monitor and maintain watering systems</li><li>➤ Identify and report the presence of pests, diseases and disorders</li><li>➤ Control pests, diseases and disorders</li><li>➤ Prepare and cultivate sites ready for planting crops</li><li>➤ Carry out harvesting operations by mechanical means</li><li>➤ Prepare the storage area and monitor crop during storage</li><li>➤ Promote responsible public use of the environment</li><li>➤ Prepare and operate a tractor and attachments</li></ul>
Level 3 Only	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Plan and manage the collection of orders</li> <li>➤ Prepare collected orders for dispatch</li> <li>➤ Prepare, monitor and adjust environmental conditions for protected crops or plants</li> <li>➤ Prepare for and maintain equipment and machines</li> <li>➤ Encourage and motivate volunteers</li> <li>➤ Manage the work of volunteers</li> <li>➤ Organise the delivery of reliable customer service</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve the customer relationship</li> <li>➤ Identify the need for and plan habitat management work</li> <li>➤ Co-ordinate and oversee habitat management work</li> <li>➤ Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of habitat management work</li> <li>➤ Time management for business</li> </ul> |
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- Apprentices will receive regular support from Coleg Cambria through visits to their workplace and online sessions.
- The college will coordinate peer-to-peer support and networking opportunities for the cohort of apprentices, including a minimum of 2 farm visits per year.
- By the end of their training, apprentices will obtain an accredited qualification.
- N.B. Tractor training is not included within this. However, it can be provided at Coleg Cambria's farm in Llysfasi and Farming Connect can subsidise 40% of the cost.
- The college also offers a range of [student services](#) including mental health, wellbeing and careers support.
- The **Landworkers' Alliance** will play a supporting role and will:
  - Provide apprentices with an introduction to the social and political aspects of agroecology through the 'Agroecology as a Movement' module, which has been co-developed by the Landworkers' Alliance and Emma Cardwell at Lancaster University.
  - Offer access to the New Entrant Support Scheme business training resources for regenerative enterprises.
  - Contribute to monitoring and evaluation through regular feedback from apprentices and their employers, for the ongoing development of the training.

### Who is eligible to do an apprenticeship?

- Anyone who is aged 16 or above who does not already have a qualification at the same level (2 or 3) in horticulture or a closely related subject, is eligible for the apprenticeship (they may be living in England, but must be working in Wales).
- Those who do not already have a GCSE in Maths and either English or Welsh will be required to complete these as part of their apprenticeship.
- Employers can recruit and select their own apprentice.

### What is the cost to the apprentice?

- The qualification is funded by the government, so the only costs for the apprentice are travel for in-person training/farm visits.
- Apprentices will also have to ensure that they can access accommodation in proximity to their place of work, and cover their living costs.
- If eligible for state benefits, apprentices can still receive these whilst completing their qualification.

### Which businesses can employ an apprentice?

- Employers can be based anywhere in Wales.

### What is the cost to employers?

- Employers are required to pay the apprentice's salary. They can be paid the Apprentice's Wage (as a minimum) at an hourly rate of £6.40 (increasing to £7.55 from April 2025) for the first 12 months. After that, apprentices will need to be paid the full National Minimum Wage for their age (£12.21 from April 2025 for apprentices aged 21 and over). Employers do not need to pay National Insurance for apprentices.
- If accommodation is provided to the apprentice by the employer, this must comply with 'accommodation offset' legislation, and must therefore not be charged at more than £5.74 per day (for optional accommodation) or £1.79 per week (for a house that someone is obliged to live in to fulfil their duties), and this must include rent as well as all

associated utilities/ bills (these figures are projected to increase by 10% from April 2025 but are yet to be confirmed).

#### **What do employers receive?**

- Employers who are taking on an apprentice will be able to take part in the LWA's one day 'Train the Trainer' workshop, which focuses on skills development for land-based trainers and teaching methods rooted in agroecological principles.
- Employers will receive a consultation fee of £300 for the equivalent of 1 day's work per year, spread across a series of online group feedback and discussion sessions. This will help us to monitor and develop the apprenticeship so that it can best meet the needs of the agroecological sector going forwards.

Please contact [chloe.broadfield@landworkersalliance.org.uk](mailto:chloe.broadfield@landworkersalliance.org.uk) for further information or to register your interest.