



# Employer Research Project

Tender Brief



# Who is Coach Core?

Coach Core Foundation is a national charity, established in 2012, as a response to the 2011 riots, to better support those that face barriers to employment or education.

Started initially as a programme for 20 young people in London, it quickly grew to other national sites, and then became an independent charity in April 2020.

We now have over 20 programmes established, work with over 250 sector employers, and have recently supported our 1000th apprentice. These inspiring, relatable young role models have given much needed sport and physical activity to over 13 million participants in that time too!

With the launch of our new strategy, Project 1500, we are looking forward to expanding our operations even further to ultimately provide more marginalised young people with life changing career pathways.

You can access our new strategy [here](#), for more information about our ambitions for the next three years.



# Overview

Over the past few years, we have seen a significant decrease in the number of potential apprentices applying to our programme. We have also heard the significant challenges that employers are facing, when looking to recruit an apprentice. However, to date, we have not captured any tangible evidence to allow us to better understand this challenge.

To allow us to generate a greater evidence base, we are commissioning a piece of work to further understand these challenges. We would also like to highlight a series of recommendations that can be presented to Government and other relevant stakeholders, with the view to lobbying for changes to the apprenticeship system, to make it more accessible for both apprentices and employers.

Potential Project Title:

***Understanding the barriers faced by employers when looking to employ young people through apprenticeships***

Potential Research Question:

***How does the current apprenticeship system support or hinder smaller employers efforts to recruit and retain young people on apprenticeships- particularly those who may have additional learning and support needs?***

# Background and Context

## Background

Across the course of a year, Coach Core is working with approximately 65 employers, over 80% of which are considered to be a micro, small or medium sized employer\*. These employers span a range of sectors, including sport and physical activity, youth work and general charitable operations. Anecdotally, we know that a number of these employers struggle to find the capacity, infrastructure and financial resource to recruit and retain apprentices, particularly those that require further support or mentoring.

With Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeship starts continuing their rapid decline (Straw and Couthard 2023), we would like to understand the national and local factors that influence employer ability to bridge skills gaps and diversify the workforce through apprenticeships.

The purpose of this research is to identify the key factors that encourage or inhibit the recruitment of apprentices, with a particular focus on intermediate level qualifications.

## Context

Coach Core has access to a range of data sets that can support or enhance this research:

- Number of employers involved in a Coach Core programme
- Breakdown of employer size and their main industry
- Number of employers who didn't engage with Coach Core and the reasons (e.g. capacity, affordability etc)
- How many of our current or recent employers have worked with apprentices before

*\*Footnote: Micro = 1-10 employees; Small= 11-149 employees ; Medium = 50-249 employees.*

# Project Objectives

The primary focus of the project is to set out clear evidence-based recommendations for future apprenticeships policy and practice.

## **Objectives:**

- To facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration between Coach Core and employer partners
- To identify the key factors that encourage or prevent smaller employers from recruiting apprentices
- To gain a greater understanding of the resource and capacity required for these employers to recruit and retain apprentices from under-represented or marginalised groups
- To provide recommendations to stakeholders/policy makers, with the view to making the apprenticeship system more feasible for micro, small and medium sized employers
- To build alliances and support from our partners to amplify our message, increase its credibility and broaden support for policy change.

The research should specifically consider the unique challenges faced by small and micro Coach Core employers when looking to recruit apprentices. The project should take a particular focus on aspects of marginalisation that may present additional challenges, such as disability, geography and economic status. It should also consider the potential implications of possible increases to National Apprenticeship, Minimum or Living Wage and how this may present additional barriers for employers.

# Methodology and Approach

Prior to the research commencing, Coach Core would consider some appropriate means of engaging some of our current and most recent employers. This may be via:

- Informal 121 and group discussions
- Sharing information about the project via Employer Newsletters

The aim of this will be to:

- Identify potential employers keen to support the research
- Sense check the research question/brief and highlight any additional areas to consider

The specific research methodology will likely be determined by the research partner, based on their expertise and recommendations. However, we anticipate that this will involve largely qualitative research.

Participants will be current or recent employers of Coach Core apprentices.

The sample size will be discussed with the research partner, but is likely to involve at least 10% of current or previous employers from the last 12-24 months (circa 10-20).

We anticipate that the research will involve in depth interviews and focus groups, leading to thematic analysis of the data to identify key trends and themes.



# Project Timelines

Date	Milestone	Responsibility
15th November 2024	Submission window closes	CCF
W/C 25th November 2024	Research partner confirmed	CCF
W/C 2nd December 2024	Research brief and expectations confirmed with partner	CCF and Research Partner
End January 2025	Research conducted	Research Partner
Mid February 2025	Thematic analysis and initial presentation of research	Research Partner
February 2025 >	Final release of research paper, with key recommendations/policy asks	Research Partner

# Project Budget and Anticipated Outputs

The total budget for this project is **£7000**. Coach Core Foundation would welcome proposals that include additional 'in-kind' contributions. Coach Core Foundation would also be open to undertaking aspects of this project internally (or via our partners), to maximise the budget available. This may include support with identification of employers, analysis of key themes, or design of the final written report.

The anticipated outputs of this project are as follows:

- Regular updates on research project
- Final written report, with clear recommendations, to be put forward to stakeholders and policy makers
- Support with dissemination of the research findings



# Expression of Interest process

Please submit your Expression of Interest via this [form](#) **by the 15th November 2024**

Expressions of Interest should include the following:

- Overview of the organisation and examples of any similar work completed
- Details and prior experience of the team/individuals that would conduct this project
- Proposed methodology/approach
- Details of how the principles of data protection and safeguarding will be adhered to
- Detailed breakdown of project budget
- Any in kind contributions that can be offered

# COACH CORE



Take a look at our new strategy  
'Project 1500: Empowering Apprentices, Enriching Communities'

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Visit: <https://coachcore.org.uk>



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