

# QUARTERLY ACCOUNT

SPRING 2025

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYERS FROM ACCOUNTANCY LEARNING



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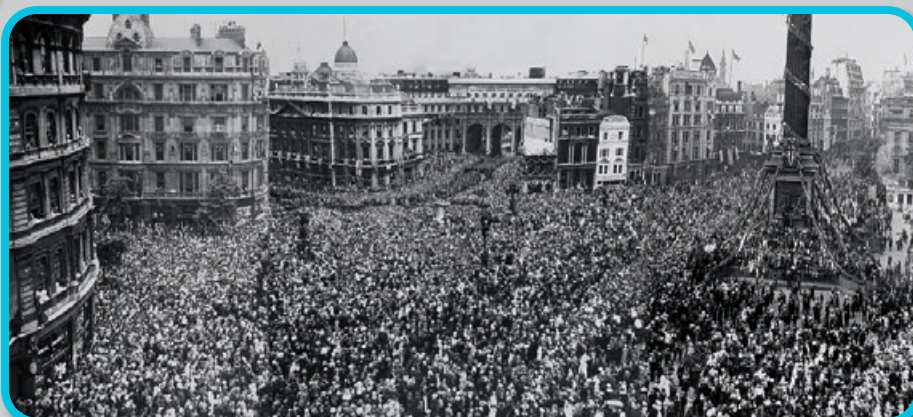
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## "VE DAY"



**VE Day on 8th May will celebrate victory in Europe at the end of World War 2.**

However, VJ Day did not occur until 15th August 1945. My uncle fought in Burma and the Burma campaign continued until 13th September 1945.

It is 80 years since the end of WW2 in Europe. I was born in 1955 and am very fortunate to have lived in the UK in a period of relative peace for the UK. There are millions living elsewhere who have been less fortunate.

I have always been struck by the difference between the solemnity

of Remembrance Day on 11th November and the celebrations for VE Day on 8th May.

The former remembers the wanton loss of life and the overriding question, "What was it all for?"

The latter celebrates victory over a terrible regime that was anathema to the liberties and tolerance that this country aspires to and which would be have been destroyed if that regime had not been overcome.

We should not take our peace for granted and should learn from history how it can slip away.

We owe it to the next generations to achieve another 80 years of peace and also to achieve this whilst preserving the liberties and freedoms that we have enjoyed.

# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTORS

## BELIEF

It was Winston Churchill Day on 9th April. It reminded me of a scene in the film *Darkest Hour* which was set in the early days of World War II, where newly appointed Prime Minister Churchill finds himself torn between standing up to Hitler and sitting down with him at the bargaining table.

The scene that really resonated with me was when, under immense pressure from his colleagues in government to secure a peace treaty, Churchill went AWOL and hopped on the London Underground (he'd never travelled that way before) to speak to the 'ordinary' people.

Historically, there is no evidence to prove that this happened, although Churchill was often prone to disappear and pop up somewhere in London with ordinary people to find out that they were thinking.

They all backed his gut feeling and desire to fight to the bitter end, not to settle for a peace treaty. This rejection of appeasement with a violent aggressor was a massive turning point, and the rest is history.

That one scene reassured me that no matter who you are, whatever position you're in, everyone needs:

- Something to believe in.
- Someone to believe in.
- Someone to believe in them.

This related to Churchill, and it related to the people he allegedly spoke to.

It relates to you and us and to your team, including your apprentices.

Remind them of your Vision and how they fit in with it, how they can contribute to it. Give them regular feedback on how they are doing, what they are doing great at and how and where they can improve.



We are all really busy and it is easy to find other things to do. Don't forget to make time to do this. Often.

The coming year was always likely to be a difficult one just because of domestic issues. Now the world seems to have been thrown into precarious chaos internationally – both economically, politically, and militarily. However, we need to continue to see the end game – our vision of what we want to be, and we want our business to be, and we need to stubbornly and determinedly continue to work to achieve this vision.

Apprenticeships try to focus on developing skills and behaviours through which to apply the technical knowledge acquired from studies. We can provide apprentices guidance on this, but it is you, the employer who is best placed to encourage those skills and behaviours and to provide opportunities for apprentices to apply them at work.

The world view might seem rubbish and there are clearly threats but this is not 1939 or even 1914, although there are some striking similarities. It is our responsibility to stick to our vision and to ensure our team are aware of that vision and believe in it and work with us to achieve it.

As Churchill said:

"The price of greatness is responsibility."

## ASK US...

...if you have any questions on Level 7, the Employer's NIC exemptions for apprentices aged under 25, incentives for apprentices aged 16-18 and exemption from the 5% SME employer contributions for those aged up-to 21.

# PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

## QUOTES OF THE QUARTER

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Winston Churchill

“It is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.”

Queen Elizabeth II

“Where there's hope, there's life.  
It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again.”

Anne Frank



## MAKING MORE OF ME!

### 5 Star Service

By Michael Heppell

Michael Heppell is one of the UK's top motivational trainers. His programmes on Brilliance and 5-Star Service have been attended by tens of thousands of individuals and used by many hundreds of companies across the UK and overseas as a way to motivate individuals to be all they can be. His current clients include major blue-chip companies, high street retailers and Government bodies, plus individuals.

Nail the competitive edge that will knock out your customers and make your business stand out from the crowd. Watch as your positive reviews, rankings and reputation skyrocket. Discover how, with even the smallest of budgets you can:

- Delight your customers every time and keep them coming back
- Win ever more customers without spending a fortune
- Get repeat orders and referrals from everyone you encounter
- Boost your profile, ranking and star-rating on online review sites
- Convert more enquiries into cash

In this third edition you'll find over a dozen of Michael's brand new, best-ever techniques as well as all the winning strategies and case studies that have already made this one of the UK's most in-demand guides to first-class customer service.

***5 Star Service is what every business needs to succeed. This easy to read and even easier to use guide will show you how you can do it – brilliantly!***

***“Michael Heppell is the ultimate service guru.” Jonathan Raggett, MD Red Carnation Hotels & Hotelier of the Year***



This is a very practical, easy to read book which is packed full of ideas, stories, hints and tips to help anyone working in a customer service role (which is most of us one way or another!).

Michael's book covers 54 topics over 7 key chapters, which makes the book very easy to dip into at any time!

# PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

## AAT NEWS AND UPDATES

### Updated from the AAT

Anthony Clarke, Head of Market Development at the AAT has kindly written the AAT update for this issue.

The big focus at AAT over recent months has been work on our brand new syllabus for the Level 4 Diploma for Professional Accounting Technicians, which will be operational from 1 September 2026. New Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications will follow in 2027.

Development of the new syllabus focuses on the following:

- Keeping our profession relevant
- Driving up professional standards
- Building responsible business

We have worked directly with employer partners, training providers and Level 4 alumni to ensure the syllabus content continues to deliver the right knowledge and skills for Accounting Technicians of the future and ensures students can demonstrate competence against the inbound Level 4 occupational standard for technical occupational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Key innovations that have gone into the design of the qualification include:

- Balance of human-marked to computer-marked assessments, supporting delivery and curriculum planning, in addition to student engagement, motivation and ultimate completion
- Use of authentic simulation to assess practical competencies through use of varied question types assessing practical and higher-level cognitive skills
- Use of pre-release (Advanced Business Awareness) and authentic reference material to replicate workplace practice e.g., Finance Acts
- Ongoing review of marking release timescales



**aat** | Training provider awards 2025  
**Shortlisted**

**aat** | Training provider Awards 2024  
**Shortlisted**

- Remote invigilation will be made available from assessment release date
- Open dialogue with other Professional Accounting Organisations to ensure maximum progression opportunities

Other key elements are:

- Removal of optional units - all five units will be mandatory
- Three of five units will be fully computer marked, with results available within 24 hours
- Introduction of Advanced Business Awareness unit content introducing new topics, e.g. change management, strategy and decision making, and sustainability strategy.
- Pass mark will remain at 70%

We will continue to support employers in the lead up to the qualification launch and work collaboratively with training providers to ensure a smooth transition.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to a member of the team, please contact:  
[employers@aat.org.uk](mailto:employers@aat.org.uk)

# PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Jess Phillips:

Having completed my Levels 2 and 3 elsewhere, I can confidently attest to the exceptional quality of tutors at Accountancy Learning.

They have supported and guided me every step of the way - not only by encouraging my studies through challenging personal circumstances but also by advising me during changes in accounting practices and helping me make the best decisions for my future.

I've learned so much, from various study techniques to mastering complex topics that I wouldn't have been able to grasp without the dedicated support of my wonderful tutors, Amy, Ros, and Rose.

I am incredibly grateful to them for their guidance and encouragement, which helped me achieve my Level 4 AAT qualification.

*Jess' personal tutor, Amy Hassall, said "Jess started her L4 apprenticeship in 2022 and has just completed and gained her L4 AAT qualification. She changed jobs during her apprenticeship and also had some tricky personal circumstances, but despite all these challenges she really persevered and eventually finished her apprenticeship."*



JESS PHILLIPS

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT ON...

### Alison Truscott (Partnerships Development Manager):

After 35 years in financial services—mostly in business development across banking and wealth management—I've learned that building strong, genuine relationships is the key to everything. Over the years, I've worked all across the UK, but for the last five, I've been based in the South, which has felt like a natural fit both professionally and personally.

In February 2025, I joined Accountancy Learning, and I'm genuinely excited about the opportunity to build long-term relationships with employers across the region. Helping people and businesses grow is what I've always loved most about my work, and I'm looking forward to continuing that journey in this new role.

Outside of work, I'm passionate about supporting charities, especially those making a real difference in people's lives. I also love to travel—preferably somewhere warm and sunny (cold, rainy days are definitely not my thing).

**Likes:** Give me sunshine, a good view, and I'm happy. I'm also a big animal lover, and my little dog Rosie completely rules the roost at home.

**Dislikes:** Brussel sprouts. The devil's vegetable, if you ask me.

**Most Embarrassing Moment:** As a child growing up (and my hate of Brussel sprouts!) I wasn't allowed to leave the dinner table until I had eaten all my vegetables and on this occasion they were sprouts. Everyone had left the dinner table, just me remaining, and my trusty Jack Russell, Timmy. I had the best plan – dogs eat anything, especially Jack Russells, so down went the plate for him to polish off said sprouts. However, to my horror, he also doesn't like sprouts! But, he did like the gravy on the sprouts.....I still had to eat the sprouts, as I couldn't admit I had tried to give them to Timmy.



ALISON TRUSCOTT

# PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

## BUSINESS FOCUS

### Clear Communication: Then and Now – Lessons from VE Day

As we commemorate VE Day, it's a moment not just to remember history, but to reflect on the extraordinary efforts of the brave men and women who helped shape it. Among the many elements that contributed to the Allied victory in World War II, one stands out as particularly relevant today - clear, concise, and accurate communication.

During the war, communication wasn't a luxury. It was a necessity. Without modern technology, messages were delivered via hand-written notes, radio transmissions, and runners crossing dangerous territory. Every word counted. Instructions had to be understood the first time. There was no room for ambiguity, no luxury of multiple follow-ups, and certainly no Teams chat to clarify what someone "really meant."

It was communication under pressure. And it was communication that saved lives. Our wartime leader, Winston Churchill was known for his powerful speeches, and this quote just shows how important effective communication is:

*The difference between mere management and leadership is communication*



The message of this quote still applies in our modern world, where we may not be navigating a battlefield, but we are surrounded by a different kind of noise - a constant barrage of messages from every direction on multiple platforms. Emails, texts, notifications, meetings, Slack threads... it's relentless.

Ironically, while we have more tools than ever before, the core need remains the same: clarity.

In the world of accountancy, clarity of communication is not just a nice-to-have - it's essential. Whether you're delivering technical content to apprentices or managing client relationships, your message has to cut through. Miscommunication doesn't just waste time, it creates confusion, delays progress and can damage trust.

This is where we can take inspiration from the ingenuity of wartime communication. Messages had to be streamlined, focused, and adapted to the environment.

Today, we're faced with a different challenge: standing out in a saturated world. The skill now lies not just in being clear, but in being engaging and relevant.

So how do we achieve that? A few simple principles go a long way:

- Be intentional: Before you speak, write, or present - ask yourself, what's the one thing I need people to understand?
- Keep it simple: Complexity doesn't equal intelligence. In fact, the smartest communicators are those who make the complex simple.
- Adapt to your audience: Whether you're training Gen Z apprentices or presenting to senior clients, adjust your tone and format. What worked in one setting won't always translate to another.

On VE Day, we honour not just the sacrifices, but also the determination, resilience, and ingenuity of those who came before us.

Clear communication isn't just a wartime necessity, it's a timeless skill that builds trust, improves understanding, and drives results.

And today, in a world full of messages, the clearest voice still wins, so let's make sure it's ours.



## PRESENT YOURSELF

Alastair Greener has over 25 years' experience as a speaker and TV Presenter. As a communications expert he delivers a range of live and virtual keynote speeches as well as leading insightful, interactive and inspiring workshops (in person and online), in confident & effective communication. You can find out more at [presentyourself.co.uk](http://presentyourself.co.uk) and look for the "Present Yourself in A Minute" video series on YouTube.

# PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

## JOKE OF THE QUARTER

**General:** Leaps tall buildings in a single bound. Faster than a speeding bullet. More powerful than a steam train. Gives policies to god.

**Brigadier:** Leaps short buildings in a single bound. Almost as fast as a speeding bullet. More powerful than a shunting engine. Walks on water.

**Colonel:** Leaps short buildings with a run up. As fast as a slow bullet. More powerful than a large lorry. Sometimes walks on indoor swimming pools.

**Lt Colonel:** Can barely clear a Nissen hut. Can fire a speeding bullet. Loses tug of war to a lorry. Is occasionally spoken to by god.

**Major:** Leaves marks high up on buildings, when attempting to jump over them. Can order others to fire speeding bullets. Pushes lorries up hill. Talks about god.

**Captain:** Runs into tall buildings. Recognises most trains. Pushes car on flat ground. Swims well.

**Lieutenant:** Trips over threshold of tall building. Makes train noises. Can tow a car, if driving another. Talks to animals.

**2nd Lieutenant:** Not allowed in buildings. Is frequently late for trains. Is run over by cars. Mumbles to himself.

**Sergeant Major:** Lifts tall buildings and walks under them. Catches speeding bullets between his teeth. Kicks steam trains off the rails. Freezes oceans with a single glance.

*Originally printed in "Union Jack" The Army Newspaper.*



## THE RUMOUR ROOM

### Level 7 Apprenticeships

Although nobody yet knows (even the government?!?), the most likely date for withdrawal of funding for Level 7 Apprenticeships is 1st August this year. So, if you are considering starting someone on Level 7, you should aim to start them by 31st July at the latest, ensuring you also have evidence of learning in place for then.

## DID YOU KNOW...

### The Strange Side of WWII Strategy:

**Bat Bombs:** The US planned to use "bat" bombs on Japan. Basically, they wanted to release hundreds of bats attached to timed devices, the bats would fly off and roost and would then explode. It was an idea to help them attack buildings that bombers wouldn't be able to get to. Testing was carried out, with promising results, but the project was scrapped in 1944 in favour of the more rapidly advancing atomic bomb.

**Operation Vegetarian:** At one point the British Government came up with Operation Vegetarian, a mission which planned to drop linseed cakes laced with anthrax onto farms in an effort to kill off Germany's sheep, pigs and cattle. Thankfully, Operation Vegetarian never got off the ground.

**Rat Bombs:** The British developed the Rat Bomb, basically, we would put dead rats full of explosives in the Nazi coal bunkers. The hope was that the rats would be found and thrown into a furnace which would then trigger a massive explosion. The Nazis discovered the plan however and then wasted months searching their coal supplies for bomb filled rats. So mildly successful if the plan was to irritate the enemy.

**Operation Cornflakes:** The OSS (Office of Strategic Services) (the American precursor to the CIA) devised a plan to spread anti-Nazi propaganda by bombing German mail trains, then inserting fake but convincing Nazi-stamped mailbags full of anti-Hitler leaflets. The idea was that German postal workers would unknowingly collect and deliver these letters across the country. The forgeries were so accurate that many letters were delivered.

## ON THE HR FRONT



### International working policies

It may read as a horror story for any company trying to accommodate an employee with health difficulties.

But the case of a software firm who permitted a developer to have months (about two years) of career break, plus adjustments at work and the exploration of working remotely from rural Pakistan, ended in a judgement of unfair dismissal earlier this year.

While the judgement itself was entirely based on how the final communications were issued to the worker (a compensation amount will

be determined later in the year), we wanted to focus on the non-starter idea of the remote working. It was in a location where the employee herself ceded that there was a significant time difference and little infrastructure, leading to poor internet quality and speed, and even electricity downtime.

In our post-pandemic world, it is important for companies to consider whether they need an international working policy. International working may embody living the dream for an employee and it could even offer some potential benefits for you as an employer – like hanging on to a good employee you would otherwise lose, or broadening a talent pool if you struggle to recruit locally.

But it is much more complex than first meets the eye. Infrastructure and time difference cited above are important. There is also foreign employment and tax law to consider, productivity/remote working concerns, data security and GDPR compliance to think about, to name a few of the issues.

If you want to tighten up this area of your business, please talk to us and we can help you develop a policy that protects your business and lets everyone know where they stand.

### Should regional accents be a protected characteristic?

From a Cockney "Let's have a butchers..." to a Geordie "Wey aye man", regional language and the accents that go with them are part of our rich heritage. They do come with a bit of ribbing too, though. Is this harmless fun or indicative of an undercurrent of prejudice against people who speak anything but the Queen's English?

One recent survey found that a quarter of employees had been mocked for their regional accent at work, and 23% worried that they may face bias. Given that if an accent was from another country, such concerns would be relevant under the Equality Act on grounds of race, it begs the question: Should regional accents, too, be a protected characteristic?



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## HOW DID THAT WORD COME ABOUT?

**Military Slang:** **Army strawberries:** Prunes. **Ash can:** Depth charge. **Battle Bowler:** Officer's slang for the British steel helmet. **Browned off:** Annoyed or fed up. **Dodo:** An Air Force cadet before he starts flying. **Doughboy** (or dough): An infantryman. **File 13:** Wastebasket. **Gravel-agitator:** Infantryman. **Mitt flopper:** A soldier who does favours for his superiors, or salutes unnecessarily. **SNAFU:** Situation Normal, All Fouled Up. **SUSFU:** Situation Under Serious Fiasco. **FUBAR:** Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition. **Armoured heifer:** Condensed milk, because it came in a metal can. **Army lids:** Radio operators, so called because they "talk through their hats". **Piggy-stick:** Entrenching tool handle. **Tooth pick:** Bayonet.

# BALANCE SHEET

## NEWS FROM ALHQ

### We welcome to AL:

**Alison Truscott (Partnerships Development Manager):** With over 35 years of experience in the financial services sector across the UK, Alison has cultivated a diverse skill set through various roles, with a significant focus on business development and building enduring partnerships over the past 20 years. Her primary focus has been on generating new business opportunities and establishing professional connections that contribute to sustained success and client satisfaction. Based in the South West community for many years, Alison's commitment to giving back is reflected in her past role as a trustee for the Devon Air Ambulance and current position as a trustee for Animals in Distress, (Ipplpen).



ALISON TRUSCOTT

**Ceri Blake (AAT Tutor):** Ceri completed her AAT in 1998 and became CIMA qualified in 2006. She has spent most of her accounting career working with local SMEs as either a Management Accountant or in more recent years, a Finance Accountant. Helping business owners understand and use financial information to make business decisions has been incredibly rewarding. Ceri lives in Devon with her husband and teenage son who are both football mad. When not at football training or matches, Ceri can be found on stage with local Amateur Dramatics groups, with dreams of being an extra on TV one day.



CERI BLAKE

## DOING OUR BIT...



In early March, a bunch of us from AL spent a crisp Sunday morning 'tree planting' for the National Trust. Located near Clifford Bridge, we started off with a 40 minute uphill trek to the site (that was almost enough for one of our team...!) where we were given our kit along with the saplings.

Planting was not in a flat, pristine field as some had hoped – instead, we planted on a steep slope amongst rocks, tree stumps, logs, bracken, brambles and goodness knows what else.

However, whilst hard work, it was massively rewarding to look back and see the 100 or so trees we had just planted – we were well and truly ready for a pint and meal at the local pub though!

## AAT CONFERENCE

In mid-March, five of us travelled up to the annual AAT Conference which took place in Solihull this year.

Two of our Apprentices (Ed Smith of PKF Francis Clark and Ben Watson of Cornwall Council) were shortlisted for the "AAT Apprentice of the Year" award.

Sadly, neither came away with the trophy, however it was a huge achievement to have made it to the final four – we were massively proud of them and so were their managers.



## SW ICAEW DINNER

Thank you to our guests Sharron Robbie (D&C TPN), Tracy Barnes (Babcock), Leanne Burns (Westcotts), Helen Hoskin and Kyra Taylor-Reid (Devon Chamber), for a very enjoyable evening!



# BALANCE SHEET

## THE CAT'S CLAUSE



### Able Seaman Simon: The Hero Cat of the Yangtze

Meet Simon, the only cat in history to be awarded the prestigious Dickin Medal – the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross. His bravery aboard HMS Amethyst during the Chinese Civil War earned him this rare honour, posthumously awarded by the PDSA.

Simon joined the Royal Navy ship in 1948 while it was docked in Hong Kong. Aboard during the infamous Yangtze Incident of 1949, Simon was seriously injured when the ship came under heavy shellfire and ran aground. Despite his wounds, he returned to duty, taking on the vital task of protecting the ship's food supplies from a rampant rat infestation.



*Simon, with three of his shipmates*

One particularly aggressive rat posed a dire threat to the crew's survival. Simon heroically took it down, and for 10 weeks, continued to keep the vermin at bay, helping to preserve morale and vital resources while the crew remained stranded.

His shipmates described Simon as their "true saviour" and proudly promoted him to "Able Seaman." When Amethyst finally returned to Plymouth in November 1949, Simon was welcomed as a true war hero. His courage and spirit left a lasting paw print in naval history.

## SMALL TALK

**The Limping Lady:** Virginia Hall, an American with a prosthetic leg nicknamed "Cuthbert," became one of the most feared Allied spies. Working with the British Special Operations Executive and later the American Office of Strategic Services, she operated in occupied France, organizing resistance movements and coordinating sabotage missions. Despite being pursued by the Gestapo, who dubbed her "the most dangerous of all Allied spies," Hall evaded capture and continued her clandestine work, significantly aiding the Allied war effort.

**The Strangest Battle of WWII:** In May 1945, American soldiers and German Wehrmacht troops fought side by side against the Waffen-SS in the extraordinary Battle of Castle Itter in Austria. The castle, used as a prison for prominent French figures, including two former prime ministers and the sister of Charles de Gaulle - was under attack by SS forces. Led by U.S. troops and a defector German officer, the defenders included the prisoners themselves. Together, they held off the assault until reinforcements arrived. It remains one of the war's most bizarre moments - and one of only two known instances of U.S. and German forces fighting as allies, the other being Operation Cowboy.

**X Troop:** was a secretive commando unit formed by Winston Churchill, consisting predominantly of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. These men, many having suffered under Nazi persecution, were trained in counterintelligence and sabotage. They played pivotal roles in operations across Europe, often operating behind enemy lines to gather intelligence and eliminate high-value targets. Their contributions remained largely unrecognized for decades due to the clandestine nature of their missions and concerns over their safety if captured.



# BALANCE SHEET

## WHY ACCOUNTANCY APPRENTICESHIPS MAKE MORE SENSE THAN EVER FOR EMPLOYERS IN 2025

As of April 2025, employers across the UK will be in a stronger position to grow their finance teams while keeping costs down, thanks to enhanced incentives for hiring apprentices.

Two key developments — National Insurance savings for young apprentices and the increasing availability of unspent levy funds from other organisations — make accountancy apprenticeships a smart, strategic move for employers of all sizes.

### National Insurance Savings: A Boost to Your Bottom Line

From April 2025, the cost of your Employers' NI Contributions will increase because of the increase in the rate from 13.8% to 15%, combined with a reduction in the threshold from £9,100 to £5,000. However, Employers' NICs are not payable for apprentices aged under 25. This applies to apprentices across all sectors, including accountancy — one of the most in-demand and skill-critical areas in many businesses.

This change can translate into substantial savings. For instance, hiring a 21-year-old accountancy apprentice on a £24,000 salary would usually cost the employer an additional £2,850 per year in NI contributions. With the exemption, that money stays in the business — allowing it to be reinvested into training, technology, or further headcount.

The savings multiply with each apprentice you take on, making it even more compelling to bring in fresh talent early and mould them to your company's systems, processes, and culture.

### Accessing Levy Funds from Other Employers: Free Training, Real Value

Another underused advantage available to employers is the ability to tap into other organisations' unspent Apprenticeship Levy funds. Larger companies (with annual payrolls over £3 million) are required to pay into the levy, but many do not use all of their allocated funds. These unused funds can now be transferred — up to 25% of a company's levy pot — to help smaller employers cover apprenticeship training costs.

This presents a golden opportunity for SMEs or non-levy payers to bring in apprentices at no cost for the training itself. For example, a full accountancy apprenticeship — such as AAT Level 3 or Level 4 — could be fully funded via a levy transfer, providing valuable savings on each apprentice.

Finding these funds has become easier too. Through the government's online apprenticeship service, employers can request and receive levy transfers. In addition, many large levy-paying employers actively look to support SMEs in their supply chains or sectors by donating unspent funds. Accountancy training providers and professional bodies like AAT often assist in facilitating these connections.

### Why Accountancy Apprenticeships?

With the rise of automation and digital finance tools, the demand for highly skilled accounting professionals is growing — but so is the need to build talent from the ground up. Accountancy apprenticeships, including Levels 2 to 4, offer employers a way to train individuals in both technical knowledge and professional behaviours while embedding them in real business environments.

Apprenticeships are more flexible than ever, too. Employers can tailor learning around business needs, develop internal career pipelines, and retain talent through structured development pathways.

Whether you're looking to grow a small finance team or build a long-term talent pipeline for your organisation, apprenticeships offer a cost-effective, sustainable solution.

### The Business Case: Cost Savings and Talent Development

Combine the National Insurance exemption with fully funded training via levy transfers, and the financial case becomes compelling:

- **Save up to 15%** on salary costs for under-25 apprentices.
- **Pay zero training fees** when using levy transfers.
- **Gain motivated, trainable team members** who often stay and progress within the business.

In short, it's a win-win: employers benefit from lower costs and skilled staff, while apprentices gain qualifications, experience, and a debt-free route into a professional career.

### What Employers Should Do Next

To make the most of these 2025 changes, employers should:

1. **Identify where apprentices can add value**, especially in finance and accounting teams.
2. **Speak to Accountancy Learning** about accountancy programmes.
3. **Register on the apprenticeship service** to find and receive levy transfer opportunities.
4. **Plan ahead for recruitment**, especially to capture the post-school and college candidate pool.

With these financial incentives and funding options in place, 2025 is the ideal time for employers to invest in accountancy apprenticeships — unlocking new talent while keeping an eye on the bottom line. Get in touch now so we can work with you to plan ahead.



**Alison Truscott**

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# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## THE EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT



**I have worked at the Devon Chamber of Commerce since February 2021 and was initially employed as a Kickstart Administrator where I specialised in projects and the financial process surrounding this.**

I was employed during the Covid pandemic while we were still in lockdown which made starting this role very different to any other job I had worked in previously, as everything was now entirely remote.

This was an incredibly rewarding job as not only did we help get over 400 young people into employment, but this was also the very scheme that helped me land in this job! Once this scheme ended, an opportunity arose for me to join the Accounts team, and I haven't looked back since!

The Devon Chamber is a not-for-profit Business Organisation, we are the official accredited Chamber of Commerce for the county of Devon and are here to support businesses across Devon of all shapes and sizes through a range of key Member benefits, services, and networking events. We represent a diverse range of businesses, charities and organisations that are keen to network, promote and grow their services across the county.

After a few years of building my accounts knowledge within the business I felt it was time to start working towards my Level 3 Diploma in Accounting. Initially I had opted for the Self Study option, however for a plethora of different reasons, after sitting my first exam, it became clear that the self-study route was not going to be the most beneficial method for myself.

After discussing my options with my manager, we decided to explore different routes as I was still determined to receive this qualification.

We approached Accountancy Learning who had also facilitated the self-study route for me initially. After a few discussions with the team at Accountancy Learning I decided it was time to start my qualification up again,

however this time with tutor-led support doing an apprenticeship.

This additional support has made a major difference in my confidence and understanding around the subjects covered. This has really reignited my passion for accounts, and I cannot thank the team at Accountancy Learning enough for not only giving me another chance but also being so understanding around the challenges faced to get to this point.



*Images from the Devon Business Show  
(the highlight of the county's business calendar)*

Written by:

**Kyra Taylor-Reid** (Apprentice) and

**Helen Hoskin** (Finance & Operations Manager)

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## PRACTISING WHAT YOU PREACH

### Fail to Plan = Plan to Fail!

Dwight D. Eisenhower famously said, "In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable," He was emphasizing the importance of the planning process rather than the final plan itself.

What do you plan to get from training your apprentice / trainee? Why did you employ them?

I presume you saw something in them:

- academic skills enabling them to pass their exams
- personal skills enabling them to support your clients
- business aptitude enabling them to support your business
- a personality to fit your core values and culture

Help us and them use their apprenticeship to fulfil these expectations. It is unlikely that each of your apprentices will turn out the same way and exactly the way you expected them to perform.

You will have had a training plan and a personal development plan for each of them. Are you amending this in the light of their performance to date?

Think of a simple formula:

- **Event x Response = Outcome.**

You had a planned outcome, but events happen, not all planned.

You can't predict all the events that will happen or accurately predict your apprentice's future performance.

Although you can't always control events you can control your response to them. The Outcome is still therefore in your control and is your responsibility.

If you think about the time you spend on your client work or key accounting role, there is often an inverse proportional relationship between the time spent and the value provided. For those in practice, the value to the client is the advice you give them at the end of the job.



AI and "robotic processes" should reduce your time below the red line to allow more added value above the line. Are you making the most of your apprentices to engage in the current changes in technology?

Are you amending your plan to reflect their abilities? Are you aware of their abilities – inside and outside of work?

Let's make the most of the apprenticeship programme to get the most out of your apprentices – for your benefit and for theirs.

## DINGBATS

Remember the 'VE Day' theme....

Answers from previous edition:

1. Apprenticeship
2. Trainees
3. Student



3



OF



# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## LEARNING IS FOR LIFE

### AAT Conference

**The key element of an apprenticeship is to develop skills and behaviours alongside one's technical knowledge.**

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, five of the AL team attended the AAT Conference in Solihull and we were joined by two of our apprentices, both of whom had received nominations for AAT Apprentice of the Year. There were only 4 shortlisted, so they did brilliantly well to achieve this accolade.

Ben Watson has just completed his Level 3 Apprenticeship with Cornwall Council - 3 months ahead of schedule.

**Ed Smith** has just completed his Level 4 Apprenticeship with PKF Francis Clark - 4 months ahead of schedule having also previously completed his Level 3 Apprenticeship ahead of schedule. Ed was supported at the event by his local director, Ashley Luxon and the firm's Training Partner, Tom Roach.

Ed is part of the team who deliver the PKF Francis Clark recruitment event roadshow, showcasing the opportunities available to school leavers.

Ed attends our Tuesday training sessions at Taunton and during this time struck up a friendship group with two students from other accounting practices. Ed was supportive of them in their Level 2 and 3 studies respectively.

He also helps new apprentices within his workplace giving them training as required. As well as helping others he has found that this has reinforced his own knowledge contributed to him improving his own self confidence.

**Ben Watson** balances his Apprenticeship job and studies alongside being an on-call Firefighter, dedicating 120 hours per week to being available for the Fire Service.

Working from home enables him to combine work, studies and his Firefighter duties. One minute he can be in a meeting at work and the next minute rushing to a fire callout.

During one particular week, Ben was working on a critical audit at the Council, sitting his Level 3 Management Accounts exam, sitting his final firefighter exams and responding to emergency fire calls!

He has passed everything first time.

This all reminds me of the saying "If you want something done, ask a busy person".

How busy are your apprentices? How busy could they be? Are you aware of any voluntary work they do in their spare time? Are there skills they have that could be applied in work?



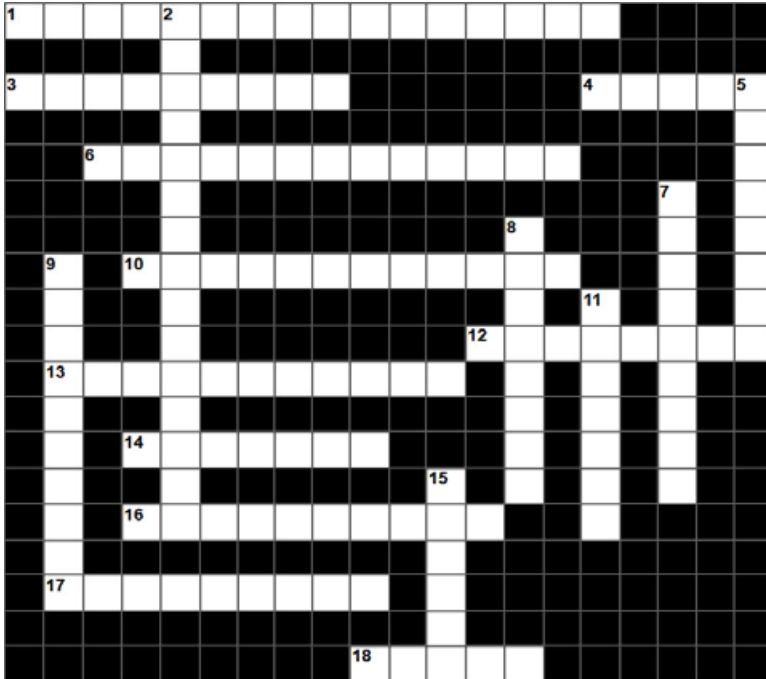
L to R: Ashley Luxon, Ed Smith, Ed's tutor Kathryn Searle



L to R: Ben Watson and Ben's tutor Sarah Wilson

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

## CROSSWORD!



### Last Issue's Answers

#### ACROSS:

4. Deferred Income 6. Double Entry  
8. Merit 9. VAT 10. Discount 11. Inheritance Tax  
13. Qualification 14. Prepayment  
16. Balance Sheet 17. Articles 18. Assessment

#### DOWN:

1. Income Tax 2. Off the Job Training  
3. Learning Outcomes 5. Costing  
7. Accrual 12. Knowledge 15. Mistake

Many congratulations to **Glen Chudley** from **Finance Department** who won our Winter edition crossword. A bottle of Champagne is on its way to you!

### Clues 'VE Day'

#### Across:

1. These American castles in the sky rained down mayhem on their adversaries. (6,10)
3. You would need to be a good map reader to find Churchill's home in Kent. (9)
4. The German surrender document was signed here, where French kings were traditionally crowned. (5)
6. It took 9 more years after VE Day before this ended and you could stack your dinner plate high! (4,9)
10. If Churchill won the war, this, his successor, won the peace. (6,6)
12. Sailors would get a sinking feeling when they saw these pilots approach. (8)
13. The US President at the end of WW2 sounds like an honest bloke, albeit a bit flash. (5,6)
14. They named a cigarette after him, even though he only smoked cigars! (7)
16. Did these bomber pilots fill their boots? (10)
17. This aircraft went down a storm during the Battle of Britain. (9)
18. Although a resort, this was no holiday destination for Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin. (5)

#### Down:

2. This peacetime conscription ended in the UK in 1960. (8,7)
5. Dragons weren't the only thing that flew and breathed flames. In fact, this was powered by Merlin! (8)
7. The last crane was collapsed to create this bomber. (9)
8. "You'll never know" whether "We'll meet again" on "The White Cliffs of Dover" but "There'll always be an England" for this Forces Sweetheart. (4,4)
9. "Oh Maa" – this would a dangerous place to build sand castles during the Normandy landings. (5,5)
11. This, the pride of the German navy entered Tromsø Fjord, never to leave in one piece. (7)
15. Montgomery eventually outfoxed this German general in the desert. (6)

Email your solution to [study@accountancylearning.co.uk](mailto:study@accountancylearning.co.uk) by **1st June 2025**.

As ever, there's a bottle of **Champagne** for the first correct solution.

Winner and the solution in the next issue.



# COMPANY INFORMATION

**WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, THERE ARE 3 WAYS IN WHICH WE'D LOVE TO HELP YOU STREAMLINE YOUR RECRUITMENT, INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

## STEP 3 - TRAINING

Accountancy Learning have four apprenticeship programmes. Depending on the skills and qualifications you require for the role, choose from:

- Accounts/Finance Assistant Apprenticeship (Level 2) (AAT)
- Assistant Accountant Apprenticeship (Level 3) (AAT)
- Professional Accounting Technician Apprenticeship (Level 4) (AAT)
- Accountancy / Taxation Professional Apprenticeship (Level 7) (ACA)

## STEP 2 - INDUCTION

During the first couple of weeks of their induction, sign up your Level 3 or above trainees onto Accountancy Learning's **FREE** Bookkeeping Induction course, The Balancing Act. (£180 + VAT per employee if not part of an apprenticeship)

The aim is to train them in how to put together a set of final accounts. The apprentices should take up to 35 hours to complete the course and the end of course test.

The outcome will be one of two options:

- **FAIL** - Reconsider their career options. Save time and money by not trying to train someone who isn't going to make the grade.
- **PASS** - Great! Start charging out their time to clients. Give them accounting software training - we provide this for FREE (usual price is £290 for tutor supported training)

## USE ACCOUNTANCY LEARNING'S FREE TALENT PROGRAMME SERVICE

## STEP 1 - RECRUITMENT

Activity	Who	Cost
Create a job spec	Us and You	FREE*
Advertise the role (creating, placing, posting the advert)	Us	FREE*
Receive applications	You or Us	FREE*
Request CVs	You or Us	FREE*
Filter applications	You or Us	FREE*
Carry out initial interviews	You or Us	FREE*
Screen candidate using our online course, the 'Bookkeeping Aptitude Test'	Us	FREE*
Interview	You	
Make a job offer	You	
Start the role	You	

\*These services from Accountancy Learning are free, providing you place your apprentice with us for their training. Otherwise, the cost is £500 per vacancy or if you want us to recruit into a non-apprenticeship vacancy.