International Post Corporation

Royal Mail reminds SMEs to apply for funding this national apprenticeship week

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This National Apprenticeship Week (9-15 February), Royal Mail is reminding small and medium sized businesses that there is still time to apply to its £1m apprenticeship levy fund, designed to help develop talent and unlock growth.

The funding is available to businesses with up to 250 employees that sell products online and is part of the Royal Mail Means Business campaign to help SMEs grow. The funding can be used for any Government accredited apprenticeship - from industry specific courses to digital marketing and e-commerce or AI and finance, and more.

Royal Mail opened its second £1 million funding round in September following the success of the first, which was launched following research by Royal Mail and the British Chambers of Commerce that found that a skills gap was one of the biggest barriers to growth

So far, Royal Mail has funded apprenticeships for businesses ranging from marketing and HR to software development and data analytics.

Companies with an annual wage bill of £3 million or more are required to pay a levy to recruit and train apprenticeships. As one of the UK's largest levy-paying employers, Royal Mail is choosing to gift part of its levy to smaller companies because of the unique role it plays in supporting businesses nationwide. As the Universal Service Provider, Royal Mail delivers to all 32 million UK addresses, making it a critical partner for businesses of every size.

Applications for the latest funding round are now open on the Royal Mail Small Business Hub.

Kieran Judd, Interim Chief People Officer at Royal Mail, said: "National Apprenticeship Week is the perfect moment to remind small and medium businesses that support is available to help them build the skills they need. Apprenticeships don't just train individuals, they strengthen entire businesses by developing talent from within.

"We know from our work with businesses across the UK that many want to invest in new skills but lack the resources to do so. By gifting part of our levy, we're helping to close

that gap and giving smaller businesses access to the same highâ€‘quality training opportunities as larger organisations. We're proud to play our part in supporting the growth of the UK's SME community."

One of the businesses that as already benefited from Royal Mail's apprenticeship levy funding is Withnell Sensors in Lancashire, a specialist in temperature and humidity solutions such as vaccine fridges and ultra-low freezers. They have received funding for a Level 3 Laboratory Technician apprenticeship.

Withnell Sensors' Managing Director, Samantha Smith, said: "It is rare that we can recruit employees with relevant experience so the apprenticeship scheme allows us to offer employees an entry point into the business where in-house training can be combined with formally recognised qualifications.

"This apprenticeship adds capacity to our team which is important in maintaining turnaround times for customers and means senior team members can focus on extensions to our scope of accreditation and expand to customers in different countries."

Royal Mail has more information and support for small and medium sized businesses from start-ups to established enterprises on its Small Business Hub.

Source: International Distribution Services

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