



## Increasing SME Apprenticeship Engagement Project

### Background to the Project

The Erasmus+ funded project, 'Increasing SME engagement in Apprenticeships' is a three year project that commenced on 1 September 2015. The project was initiated by Gedling Borough Council as their plan was to help ensure local people and businesses were best placed to take advantage of employment opportunities, and apprenticeships were, and still are, high on the governments agenda.

The project has an international reach with six partners participating from five countries including Canada, Germany, Bulgaria and Poland, as well as the UK (Gedling, Nottingham).

The aim of the project in the first 12 months was to research the barriers to SMEs engagement with apprenticeships (Appendix 1). Although the apprenticeship systems are different in each partner country we identified that the barriers are very similar. Once the barriers had been identified our Canadian and German partners, as countries with a positive track record in apprenticeship uptake, shared best practice examples that would help reduce or eliminate these barriers. The next phase of the project involved Bulgaria, Poland and Gedling Borough Council adopting elements of identified best practice and adapting to meet local needs, delivered as a two-year pilot programme (1 September 2016-31 August 2018).

In the UK Gedling Borough Council are delivering a support service for SMEs to assist them with every stage of the recruitment process along with funded accredited mentoring training for employers.

### The Project Team

Gedling Borough Council (GBC) is the lead partner for the project. The project commenced on 1 September 2015 and finishes on 31 August 2018.



## The 6 delivery partners:

UK	Gedling Borough Council, Economic Growth Service
Germany	Vereinigung für Betriebliche Bildungsforschung e.V. IBBF (IBBF) a Research Institution for Further Education and Training
Canada	Canadian Apprenticeship Forum/Forum Canadian Sur L'Apprentissage (CAF-FCA) a pan-Canadian non-profit organisation that promotes apprenticeship training
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)
Poland	Zespół Szkół Łączności im. Mikołaja Kopernika w Poznaniu (Zsł) is a group of schools consisting of a junior secondary school and technical college
UK	NGi (UK) Ltd a for profit business that works with employers to develop, improve and up-skill their workforce through vocational educational training (VET).

## Project Outputs

The outputs attached to the delivery of the pilot programmes are to support a minimum of 240 SMEs and deliver 360 apprenticeships starts across the three pilot countries.

## Appendix 1

### Barriers to SME Engagement in Apprenticeships

1. Size of SME isn't sufficient to support an apprenticeship
2. Lack of a dedicated HR Department
3. Lack of SME awareness of apprenticeships and the benefits they bring to business/negative perceptions
4. Lack of available funding to SMEs to support Apprenticeships
5. Apprentices leaving once qualified
6. Image of certain industry related apprenticeships
7. Lack of overarching structures
8. Interest in vacancies and identifying a suitable candidate

