

OFSTED READINESS

# Team leader

ST0384 · Level 3 · Business and administration

Curriculum intent, evaluation area readiness, deep dive preparation, inclusive design, evidence essentials, and delivery-critical compliance points

STANDARD

**ST0384**

VERSION

**1.4**

LEVEL

**3**

GENERATED

**30 March 2026**

DURATION

**15 months**

MIN. HOURS

**348 hours**

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## Curriculum Intent

This programme is designed to turn a capable colleague into a first-line leader who can run day-to-day operational activity, support and develop people, manage performance, and contribute to change with confidence. The occupational heart of the role is practical leadership: setting expectations, allocating work and resources, monitoring progress, resolving problems, influencing others, and keeping the team aligned to organisational goals, compliance requirements, and inclusion expectations. By gateway, the apprentice should be operating across real team responsibilities with enough independence to manage workload, people and stakeholder relationships consistently, while still knowing when to escalate or seek wider guidance.

The curriculum is sequenced from self-management and role clarity, through organising work and resources, then into coaching performance, handling data, influencing stakeholders, applying policy, and leading improvement and change. This sequencing matters because team leadership is cumulative: apprentices must first understand their authority, reporting line and organisational context before they can credibly manage others, budgets, projects and conflict. Starting points are built into the design through initial assessment and prior learning recognition, so experienced supervisors can move quickly into stretch practice while new managers receive more explicit grounding and supported rehearsal. The typical duration to gateway is 15 months, giving time for repeated application in live work and for the apprentice to demonstrate breadth across the full range of duties, not just isolated tasks.

## Evaluation Area Readiness

### Curriculum, Teaching and Training

The curriculum must teach team leadership as an integrated operational role: people, performance, resources, data, compliance, influence and change all need to be learned in connected workplace contexts.

#### How This Programme Addresses It:

Delivery is deliberately sequenced from role clarity and personal effectiveness into operational planning, then people management, data-led decision-making, stakeholder influence, compliance, project work and continuous improvement. The blended model means taught learning is paired with immediate workplace application, so apprentices can use live rotas, performance conversations, reports, project tools and policy scenarios rather than learning these in isolation. Formative assessment should use live outputs, questioning and reflective discussion so trainers can check whether the apprentice can explain, apply and adapt what they have learned in their own setting.

#### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Clear phase-by-phase curriculum map linked to duties and KSB coverage
- Trainers use the employer's live systems, reports and routines in teaching
- Apprentices regularly practise skills in workplace tasks, then reflect and improve
- Assessment evidence shows increasing complexity, not repeated basic tasks
- Staff can explain why each learning sequence comes before the next

### Achievement

Achievement is about apprentices becoming broadly competent in real supervisory situations, not just completing learning activities or producing isolated pieces of work.

#### How This Programme Addresses It:

Progress is structured through the milestone points at Month 2, Month 4, Month 6, Month 9, Month 12 and Month 15, moving from settling into the remit to operating as a more independent, strategic team leader. Those milestones give staff and employers a shared picture of what better performance looks like over time, especially as the apprentice moves from managing their own workload to coaching others, using evidence, applying policy and handling change. Gateway readiness should be judged on consistent performance across live duties, with the final phase used to rehearse EPA expectations and check that competence is secure rather than occasional.

#### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Review records show milestone conversations and actions being completed on time
- Apprentices can point to growing responsibility across people, resources and improvement work
- Evidence shows performance improving across more than one context or task type
- Final-phase activity includes EPA rehearsal and readiness checks
- Staff can explain what broad competence looks like for this occupation at gateway

## Participation and Development

Apprentices need enough confidence, attendance and engagement to take part actively in leadership practice, because this role is learned through repeated responsibility and reflection.

### How This Programme Addresses It:

The programme depends on regular participation in off-the-job learning, workplace application and progress reviews so apprentices can keep testing ideas in real team situations. The Wider Development Plan addresses broader participation and development in more depth, but this curriculum expects apprentices to grow through day-to-day behaviours such as taking ownership, seeking feedback, adapting to different audiences and reflecting on their impact. Inspectors should be able to see that apprentices are not passive recipients of teaching: they are contributing to meetings, reviews, reports, one-to-ones and improvement work with increasing confidence.

### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Attendance and engagement are strong across both taught learning and workplace activity
- Apprentices can describe how they use feedback to improve their leadership practice
- They take an active role in reviews, team discussions and operational meetings
- Line managers can show apprentices are given real responsibility, not observation only
- Apprentices can explain how wider development has helped them in work situations

## Inclusion

Team leaders must learn to lead fairly across different people, teams, cultures and stakeholder groups, and to make everyday decisions that do not disadvantage others.

### How This Programme Addresses It:

Inclusion is built into the curriculum through communication, stakeholder management, people policy, performance conversations and change leadership, so apprentices learn how to adapt behaviour for different colleagues and external contacts. The Wider Development Plan addresses inclusion in more depth, but inspectors should see it in the workplace: for example, how apprentices allocate work fairly, adapt communication for different audiences, challenge bias appropriately and manage disagreement without excluding voices. This is particularly important in a role that often spans hybrid working, shift patterns, mixed teams and cross-functional relationships.

### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Apprentices adapt tone, format and detail to different colleagues and stakeholders
- Work allocation and monitoring show fairness, not convenience or bias
- Staff and employers can give examples of the apprentice challenging or preventing unfair practice
- The apprentice can explain how inclusion affects team performance and trust
- Evidence shows inclusive behaviour in meetings, feedback and conflict situations

## Safeguarding

Apprentices must understand how to work safely, escalate concerns appropriately and model professional conduct in operational settings where they are supervising others.

### How This Programme Addresses It:

The Wider Development Plan addresses safeguarding in depth, but this programme should reinforce safe practice through the way apprentices manage teams, apply policy, and handle responsibility for people and operational standards. Inspectors would expect to see apprentices using normal workplace channels for concerns, understanding boundaries in their role, and acting professionally when faced with pressure, conflict or uncertainty. Safe practice should be visible in supervision, progress reviews and employer feedback, not left as a one-off induction topic.

### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Apprentices can explain how to raise concerns through the right workplace route
- Managers can show safe practice is reinforced during supervision and reviews
- Professional conduct is evident in sensitive conversations and stakeholder interactions
- Apprentices understand limits of authority and when to escalate
- Workplace examples show the apprentice applying policy consistently and responsibly

## Leadership and Governance

Leaders must make sure the programme is ambitious, occupationally accurate, well sequenced and consistently supported by employers, so apprentices get real leadership practice and not just theoretical input.

### How This Programme Addresses It:

Governance should focus on whether the curriculum intent is being delivered in live work, whether the blended model is working for employers, and whether the progress milestones are being used to improve quality. Senior leaders should be able to explain how starting points, training plans, employer engagement and progress reviews shape individual learning pathways, and how that information is used to strengthen delivery. Strong oversight will show that leaders check whether apprentices are gaining breadth across the role, not just completing attendance, and that they act quickly when workplace responsibility, pace or support is not sufficient.

### Strong Practice Indicators:

- Leaders can explain how curriculum intent is monitored through milestone and review data
- Employers are actively involved in shaping and reviewing the training plan
- Quality processes look at whether apprentices get real leadership responsibility
- Staff standardisation shows shared expectations of competence and progression
- Governors or senior leaders can describe the risks to quality and how they are being managed

## Deep Dive Preparation

A deep dive is likely to concentrate on how the curriculum moves apprentices from initial role understanding into increasingly complex leadership practice across people management, operational planning, data use, compliance, stakeholder influence and change. Inspectors will want to see that teaching, workplace tasks and reviews are coherently sequenced, that starting points are used well, and that apprentices can evidence growing independence through live work rather than classroom tasks alone.

## Questions for Staff

1. How does the curriculum move an apprentice from first-line supervision into more strategic team leadership over time?
2. How do you use live workplace tasks to teach performance management, resource planning and stakeholder influence?
3. How do you know an apprentice is ready to move from supported practice to independent application?
4. How are starting points and prior learning shaping the individual training plan?

## Questions for Apprentices

1. What have you learned first, and why was that the right place to start?
2. Can you give an example of how you have used something from off-the-job learning in your team role?
3. How do you know whether your team is on track, and what do you do if it is not?
4. What leadership responsibilities are you now doing that you could not do at the start?

## Questions for Employers

1. What real authority and responsibility does the apprentice have in the team?
2. How do you make sure the apprentice gets enough variety to cover the full role?
3. How do you support the apprentice to apply learning in live operational situations?
4. What changes have you seen in the apprentice's leadership, judgement and confidence over time?

## Inclusive Design

- Use live team scenarios from the apprentice's own setting so they learn how to brief different audiences, including remote colleagues, shift teams, customers and senior managers, without relying on a single communication style.
- Build fairness into workload allocation and performance conversations: apprentices should practise explaining decisions, handling competing priorities and challenging bias or favouritism in a professional way.
- Ensure projects and stakeholder tasks include mixed viewpoints and varied communication channels, so apprentices learn to negotiate, listen and adapt when colleagues have different working patterns, confidence levels or expectations.
- Make inclusion visible through behaviour in the workplace: apprentices should be observed adapting communication, involving quieter voices, and managing disagreement without undermining dignity or trust.

## Delivery-Critical Compliance Points

1. The programme needs 348 hours of off-the-job learning as the baseline, and any reduction must be justified by evidenced prior learning; otherwise the curriculum risks being too thin to build genuine leadership competence.
2. Blended delivery still has to be active off-the-job learning in normal paid hours, not self-directed distance learning or on-the-job task time; if this is blurred, the funded learning volume and the quality of development both suffer.
3. The curriculum must still allow at least the DfE minimum practical period of 8 months before gateway, so apprentices are not pushed through assessment before they have repeated experience of managing people, work and change.
4. English and maths rules vary by age: 16–18 apprentices without suitable equivalents must study them, while 19+ apprentices can only do standalone provision if the employer agrees; misunderstanding this can either under-support the apprentice or create unnecessary delivery.
5. The training plan must be updated to include the EPAO as soon as the EPAO is known and no later than 6 months before the learning planned end date; if this is left too late, EPA preparation becomes disjointed and gateway planning slips.
6. Initial assessment and prior learning recognition must be rigorous and validated by the employer; if starting points are guessed rather than evidenced, apprentices either repeat learning they do not need or miss essential leadership gaps.

## Evidence Essentials

These are normal operational documents, not inspection-specific paperwork.

- **Training plan**  
Shows the agreed learning sequence, role focus, delivery pattern and how the apprentice's starting point has been taken into account.
- **Initial skills scan and prior learning summary**  
Explains what the apprentice already knows and can do, and what still needs new learning to reach occupational competence.
- **Progress review records**  
Evidence that progress is being checked regularly with the apprentice and employer, and that delivery is adjusted when needed.
- **Workplace outputs such as rotas, reports, project plans, briefing notes and action logs**  
Shows the apprentice applying leadership skills to real operational work across the role.
- **Observation notes and professional discussion records**  
Capture how the apprentice performs in live situations and how well they can explain their decisions and judgement.
- **Performance, team or operational data used by the apprentice**  
Demonstrates use of evidence to manage workload, people, resources and improvement decisions.
- **Employer feedback or 1:1 records**  
Shows the apprentice is being given real responsibility and that development is being reinforced in the workplace.
- **Project or change documentation such as risk logs, milestone trackers or improvement records**  
Shows the apprentice contributing to change, monitoring progress and taking corrective action where required.