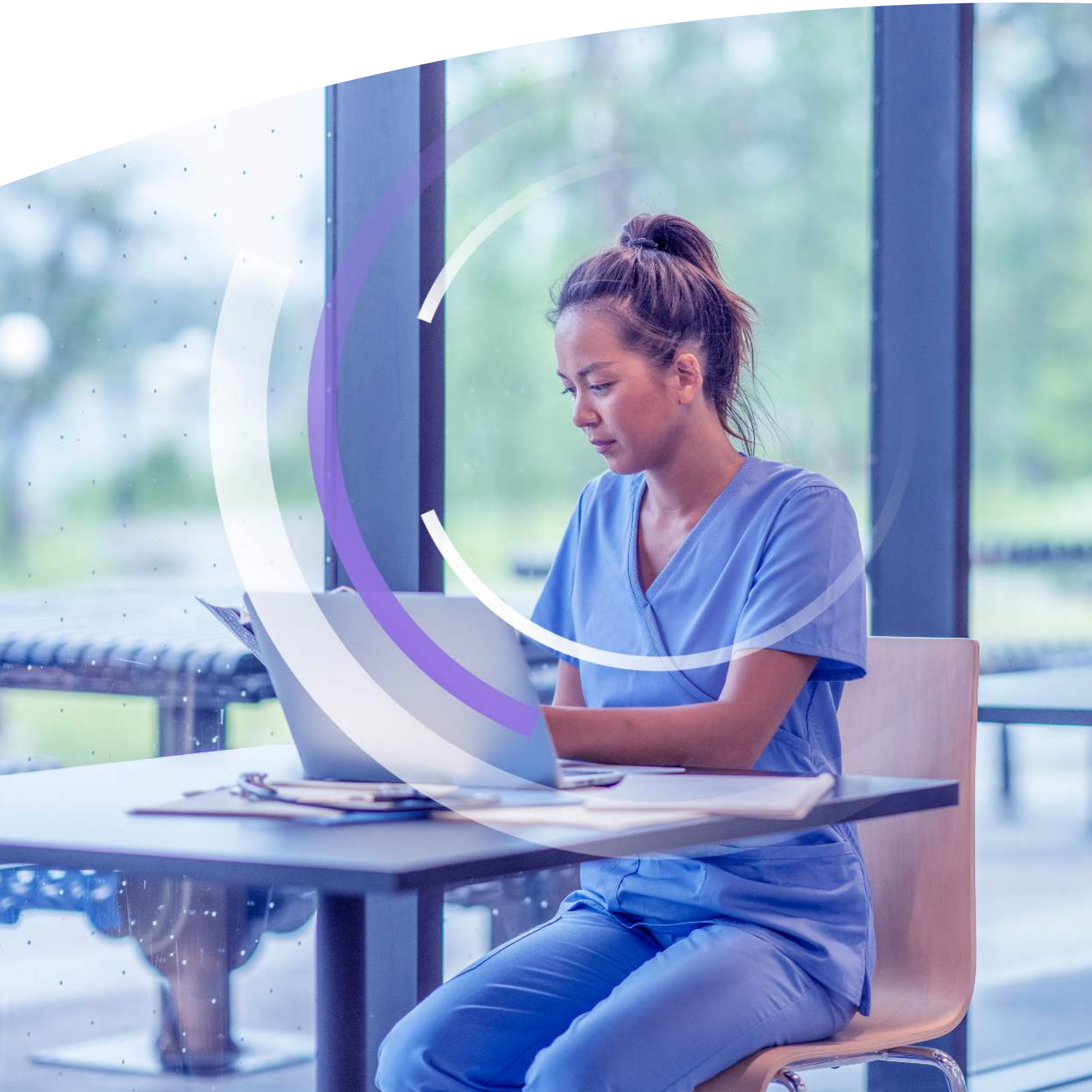
aptem. apprentice

Pearson

**Case study:**

# How Pearson TQ uses Aptem to overcome digital accessibility barriers



aptem.
apprentice

**Pearson TQ, a division of Pearson, delivers high-quality workforce training and apprenticeships to major UK employers, including the NHS and defence sector.**

## Contents


Introduction 3

**The challenge:** supporting mobile, shift-based learners with varied access to technology 4

**The solution:** Aptem's flexible, accessible platform 5

**The impact:** removing barriers, empowering learners 10

# Introduction

**To ensure no learner is left behind, Pearson TQ leverages Aptem as a flexible, accessible digital learning platform – enabling every apprentice to access tailored training, regardless of location, schedule, or individual accessibility needs.**

Pearson TQ, a division of Pearson, delivers high-quality workforce training and apprenticeships to major UK employers, including the NHS and defence sector. Their 400+ apprentices represent a wide range of roles and learning needs. For example, NHS staff often work irregular shifts and are rarely desk-based, making traditional, fixed-time desktop learning unworkable. Other clients require fully online programmes, with no site visits or travel allowed. Some learners face specific digital accessibility challenges.

Given these diverse requirements, Pearson TQ relies on Aptem's adaptable digital platform. This ensures every apprentice – regardless of work pattern, location, or individual needs, has equitable access to all learning materials and activities.

This approach aligns with Ofsted's 'no learner left behind' mantra, supporting success for every apprentice.

In these remote-first settings, learners are not quite under that 'digital poverty' banner, but it does fall back to employer expectations. We listen to what the employer needs and can assure them that we can deliver exactly what they're looking for.

**Neil Saunders,** Senior Quality Manager, Pearson TQ

# The challenge:
## supporting mobile, shift-based learners with varied access to technology

**Many of Pearson TQ's apprentices move between locations and rely on a mix of shared workplace computers and personal mobile devices to access learning. For some, the only chance to study and work on their apprenticeship is during short windows, where a laptop or fixed PC simply isn't an option.**

Yet, the digital learning platform Pearson TQ had been using prior to Aptem wasn't designed for this reality. Neil Saunders, Senior Quality Manager at Pearson TQ explains, *"Our previous apprenticeship management system couldn't deliver the digital learning experience our apprentices needed. Learners found that issues accessing the platform on their devices made it off-putting to simply pick up and engage with their programme whenever it suited them."*

This challenge isn't only about convenience; it risks creating new forms of 'digital poverty'. As Neil notes: *"Digital poverty is not only about having or not having internet access. The barrier is often not being able to sit at a desk or PC to learn. Our apprentices can't always choose when and where to access digital learning; it must fit around their work and schedules. We also wanted to ensure we could offer an equitable learning experience for any learners with accessibility needs."*

Accessibility was another key consideration. The team wanted to ensure that every apprentice, including those with accessibility needs, have an equitable learning experience. They recognised that creating digital content alone isn't enough – if learners can't access it, they are not truly included. Ensuring an accessible and seamless learner experience has become central to their inclusion strategy.

Our apprentices can't always choose when and where to access digital learning; it must fit around their work and schedules.

**Neil Saunders,** Senior Quality Manager, Pearson TQ

# The solution:
## Aptem's flexible, accessible platform

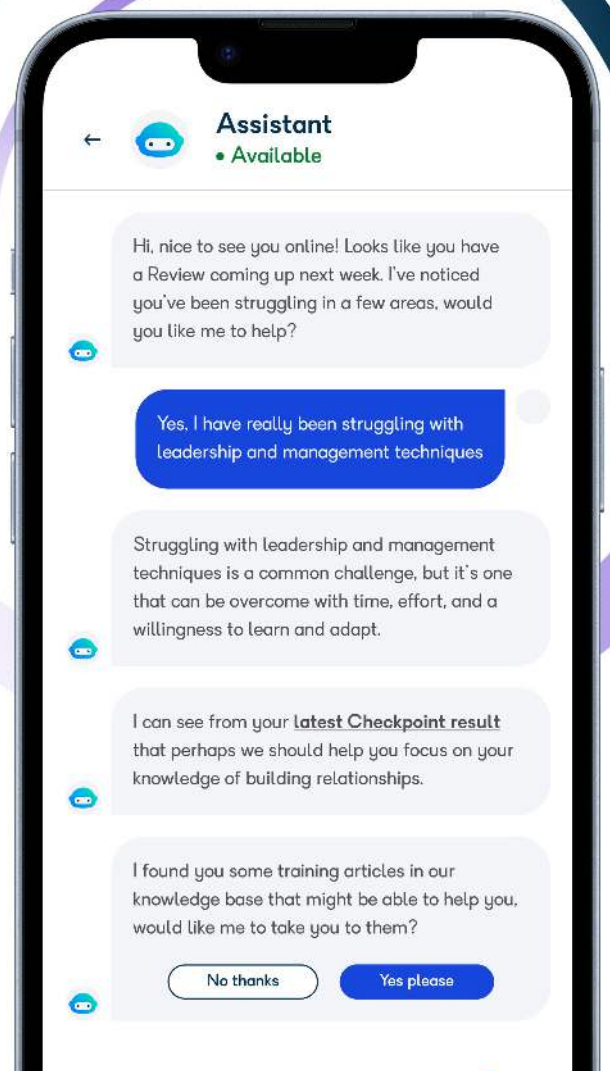
**Recognising the diversity and unpredictability in their learners' work patterns and tech access, Pearson TQ decided to switch to Aptem – a platform built for true flexibility and inclusivity.**

**This was not just a change in technology, but a transformation in approach: digital learning now meets the learner where they are, not the other way around.**

### Flexible access for every learning environment

Aptem's design ensures **device-agnostic learning** for Pearson TQ's apprentices: they can engage seamlessly via smartphones, tablets, PCs, or shared workplace computers, adapting effortlessly to variable work environments. Aptem removes the artificial boundaries of location and device type, supporting flexible access within learning hours.

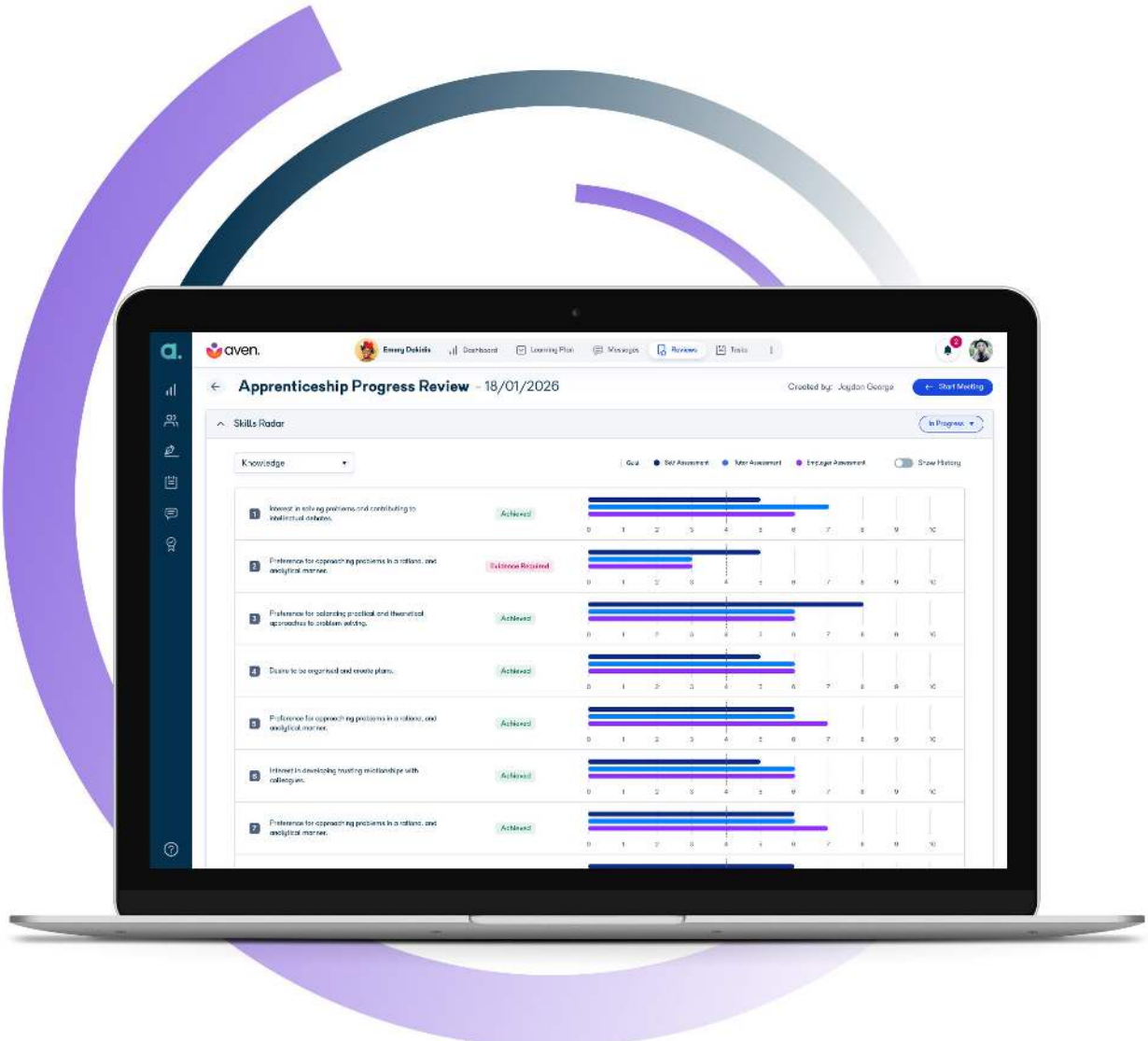
Support is also always available to learners through the AI-powered Aptem virtual assistant (AVA), which provides **round-the-clock help and guidance**, aligned to the learner's programme. This not only maximises independence but addresses knowledge gaps as they arise – essential in a time-poor workforce.



## Proactive digital inclusion and equity

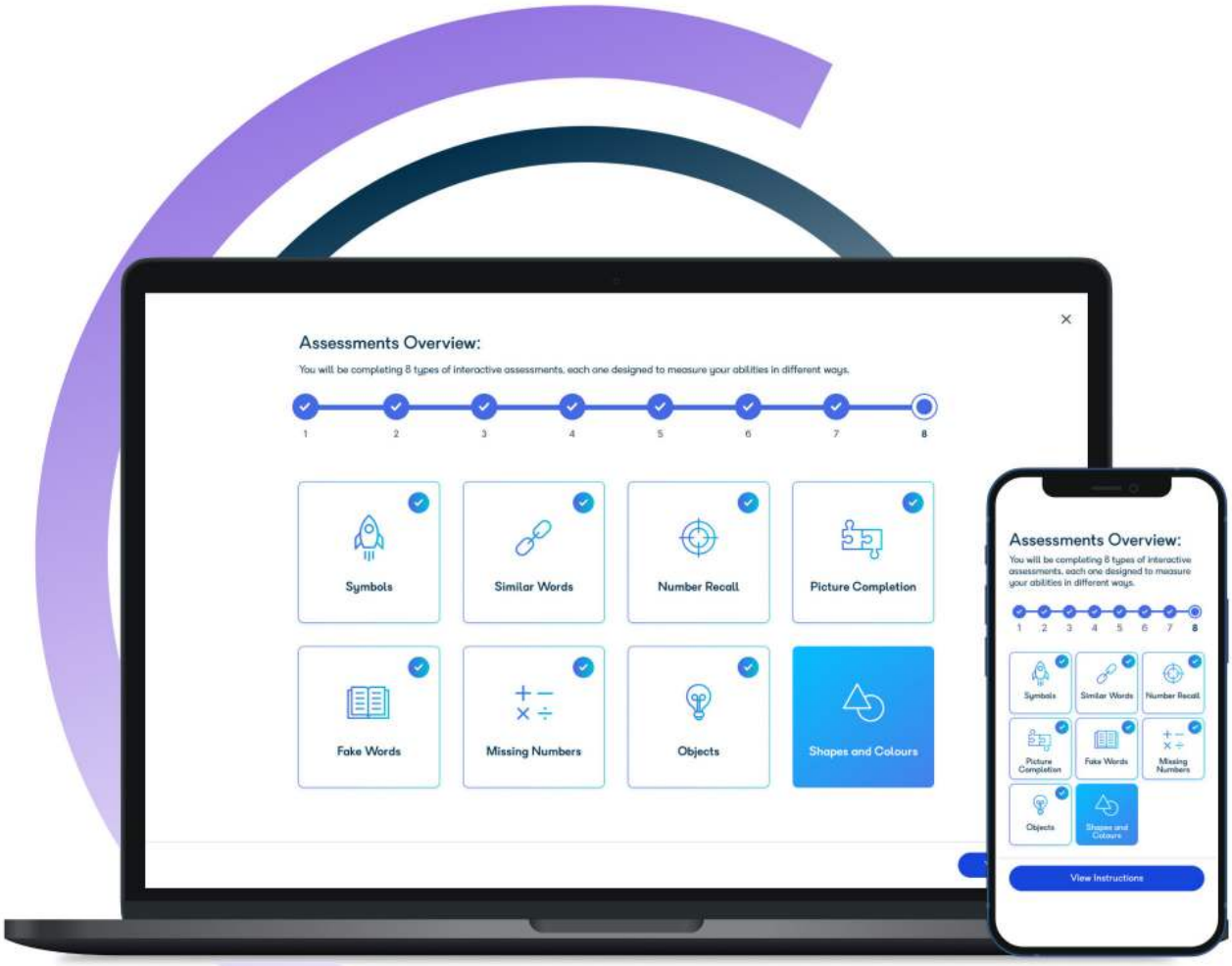
Aptem has streamlined the entire **initial assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning** (RPL) process, making it far more efficient and manageable. What once required hours of paperwork and lengthy calls is now largely digitised: learners complete their skill scan online – reducing what used to be two to three hours of interviews – while coaches can review responses beforehand and focus their calls on key areas. Neil adds, *"Our team is now also trialling Aptem's AI-powered progress checkpoint feature to further validate responses, which is a great next step."*

He adds, *"from the learner's perspective, the onboarding feedback has been universally positive. They appreciate being able to do everything in one system, on their own schedule, rather than dealing with scattered paperwork or multiple emails. For many, the clarity of a single login and guided process makes onboarding less daunting and much more user-friendly."*



The team recently enhanced their onboarding process by introducing the cognitive assessment tool, Aptem Assess, to their latest cohort of apprentices. This tool, built seamlessly into the onboarding journey, enables Pearson TQ to **quickly pinpoint where apprentices may benefit from additional learning support** right from the outset. Reflecting on the impact, Neil shares, *"Honestly, I don't know why we hadn't used it sooner. Aptem Assess gives us valuable insights that allow us to tailor our support more effectively, ensuring every apprentice gets the best possible start to their journey."*

Pearson TQ goes beyond simply putting resources online. By building **self-paced, asynchronous learning packages**, they ensure materials are available to learners any time, eliminating 'dead time' and waiting for tutor responses.



## Custom solutions for individual accessibility needs

Neil describes how proud they are to have provided a blind apprentice with a positive and inclusive experience, helping to allay their biggest fear of being treated differently from their peers. In this case, the apprentice's employers paid for assistive technology and software. By working collaboratively with their Aptem Implementation Consultant, Neil and the team managed to understand how that assistive software can work with Aptem.

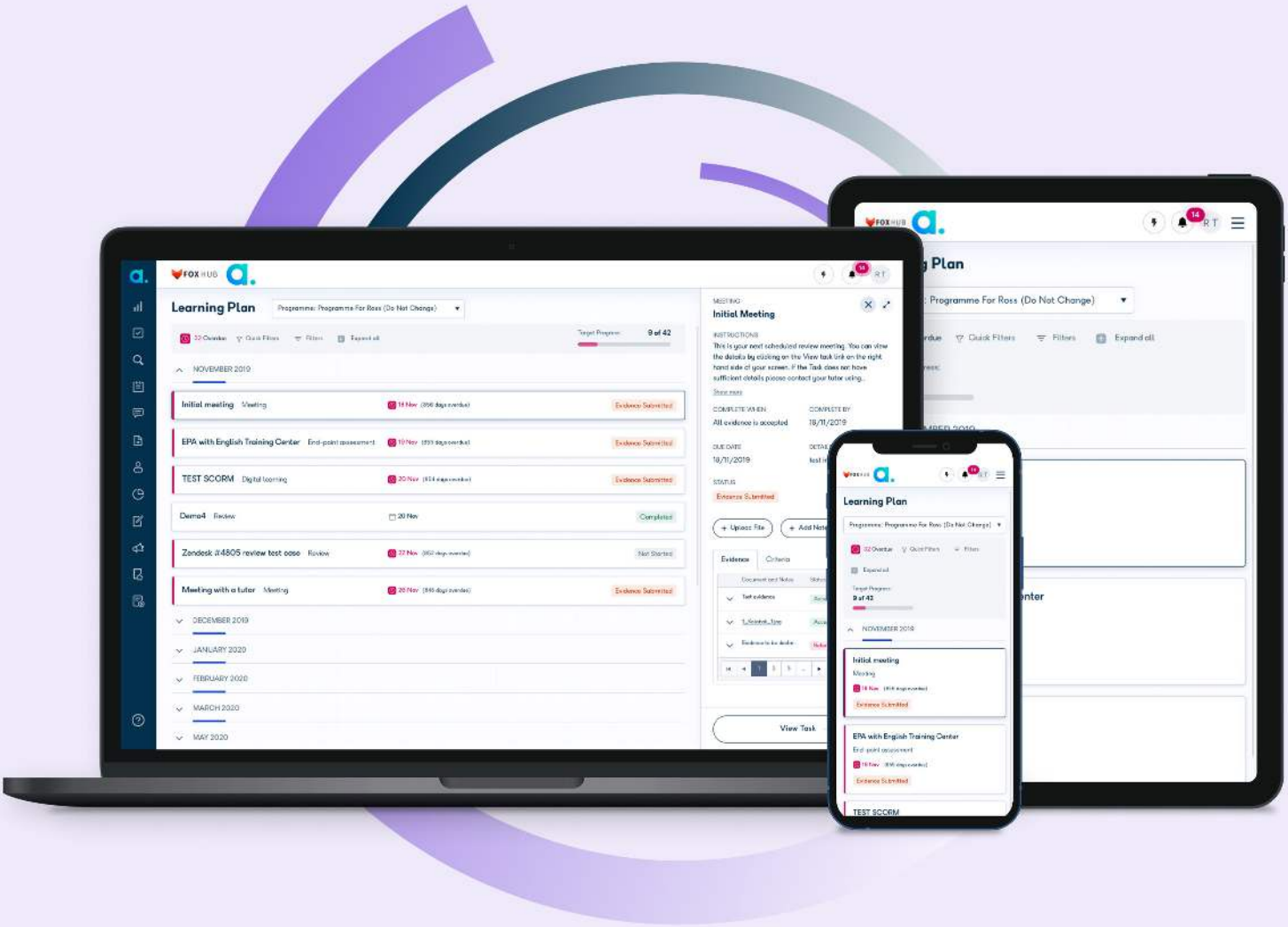
Neil explains, "*This has been hugely successful for our learner – to the point where our original plans had to be revamped because they found they could just do everything on Aptem, just as they do on their internal work systems.*" Apart from a few minor adaptations for group learning activities, there were no significant challenges. Neil concludes, "*That's a good news story that we're justifiably proud of, and we're really over the moon that Aptem has been able to play a part in that.*"

Using functions such as browser extensions can support learners within Aptem, this includes using screen readers, font changing extensions and speech to text functions.

## Meeting a range of employer demands

Beyond the learner experience, Aptem empowers Pearson TQ to successfully deliver for a range of employers – from the NHS, where busy staff juggle shifting schedules and shared workstations, to other national employers whose business models have moved to entirely remote, digital delivery. As Neil explains, "*In these remote-first settings, learners are not quite under that 'digital poverty' banner, but it does fall back to employer expectations. We listen to what the employer needs and can assure them that we can deliver exactly what they're looking for.*"

Aptem enables Pearson TQ to confidently meet – and often exceed – employer requirements, providing truly flexible and accessible online learning, regardless of employer model. This ability to address the varied needs of employers, from the NHS to fully remote organisations and defence sector organisations, continues to reassure and impress Pearson TQ's clients, strengthening key relationships across sectors.




Pearson TQ relies on Aptem's adaptable digital platform. This ensures every apprentice – regardless of work pattern, location, or individual needs, has equitable access to all learning materials and activities.

# The impact: removing barriers, empowering learners

## Pearson TQ's move to Aptem is having a meaningful impact across its provision:

- **Greater engagement:** apprentices, especially those balancing unpredictable shifts, report significantly improved opportunities to participate and progress. Learning can now happen in small bursts, at the learner's convenience.
- **Authentic accessibility:** Aptem's comprehensive support for accessibility needs ensures every apprentice can access resources, develop skills, and have the best possible chance of success throughout their programme.
- **Empowered learners:** digital learning now adapts to each apprentice's context, not vice versa, nurturing autonomy and confidence.
- **Employer confidence:** employer partners, including the NHS and leading corporate employers, trust Pearson TQ to go above and beyond in supporting every apprentice, ensuring no one is left behind.
- **By making accessibility and flexibility non-negotiable priorities, Pearson TQ is setting a new standard:** digital apprenticeships that break down barriers, support every learner's success, and inspire others across the sector to rethink what's possible.

We are now able to deliver a high-end product and service that's in line with what our employers and our apprentices expect to see.

**Neil Saunders,** Senior Quality Manager, Pearson TQ

aptem. apprentice

Read more

Aptem's approach to accessibility

Read more

aptem.
apprentice

Digital poverty is not only about having or not having internet access. The barrier is often not being able to sit at a desk or PC to learn. Our apprentices can't always choose when and where to access digital learning; it must fit around their work and schedules.

**Neil Saunders**, Senior Quality Manager, Pearson TQ

If you are an organisation that helps deliver further education and employment programmes and would like to transform the way you deliver in a cost-effective, efficient and compliant way, get in touch:

**enquiries@aptem.co.uk**

**020 3758 8540**

**www.aptem.co.uk/apprentice**

Aptem is one of the fastest-growing SaaS software companies to manage vocational training, skills and employability programmes. In addition to Aptem Apprentice, we offer a range of other solutions to support the development of vocational skills and re-employment.

- **Aptem Employ,** a unique, flexible, award-winning employability system that helps to get people back into the workplace quickly and for the long term.
- **Aptem Skills,** our award-winning end-to-end delivery platform that enables fully compliant ASF course delivery and accelerates re-employment.
- **Aptem Assess,** a cognitive assessment tool that enables you to seamlessly identify and respond to learning needs.

Follow us on LinkedIn and YouTube

**www.aptem.co.uk**

02/26
© Aptem Ltd 2026