

## **JSCC Discussion Paper: Apprentices**

### **Background**

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017 by the UK Government as part of its plan to increase the number of Apprentices. The levy applies to all employers with an annual pay bill of £3,000,000 or more, who must pay 0.5% of this pay bill (with a deduction of £15,000) to HMRC. Employers then access this money via the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS). This is used to pay for apprenticeship training (using approved Apprenticeship Standards) from a selection of training providers, these training providers are approved and listed on the government apprenticeship website, training providers are paid directly via the DAS.

### **How Apprenticeships work**

For North Herts Council, prior to the introduction of the Levy, Apprentices completed a Business Administration NVQ which was delivered by a local college and involved Apprentices attending North Herts College one day a week, this was linked to the Academic year.

Training providers are now far more flexible with their delivery methods. Current Apprenticeship Standards require Apprentices to complete 80% on the job learning (the “day job”) and 20% off the job learning. The 20% off the job learning can now be made up of:

- Workshops or webinars
- E-learning – completing modules
- Attending a client meeting/networking events
- Reflecting on skills knowledge learnt ie. completing of Learner Journal
- Role play and simulation
- Planning and preparation for tasks set by the Trainer/ Coach
- Job shadowing a colleague
- Providing mentoring support for a colleague or candidate

Off the job learning is defined as learning which is undertaken outside the normal day to day working environment and leads to the achievement of an apprenticeship. This is a legal requirement of an apprenticeship but does not need to be fixed to one day a week and can fit with the requirements of the role.

### **Additional support that we provide to our Apprentices**

We provide a number of Apprentice Specific learning opportunities to equip apprentices with skills for the workplace:

- Presentation Skills and the opportunity to present on a given topic
- Coaching and Mentoring opportunities
- Minute taking skills
- Participation in EELGA Apprentice of the Year Event

- Additional support towards the end of the fixed term contract including CV writing and interview skills

### **What Apprenticeships are available?**

Upon introduction of the levy, the number of training providers increased. In the first few years the number of apprenticeship available were limited, but now that the scheme is more established, the number of Apprenticeship standards have increased and we are now able to offer Apprenticeship Standards that link more closely to the field of work rather than general Business Administration qualification.

Current apprenticeships in addition to Business Administration are:

- Assistant Accountant
- Community Health & Wellbeing
- Cultural Learning & Participation
- Customer Service Specialist
- Digital Marketing
- HR Support
- Information Communication Technician

The Apprenticeship Levy can also be used to upskill existing members and staff have completed Team Leader & Supervisor Apprenticeship and Revenues and Welfare Benefits Practitioner.

### **Additional information**

- Apprentices join the Council on a fixed term contract, typically of 18 months
- The salary is generally funded from a central budget, although Service Areas can also fund their own apprentices and this mostly occurs where there are hard-to-fill vacancies as part of a 'grow your own' approach. The central budget provision is for 8 apprentice posts (although underspends from delayed appointments are carried forward which can lead to more posts at certain times)
- We pay £10.60 per hour which is above the NLW for over 23s
- We have recruited 69 apprentices since we started our programme in 2013, aside from 12 who are still in their apprenticeship, 31 have gone on to secure a further role within the organisation – a 54% success rate
- Since the scheme began in 2013, 19 different teams have recruited an apprentice

### **How do we promote our Apprenticeship Opportunities?**

- Apprenticeship vacancies are advertised in line with our other vacancies on our Jobs page
- Apprenticeship vacancies are advertised on the gov.uk find an apprenticeship website
- We attend career fairs (with current Apprentices) at local schools to promote North Herts Council as a potential employer
- We have featured our Apprentices in the Outlook magazine