

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Staffing Policy Committee

8th January 2020

Apprenticeship Update

Purpose

1. The purpose of this item is to provide Staffing Policy Committee with an update on the council's apprenticeship programme, including a progress report on the recruitment of apprentices and the use of our apprenticeship levy.
2. This report was requested at the meeting of Staffing Policy Committee on 14 November 2019.

Background

3. The apprenticeship levy came into effect in March 2017. All businesses with a PAYE bill of over £3 million per year must pay 0.5% into the levy. Levy funds can only be used for apprenticeship training. The funds go into the Digital Apprenticeship Service account (DAS) and a monthly direct debit is set up to transfer these funds into the training provider's DAS account.
4. There is a government target for the council to employ 2.3% of its workforce as apprentices. This currently equates to approximately 266 apprentices per year for our organisation.
5. The old style apprenticeship frameworks continue to be replaced by new standards. There are currently 513 standards that have been approved for delivery with an additional 144 in development. All old frameworks will be removed by 1st August 2020.
6. It is the council's strategy to recruit and develop new apprentices who will develop their career within the council. The policy is therefore clear that services should ensure that there will be a budgeted post in the structure for the individual to move into at the end of their apprenticeship, and new apprenticeships are always targeted towards these posts.
7. The council is also committed to providing apprenticeship opportunities for existing employees, upskilling them and providing them with potential future career progression opportunities. An apprenticeship enables the employee to gain a qualification, alongside work experience, which is relevant to the service area / team they are employed in.

Main considerations

Types of apprenticeships

8. The different types of apprentices referred to within this report are:
 - New apprentices - employees recruited into a specific apprenticeship post since the introduction of the levy in March 2017. These apprenticeship roles are linked to substantive posts within the council structure and apprentices move into these posts on successful completion of their apprenticeship.
 - Upskilling apprentices - current employees who are completing an apprenticeship within their current post. They remain in their current post on completion of the apprenticeship, but the intention is that it will afford them greater career progression opportunities in the future.
 - Pre-levy apprentices - started their apprenticeship before the apprenticeship reforms and the introduction of the levy in March 2017. All of them have now completed their apprenticeships.

Apprentice numbers and take-up

9. As at 10 December 2019 the council has 244 individuals undertaking apprenticeship courses eligible for funding from the apprenticeship levy (220 within the council and 24 in maintained schools). The age range across new and upskilling apprentices is from 17 years old to 58 years old. See appendix 1 for list of current apprentices.
10. There are an additional 7 apprentices due to enrol on apprenticeship programmes in January 2020.
11. There is now at least one apprentice in every directorate within the council. See appendix 2 for a breakdown of apprenticeships within each directorate.
12. By January we anticipate having 2.2% of our workforce undertaking apprenticeships. Although this is slightly below our 2.3% apprenticeship target the feedback received from our ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) account manager is that we are doing very well compared to other organisations. If we exclude schools, we are well above the target at 5.4%.
13. As yet there is no published benchmarking information available to enable us to compare our performance with other similar sized local authorities or other employers. However from local networks we know that we are one of the only local authorities to guarantee a job for all our apprentices once they have completed. We also know that we have a higher number of upskilling apprentices than other authorities within our local networks. Other local authorities have higher numbers of apprentices within schools, however we have a larger number of maintained schools than these authorities.

Apprentice progression

14. Eight of our new apprentices have now completed their apprenticeship, and all have moved into the linked substantive post and continued their employment at the council.
15. Three new apprentices resigned before reaching the end of their apprenticeship. They were offered support to continue but, for a variety of reasons, made the decision that this was not the right career or role for them.
16. Two apprentices who completed their apprenticeship pre-levy have progressed to take a further apprenticeship.
17. Two new apprentices have changed roles due to service restructures whilst completing their apprenticeship, however both have been supported to continue with their apprenticeship and have been linked to new substantive posts within the structure to move into on completion.
18. Three upskilling apprentices have been offered secondments whilst undertaking their apprenticeship and all have been supported to continue with their apprenticeships whilst on secondment.
19. Nineteen upskilling apprentices have moved into acting up or more senior roles whilst completing their apprenticeship. A number have cited their apprenticeship as a reason for having the confidence to apply for a more senior role.

Apprenticeship levy transfers

20. Under new apprenticeship rules, employers are now able to transfer 25% of their levy to other organisations to pay for apprenticeship training.
21. HR and OD have worked closely with the BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (BSW STP) group to ensure Wiltshire Council are able to offer transfers for 6 trainee nursing associates who are based in GP Practices around Wiltshire.
22. Wiltshire Council are also funding, using our apprenticeship levy, 11 trainee nursing associates for Wiltshire Health and Care.
23. HR & OD are working closely with Families and Children's social care teams to be able to offer transfer funds to employers willing to employ a Wiltshire care leaver, supported by the Virtual School and Employment and Skills teams.

Care Leavers

24. As part of our apprenticeship offer, if any Wiltshire care leaver applies for one of our apprenticeships and meets the minimum requirements, they are guaranteed an interview and supported through an offer of a mock practice interview. The

care leaver offer has also been expanded to also include CV writing tips from an HR&OD officer.

Joined up working

25. HR&OD are working with the BSW STP (BANES, Swindon, Wiltshire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership) apprenticeship group in joint procurement of apprenticeships, through Salisbury NHS Trust DPS (Dynamic Purchasing System) The group meet on a monthly basis and also share information on apprenticeships. We are the only local authority to have a presence in this group.
26. Originally Wiltshire Council came under the Thames Valley ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) account manager, linking us to local authorities across the South East of the country. Although the areas that ESFA account managers support have changed, we have continued to remain in close contact with our Thames Valley partners (Slough, Bracknell, Oxford, West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham). We have yet to procure jointly, however still share information about providers and policy.
27. South West Councils holds regular meetings and updates for apprenticeships, we have a strong presence in this group and attend meetings and share information. Although we have not jointly procured we do share information about providers.

Support for apprentices while they are on programme

28. Support for apprentices while they are on programme is vital to ensure they are making good progress and ultimately complete the apprenticeship. All apprentices have a designated mentor, either a manager or someone within their team to support them on a day to day basis. Support is also provided by the OD Consultant for Apprenticeships, and the Apprenticeship and Training Officer and both based in the HR&OD service.
29. Support groups have been encouraged and put into place. We have a Leadership and Management Support group (LAMS) that meets every few months and a “New Apprentices” support group with two strands:
 - A facilitated support session to allow new apprentices to ask questions, share knowledge and support each other, even if they are on different apprenticeships;
 - A social networking group run by the apprentices themselves, providing an opportunity to make contacts across different teams and services.

Training providers

30. We have 37 different apprenticeship standards being delivered by 18 different training providers (see appendix 1 for provider details for each apprenticeship).
31. All providers go through a light touch procurement. The HR&OD team have regular contact with providers and monitor the progress of apprentices to ensure

that they are progressing well. If additional support is needed this can be provided by the training provider or by the HR&OD team.

32. Each training provider provides us with an account manager. The OD Consultant for Apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship and Training Officer meet with these account managers on a bi-monthly basis to monitor progress of apprentices, discuss future plans and any changes that might be needed to ensure the apprenticeship programmes run as smoothly as possible.
33. When monitoring the training providers, we ensure that we consult Ofsted inspection reports and discuss with partners (STP network, ESFA).
34. We monitor the success rates and timely success rate with providers throughout the apprenticeships to ensure quality and value for money.
35. If a provider is not performing, and we are unable to find a resolution we will move them to another provider. This happened with a group of staff undertaking a Civil Engineering apprenticeship, a new provider was procured, and the apprentices were able to move across with minimal disruption.

Financial Implications

36. Since March 2017 the council has contributed a total of £1,763,017.03 into our Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account.
37. Funds in the DAS account are available to draw down to pay training providers to deliver apprenticeships for 24 months from the point at which they go into the account.
38. Funds expire after this period, a process known as “sunsetting”, and are then moved out of the DAS (Digital Apprenticeship Service) account and become available for smaller employers to access via a central government grant scheme.
39. To date we have spent £441,051.72 from the DAS account (excluding transferred funds which are still being processed) and we have a further committed spend of £1,863,205 to fund the current learners on programme. This committed spend will continue to increase as we take on more apprentices.
40. There is a spend of about £37,000 per month from the account (this amount varies depending on new apprentices starting, completing or paying the additional end point assessment fee for each apprenticeship)
41. The DAS account shows a sum of £15,858 due to expire at the end of Dec 2019. However, we have raised a number of technical issues with the DAS account which are currently being investigated by the ESFA so this amount may change. Other organisations are having similar technical issues with their accounts.

Next steps

42. The original Apprenticeship and Training Coordinator role was recently updated and re-graded as an OD Consultant to recognise the more strategic approach needed to fully utilise the apprenticeship levy to support the council's wider workforce planning agenda.
43. In addition a new role of Apprenticeship and Training Officer has been created to support with the increasing demand on the HR&OD service to support apprentices throughout the council.
44. Moving forward we will continue to increase the number of apprentices within the council. We are setting up a new apprenticeship working group in the new year, to develop a 5-year strategic plan to include forecasting and future planning, identifying skill gaps within Wiltshire and how we can use apprenticeships to fill these gaps.
45. A further report will be presented to Staffing Policy Committee in May 2020 to provide more information about our strategic plan for apprenticeships and further update on numbers of apprentices and our levy spend.

Recommendations

46. It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee note the contents of this report and that a further report will be presented in May 2020.

Joanne Pitt
Director HR&OD

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Appendix 1 – List of current apprenticeships (as at 10 December 2019)

Apprentice Title	Level	Number of sign ups	Committed Spend	Provider	Upskillers	New	School
Assistant Accountant	3	6	£ 54,000.00	Wiltshire College	4	2	0
Accountancy/Taxation Professional	7	3	£ 81,000.00	CIPFA	3	0	0
Associate Project manager	4	3	£ 18,000.00	Wiltshire College	3	0	0
Business Admin	3	20	£ 110,000.00	Wiltshire College	4	14	2
Business admin	4	2	£ 6,000.00	Wiltshire College	0	2	0
Chartered Manager Degree	6	1	£ 18,000.00	UWE	0	0	1
Children and young People's workforce: Social Care	3	3	£ 18,000.00	Wiltshire College	3	0	0
Children, Young People and Families Manager	5	1	£ 6,000.00	Wiltshire College	1	0	0
Civil Engineering	6	8	£ 216,000.00	UWE	7	1	0
Civil Engineering Technician	3	6	£ 72,000.00	Swindon College	4	2	0
Commis Chef	3	1	£ 9,000.00	Wiltshire college	0	0	1
Construction Technical and professional Building control	3	1	£ 6,000.00	Basingstoke College	1	0	0
Customer Service	3	1	£ 5,000.00	Wiltshire College	0	1	0
Data Analyst	4	3	£ 45,000.00	QA	2	1	0
Digital Marketing	3	4	£48,000	QA	4	0	0
Executive MBA (Facilities Management)	6	1	£ 18,000.00	Sheffield Hallam Uni	1	0	0
Exercise and Fitness	3	1	£0	Lifetime	1	0	0
HR Consultant/Business Partner	5	6	£ 54,000.00	Wiltshire College	6	0	0
HR Support	3	1	£ 5,000.00	Wiltshire College	0	1	0
Junior Energy Manager	3	3	£ 27,000.00	NETS	3	0	0
Property maintenance	2	1	£ 9,000.00	Wiltshire College	1	0	0
Payroll Admin	3	1	£ 9,000.00	MBKB Ltd	1	0	0
Learning and development Consultant/Business Partner	5	1	£ 12,000.00	Cake PD	1	0	0
Lesuire duty Manager	3	3	£ 15,000.00	ICON	3	0	0
Lesuire Operations	2	1	£ 2,000.00	ICON	0	1	0
Adult Care	2	6	£ 18,000.00	Wiltshire College	6	0	0
Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	2	1	£ 5,000.00	Wiltshire College	0	0	1
Marketing manager	6	1	£ 9,000.00	Cambridge Marketing college	1	0	0
Operational/Departmental Manager	5	68	£ 552,505.00	Knowledge Brief	68	0	0
Professtional Accountancy	4	2	£ 16,000.00	Wiltshire College	2	0	0
School Business Manager	5	3	£ 18,000.00	Educ8 Training	0	0	3
Senior Leaders	7	3	£ 54,000.00	University of Glos	3	0	0
Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	3	14	£ 35,000.00	Wiltshire College (13) Swindon college (1)	0	0	14
Swimming Coach	2	2	£ 3,000.00	Dudley College	2	0	0
Teaching Assistant	3	2	£ 10,000.00	Wiltshire College (1) Educ8 (1)	0	0	2
Team Leader/Supervisor	3	59	£ 276,700.00	Knowledge Brief	59	0	0
Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	2	1	£ 3,000.00	Sparshot College	0	1	0

Appendix 2 – List of current apprenticeships (as at 10 December 2019) per Directorate

Directorate	Apprentice New Starts	Apprentice Upskillers	Total
Legal, Electoral & Registration Services	1	5	6
Access and Reablement	0	18	18
Learning Disabilities & Mental Health	0	6	6
Digital, Data & Technology	0	2	2
Public Health	0	4	4
	1	35	36
HR & OD	7	14	21
Families and Children	5	29	34
Education & Skills	3	4	7
Corporate Service	0	21	21
	15	68	83
Finance & Procurement	4	12	16
Highways and Waste	5	27	32
Economic Development and Planning	1	8	9
Housing & Commercial	1	18	19
Communities & Neighbourhood Services	2	17	19
	13	82	95
Joint Commissioning	1	5	6
	30	190	220