

Staffing Policy Committee
12 September 2024

Apprenticeship Update

Purpose

1. To provide Staffing Policy Committee with an update on the council's apprenticeship programme, including a progress report on the recruitment of apprentices, how we are using it to target early careers and the use of our apprenticeship levy.

Background

2. 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 them to the training provider's DAS account.
3. 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.
4. 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

5. The different types of apprentices referred to within this report are:
 - New apprentices - employees recruited into a specific apprenticeship post since the levy's introduction in March 2017. These apprenticeship roles are linked to substantive posts within the council structure and apprentices move into these posts upon successful completion of their apprenticeship.

- Upskilling apprentices - current employees completing an apprenticeship within their current post. They remain in their current post after completing their apprenticeship, but the intention is that it will afford them greater career progression opportunities.

Apprentice numbers and take-up – April 2023 - 2024

6. We currently have 181 staff enrolled in apprenticeship programmes, ranging from Level 2 to Level 7 (31/3/24). 34 of these have been employed directly into apprenticeship positions, and 147 are existing staff undertaking upskilling apprenticeships. We have 28 staff undertaking apprenticeships in maintained schools. The age range across new and upskilling apprentices is from 17 to 58. A list of current apprentices is provided at appendix 1 and a breakdown of apprentices in each directorate is provided at appendix 2.
7. Since April 2023, we have had 96 staff start apprenticeships across all levels.
8. Since April 2023, 60 staff have successfully achieved their apprenticeships. Ten of these were new apprentices, and all moved into their substantive roles and remain working at the council.
9. 60% of our newly recruited apprentices are under 25.
10. Our first cohort of Social Worker apprentices achieved their apprenticeships in January 2024. They have all remained with Wiltshire Council and have moved into ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) Social Worker roles.
11. We have annual cohorts for the Wiltshire Leader programme. Part of this offer is apprenticeships for existing and aspiring managers which demonstrates our commitment to our managers and future leaders.

Apprenticeship levy transfers

12. Under new apprenticeship rules updated in April 2024, employers can now transfer 50%(was previously 25%) of their levy to other organisations to pay for apprenticeship training.
13. HR & OD have worked closely with the BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) group to ensure Wiltshire Council are able to offer transfers. We are currently supporting Early Years settings, Adult Care settings and some partners within ICB.

14. 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

15. 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 also includes CV writing tips from an HR&OD officer.

Partnership working

16. HR&OD is working with the BSW ICB apprenticeship group in the joint procurement of apprenticeships, through Salisbury Managed Procurement Services (SMPS). The group meet monthly to share information on apprenticeships. We are the only local authority to have a regular presence in this group.
17. South West Councils holds regular meetings and updates for apprenticeships. We have a strong presence in this group and attend meetings to share information about apprenticeship providers.

Training providers

18. We have 55 different apprenticeship standards being delivered by 42 different training providers. Provider details for each apprenticeship is available at appendix 1.
19. All providers go through Salisbury managed procurement services. The HR&OD team regularly contact providers and monitors apprentices' progress to ensure that they are progressing well. If additional support is needed, the training provider or the HR&OD team can provide it.
20. We monitor the success and timely success rates with providers throughout the apprenticeships to ensure quality and value for money.

Financial Implications - April 2023 – March 2024

21. The table below shows the fund available for the apprenticeship programme.

Apprenticeship levy paid	£1,026,029
Levy spent	£708, 346
Levy Sunset	£166, 406
Levy transferred	£38,432.5

22. Funds in the DAS account are available for 24 months from the point at which they are deposited account, to draw down to pay training providers to deliver apprenticeships.

23. After this 24-month period, the funds expire, a process known as “sunsetting”. They 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.

Early Careers engagement

24. We regularly attend school and college career fairs to make young people aware of the range of services we provide and the opportunities available to build a career at Wiltshire Council.

25. Volunteers from across the council support with mock interviews at Wiltshire Schools to help young people get interview experience.

26. We have run challenge days at local schools to give young people a more detailed look into our service areas; working with the school effectiveness team, we are aiming to increase the range of services involved for the next academic year.

27. The Wiltshire Council careers fair allows us to interact with young people and their parents.

28. We offered 8 T-level placements to 16 – 19 yr old students from Wiltshire College; these are across Business Management, Social Care and ICT.

29. From April 2023 – March 2024, we offered 30 work experience placements. From April 2024 – August 2024, we have offered 36 placements so far.

Next steps

30. To work with Gloucestershire & Wiltshire partnership to increase our levy sharing and to support more SMEs in Wiltshire that align with Wiltshire Council priorities with apprenticeship funding for their employees.

31. Working closely with service areas to utilise apprenticeships for 'hard to fill' roles and allowing staff to progress internally and build a career at Wiltshire Council.

Environmental impact of the proposal

32. N/A.

Equalities impact of the proposal

33. The apprenticeship programme supports Wiltshire Council's commitment to supporting under 25yrs and early careers.

Risk Assessment

34. N/A.

Financial Implications of the proposal

35. Wiltshire Council is required to pay 0.5% of its PAYE bill each year into the Apprenticeship Levy fund which we can draw down on to fund the cost of apprenticeship training. Any unspent funds that we pay to the Levy are made available for smaller employer to access via a central government grant scheme.

Recommendations

36. SPC are asked to note the contents of this report and the work undertaken to support the apprenticeship programme and early careers.

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Appendix 1 – Current apprenticeships August 2024

Apprentice title	Level	Upskiller	New	School
Accounts/Finance assistant	2		1	
Accountancy Taxation professional	7	2		
Adult care worker	2	2		
Applications support lead	4		1	
Assistant accountant	3		2	
Associate Project management	4	1	1	
Building control surveyor	6	1		
Business admin	3	1	13	
Business analyst	4	1		
Chartered Legal executive	6	4		
Chartered Town planner	7	1		
Children, young people and families manager	5	1		
Children, young people and families practitioner	4	11		
Civil engineering degree	6	5	2	
Civil engineering senior technician	4		1	
Civil engineering technician	3		6	
Coaching professional	5	2		
Commercial procurement & supply	4	1		
Community Health & wellbeing worker	3		2	
Customer service specialist	3		1	
Customer service practitioner	2		1	
Data analyst	4	4		
Data protection & information governance	4	1		
Data scientist	6	4		
Early years educator	2			3
Early years practitioner	3			1
HR Business Partner/Consultant	5	1		1
Employability practitioner	4	4		
HR Support	3	1		
Information communications technician	3		1	
Junior Energy manager	3	1		
Lead Adult care worker	3	6		
Lead practitioner in adult care	4	13		
Leader in adult care	5	6		
Learning & Development Business consultant	5	1		

Library, information and archives assistant	3		1	
Occupational therapist	6	8	2	
Operations/Departmental manager	5	17		
Personal trainer	3		1	
Professional accounting technician	4	1		
Rehabilitation worker (visual impairment)	5	1		
School Business manager	4			3
Senior Healthcare support worker	3	6		
Senior Leader	7	3		3
Senior People professional	7	1		
Social Worker	6	17		
Software development technician	3	4		
Systems thinking practitioner	7	1		
Teacher	6			7
Teaching assistant	3			12
Team leader	3	11		
Trading standards professional	6	3		
Vehicle maintenance & repair, light vehicle	2		1	
Totals		148	37	30

Appendix 2 – Current apprenticeships per Directorate (August 2024)

Directorate	New start apprentices	Upskilling apprentices	Total	% of apprentices against Directorate headcount
Legal & Governance	2	9	11	3.53
Assets & Commercial development	1	2	3	1.23
Finance & Procurement	4	6	10	3.8
HR & OD	0	4	4	2.98
ICT	2	10	12	9.1
Transformation & Business change	0	6	6	14.28
Adult social care	2	55	57	2.84
Education & Skills	0	7	7	2.84
Families & Children	7	29	36	4.19
Commissioning	2	0	2	2.04
Public Health	2	1	3	4.05
Environment	0	3	3	1.77
Leisure, culture & communities	2	4	6	0.55
Highways & transport	12	9	21	3.23
Planning	0	3	3	1.75
Economy & regeneration	0	1	1	2.17