

## **Wiltshire Council Human Resources Apprenticeship Programme Policy**

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

### **What is it?**

This policy outlines how apprentices can be utilised within Wiltshire Council and how managers recruit, support and develop apprenticeships within their teams.

### **Go straight to the section:**

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### **Who does it apply to?**

This policy applies to all Wiltshire Council employees (with the exception of teaching staff employed in locally managed schools).

This is a harmonised policy and applies to both Wiltshire Council and ex-district TUPE employees.

### **What are the main points?**

What are apprenticeships?

1. Apprenticeships are open to all age groups above 16 years old whether just leaving school, working for a number of years or seeking to start a

new career. No age restrictions apply. Applicants to the programme must be living in England and not in full time education.

2. Apprentices learn whilst undertaking a role, building up knowledge and skills whilst gaining nationally recognised qualifications and receiving a salary.
3. Depending on the type of apprenticeship, the programme usually runs between 1 and 4 years.
4. There are 3 levels of apprenticeship:

**a) Intermediate Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes at grades A-C)**

- Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a vocational Level 2, Functional Skills, (communication, number and ICT), and in some cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as a BTEC or diploma, (often referred to as the Technical Certificate). There is a requirement to study Personal Learning and Thinking, (PLT) and Employer Rights and Responsibilities, (ERR).

National standards for the delivery of apprenticeships state that there must be a minimum of 280 hours of learning (known as guided learning hours), undertaken per year, of which, a minimum of 100 hours must be delivered off of the job.

- Intermediate Apprenticeships provide the skills the learner needs for their chosen career and allow entry to an Advanced Apprenticeship.

**b) Advanced Apprenticeships (equivalent to two A-level passes)**

- Advanced apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as a vocational Level 3, Functional Skills, PLT, ERR and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge based certificate such as a BTEC or HNC.
- To start the Advanced Apprenticeship Programme, learners should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have completed an Apprenticeship. However this will not necessarily exclude the learner from undertaking the programme. If through initial assessment, they can demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills to undertake the programme, then, they can start directly.

**c) Higher Apprenticeships**

- Higher Apprenticeships work towards work-based learning qualifications such as vocational Level 4 or 5, and in some cases, a knowledge based qualification such as a Foundation degree. Some apprentices can progress to higher education including university degrees. There are currently seven apprenticeship frameworks which go to Level 4, and one to level 5.
5. Appointments are particularly encouraged in areas of the council where there are known skills shortages and it is hard to recruit.

#### Why use an apprentice?

6. Due to the level of investment in an apprentice, organisations often find they become invaluable employees. In addition benefits include:

- An opportunity to grow your own talent
- A demonstration to existing and future employees that the council is willing to invest in their future
- An increase in personal development for other team members who get involved with the apprenticeship programme. e.g. mentoring
- The development of a trained and motivated workforce – an apprenticeship programme delivers job specific development
- The reduction of skills shortages and a mechanism for career progression
- The development of existing staff by helping them to gain new skills and qualifications

#### How is an apprenticeship funded?

7. The training element of an apprenticeship is funded from central government, through the Skills Funding Agency. The amount of funding provided is variable depending on the framework and level of apprenticeship being undertaken. All funding is provided at no cost to the council for 16-18 year olds, and approximately 50% of the funding is provided for 19-24 year olds. Funding for employees over 25 will still attract a contribution from central government.
8. Costs to the council are those similar to any other employee and include:
- To pay the apprentice's salary and any other related contributions, such as National Insurance if applicable (depends on salary rate).

The rate of pay of the apprentice will depend on the outcome of the evaluation of their role.

- To provide staff time to support the apprentice in the workplace and to take an active part in any review sessions with the training provider
- Time out of the workplace to allow the apprentice to attend formal training, plus any other apprenticeship events where their presence is required
- Any additional costs for additional equipment i.e. tool kits, safety items, educational visits, annual subscriptions

#### Preparing to employ an apprentice

9. HR are able to support you in the recruitment process and the Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre can offer advice when identifying an apprenticeship framework relevant to a job role. In addition the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) a government funded agency, provide a free expert support service for employers, and can be found at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk). HR will also advertise all externally recruited vacancies on the NAS Apprenticeship Vacancies System in line with their Skills Funding Agency Funding Contract.
10. Managers will need to follow the council's [recruitment policy and procedure](#) which includes gaining authorisation to fill the vacancy using the [approval to recruit form](#), and creating the role on SAP using the [SAP position creation form](#).
11. Suitable apprenticeship vacancies tend to be roles which do not require specific experience or qualifications and could be adapted to provide a learning opportunity. Some roles may, depending on the role, require formal qualifications. A 'Level or equivalent standard of education may be required for higher level apprenticeship programmes. Previous work experience should not be a requirement; however managers can specify the core competencies, and any other elements relevant to the working environment.

#### Created Roles

12. It is the council's objective to recruit and develop apprentices who will continue their employment following completion of the apprenticeship programme and develop their career within the council. Therefore, when creating an apprentice role, where possible permanent funding should be identified and a permanent contract offered.
13. The post will require a JEQ/Job description. This will need to be specific to the type of apprenticeship programme and include appropriate milestones and qualifications to be attained. For

programmes that continue for more than a year, a new JEQ is required for each stage of the programme, to reflect the development of the apprentice, significant milestones reached and qualifications gained. Please refer to [guidance for managers on completing the JEQ](#).

14. New roles will need to be evaluated in line with the [GLPC Job Evaluation Scheme](#).

#### Current Vacancies

15. We would welcome the opportunity to deliver training to potential apprentices in any area of the Council. This however is affected by:
  - The ability to match the requirements of the job role against a suitable apprenticeship framework.
  - The ability to deliver the technical element of the framework, or find a suitable external organisation.
  - The ability to provide tutor and assessor capacity for a cohort of apprentices.
  - An ability of the recruiting line manager to demonstrate that the learning is linked into a longer term career path within the Council.
16. If an apprentice fills a current vacancy, the title of the role must be changed to include apprentice in the title, to enable HR to monitor Apprenticeship placements.
17. The manager does not have to complete a further JEQ, however they will need to complete additional JEQ's if they wish to include a career progression path. Managers must demonstrate how the role could be filled by an apprentice and have liaised with both their HR Business partner for additional recruitment support, and the Wiltshire Accredited Learning centre to ensure there is an appropriate apprenticeship framework available for the role.

#### Next steps

18. Prior to authorisation and evaluation of the role, managers should have spoken with the Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre to identify the relevant apprenticeship framework and whether it is possible to deliver in house or using an external training provider. If an external provider is to be used, the council will engage with the National Apprenticeship Service to assist in the identification of a provider who will best meet our requirements.
19. Some apprenticeship roles will require a CRB check and this should be highlighted on the approval to recruit form as it will need to be included

in the job advertisement and the CRB check carried out on the preferred candidate. Refer to the policy on [criminal records disclosures](#).

#### How to recruit an apprentice

20. Managers need to submit JEQ/Job descriptions to the recruitment team, who will advertise the role and review the redeployment pool. They will also liaise with NAS and/or Job centre and Integrated Youth Service.
21. Apprentices can apply for the role using the [council's application form](#), online via the council's website or by requesting a paper copy to complete and return.
22. Please note apprenticeship vacancies will remain open for redeployment purposes until it is offered to an apprentice.
23. Once the candidates have been short listed, interviews should be held. However the interview should be proportionate to the role, relaxed and informal. Managers will be provided with [appropriate guidelines](#), and should also refer to the [Guidance on how to conduct an interview](#).
24. When a suitable candidate has been selected as the preferred candidate, the normal [recruitment procedure](#) should be followed. This will include the completion of a pre-employment questionnaire and any [reasonable adjustments](#) will be identified and measures put in place to accommodate them.

#### Safeguarding of young persons and vulnerable adults

25. The council takes its responsibilities seriously under the [safeguarding vulnerable groups act 2006](#). The recruiting manager is responsible for ensuring that safe recruitment practices are followed when recruiting into roles dealing with young persons and vulnerable adults.
26. The recruiting manager should refer to the following policies/guide:
  - [employment of children and young persons](#)
  - [criminal record disclosures \(CRBs\)](#)
  - [guidance for managers on safer recruitment](#)

#### Equality of opportunity and diversity

27. Refer to [guidance for managers on equal opportunities in recruitment](#) for further equality and diversity issues and considerations.

#### Supporting an apprentice

28. The key element of an apprenticeship programme is to combine work based learning with the achievement of formal qualifications. To achieve this, the apprentice has an Individual Learning Plan or agreement. This will outline the training programme with the training provider, including duration, key dates and attendance. It will also apply focus to the learning and identify key achievement milestones.
29. The Individual Learning Plan will be developed by the Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre with input from the manager and the apprentice. This document will then be used to develop a structured work experience and development programme which supports the formal study element of the apprenticeship. Any [reasonable adjustments](#) required, such as training formats or additional support, will be included.
30. Managers are required to hold regular one to ones with their apprentice to coach them within their role, to ensure they are performing satisfactorily and are developing their skills in work. Managers are also required to liaise with the training provider to provide “on the job” feedback regarding their employee’s progress.
31. An apprentice will be allocated a mentor in liaison with the line manager. Their main role is to provide an additional source of support to the apprentice. This will give the mentor the opportunity to develop supervisory and performance management skills.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Line manager responsibilities

- Identify the skills gap within their team which could be filled by employing an apprentice
- Identify funding for the apprenticeship role
- Liaise with the Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre/National Apprenticeship Service to identify a suitable framework and provider
- Create a JEQ and submit it for evaluation
- Gain authorisation to “recruit”
- Liaise with HR and submit job details for advertising
- Interview prospective apprentices
- Develop a structured training programme in conjunction with Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre or external provider
- Provide a safe and secure working environment
- Ensure that the apprentice has time for study and is given work that develops their skills – knowledge and experience which is linked to their Individual Learning Plan
- Liaise promptly with the recruitment team to ensure HR Payroll Administration receive all appropriate paperwork

- Allocate a work space for the apprentice and order any equipment they may need
- Organise an induction course and risk assessment if apprentice is below 18 years old. Contact HR Advisor/Occupational Health and Safety
- In the first arranged one to one meeting, ensure the apprentice understands what is required from them in the workplace and refer them to HR Direct and to the policies which they need to understand for instance absence, email and internet useage, and conduct and performance.
- Assess performance and have regular reviews with both the apprentice and tutors from the Wiltshire Accredited Learning centre or external provider

#### Training provider – Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre

- The Wiltshire Accredited Learning centre will co-ordinate the learning and development element of Council apprenticeship programme, whether it is delivered by the in house team or by an external provider
- Provide a detailed Individual Learning Plan for agreement with the line manager and the apprentice
- Support and advise the line manager and apprentice on the learning programme for its duration
- Co-ordinate and deliver training in line with the apprenticeship framework
- Assessment of the apprentice in the workplace
- Assessment and evaluation of the programme once the apprentice has completed their placement

#### Apprentice responsibilities

- Attend planned and agreed formal learning and development sessions whilst working towards the apprenticeship framework either through day or block release
- Complete assignments/coursework related to their programme by the set deadlines
- Perform the job to the best of their ability
- Discuss any problems, issues or concerns about the programme or their work with their manager or mentor

#### HR responsibilities

- Provide manager with advice about setting up the post and advise and support throughout the process
- Work with the line manager to identify post apprenticeship career progression routes
- Provide advice for interview/selection



## Recruitment

- To place all internal and external job adverts and post jobs with NAS/Jobcentre/Integrated Youth Service
- To initiate all new starter actions after carrying out the pre-employment checks including any Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) clearance
- To issue written conditional job offers to candidates
- To liaise with occupational health and the manager, once an offer of employment has been made, to ensure the completion and return of the pre-employment health questionnaire.
- To notify the manager of the outcome of the questionnaire once completed by the candidate in order that the manager may consider [reasonable adjustments](#)
- To maintain relevant data on the online e-recruitment system
- To issue contracts of employment
- To respond to recruitment queries from prospective candidates
- To set up electronic personal files
- To set up new starter information in the payroll system
- To ensure a copy of all relevant documentation is held on the file including a signed copy of the contract, the interview notes, the relevant job description and JEQ

## Frequently asked questions

### **How much time will the apprentice require on and off the job?**

This will depend on the framework the apprentice is undertaking and the speed at which they are able to progress. There are minimum requirements for an apprentice to undertake 280 hours of structured learning known as 'guided learning hours' per year. 100 of these must be "off the job" and could comprise of:

- Formal classroom based training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Review meetings
- Online training and development
- Preparation of course materials
- Research

### **Can an apprentice apply for vacancies whilst they are on the apprenticeship scheme?**

Yes, but if they are successful in their application they should be allowed to complete their apprenticeship if they wish to do so.

### **What happens if an apprentice does not complete their apprenticeship programme?**

Employers cannot ask apprentices to repay the training costs if they leave.

### **How long is the probation period?**

Apprentices will be subject to the council's standard probationary period of six months as stated in their contract of employment.

### **What if an apprentice is absent/ill?**

If the apprentice is absent from work or college due to sickness, then the Council's [Sickness Absence Management Policy](#), Procedure & Guidelines must be followed. For further information please refer to the guidance on HR Direct.

### **How are working hours/lunch breaks organised?**

As with non apprentice employees, working times and lunch breaks should be agreed locally with the apprentice once they start. The hours they are contracted to work include the time that is spent whilst attending formal training. (If attendance at the training provider is not required due to half term, for example, then the apprentice will be expected to attend work).

### **Can an apprenticeship programme be completed on a part time basis?**

Typically apprenticeship programmes are for a minimum of 30 hours paid employment per week. If an apprentice is unable to commit to working 30 hours per week the council may consider allowing them to undertake the role on a part time basis. Such allowances will only be made in exceptional circumstances and will only be considered if there are enough hours in the working week for the apprentice to complete their required training. For example, if an apprentice works 20 hours per week their manager will need to consider that the apprenticeship framework typically requires an average of 5 hours training per week, totalling 280 hours per year – 100 hours of which must be "off the job". If the training element is likely to be more than 5 hrs per week, for example day or block release, the applicants request to undertake the programme on a part time basis is unlikely to be accommodated.

### **As the apprentice may be under 18 are there any regulations I should know about?**

Under the Working Time Regulations 1998 a young person (anyone under 18 years of age) cannot usually be made to work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. These hours cannot be averaged over a longer period and you're not allowed to ignore these restrictions. Please visit the following link for more information: Young People at Work and the Law <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/>

### **Does an apprentice need a specific risk assessment – a Young Person Risk Assessment?**

Managers should complete this with assistance from occupational health when assessing the potential work tasks carried out by a young person under the age of 17 on work experience, or a young person under the age of 18 who will be an employee, **before they start their placement/work**. If you require any further information, please contact your Directorate Health and Safety Advisor. Please see HR Direct for further details. (<http://thewire.wiltshire.council/hrdirect/occhealthandsafety/riskassessmentguidance.htm> ).

### How do I liaise with the training provider?

The training provider (either internal or external) will be on hand to advise you of the framework from the early days of planning for your role. Soon after the apprentice has started work they will advise the key contacts to complete any required paperwork, plus agree the process from here on with a view to meetings, reviews and a timetable of events such as exams.

### Definitions

Training provider – Wiltshire Accredited Learning Centre or external training provider (either private or college).

NAS – National Apprenticeship Service - a government funded agency, providing a free expert support service for employers.

### Equal Opportunities

This policy has been Equality Impact Assessed ([link to EIA for policy](#)) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

#### *If appropriate:*

Managers will make any necessary adjustments to ensure that all employees are treated fairly. For further information see the guidance on equal opportunities in ([link to equal opps guidance](#))

### Legislation

This policy has been reviewed by an external legal organisation to ensure compliance with (the above legislation and) our statutory duties.

### Advice and guidance

If you require help in accessing or understanding this policy [[or completing any of the associated forms](#)] you should contact your line manager or trade union representative if you are a member.

If, due to the nature of your query, it is not appropriate to contact your line manager you should contact your head of service who will nominate an appropriate manager or colleague to help you.

See [guidance for managers – giving advice on policies](#).

### **Further information**

There are a number of related policies and procedures that you should be aware of including:

Recruitment Policy and Procedure  
Job evaluation  
Criminal records disclosures  
Politically restricted posts  
Probationary reviews  
Code of conduct  
Disciplinary

There is also a **toolkit** including manager guidance and supporting documents to use when following this policy and procedure.

### **Toolkit**

#### Guidelines

- [guidance for managers to managing appointments through e-recruitment](#)
- [guidance for managers to recruitment](#)
- [guidance for managers to safer recruitment](#)
- [guidance for managers - reasonable adjustments](#)
- [guidance for managers - equal opportunities in recruitment](#)
- [guidance for managers – completing the job description](#)
- [guidance for managers – induction](#)
- [recruitment flowchart](#)

#### Forms

- [form - SAP configuration request](#)
- [form - approval to recruit](#)
- [template - short listing matrix](#)
- [form - interview assessment](#)
- [form - preferred candidate](#)
- [form - CRB clearance information](#)
- [form - new starter](#)

#### Other

- [Apprenticeship programme flowchart](#)
- [EIA – Apprenticeship programme policy](#)
- [recruitment training](#)
- [safer recruitment](#)

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact your HR advisor.

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