

a 'how to...' guide
to apprenticeships



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1. About this guide

Our aim throughout this guide is to support Council managers and staff to develop effective processes for recruiting and supporting Apprentices, incorporating minimum quality standards in order to guarantee a positive experience for both Apprentices and managers.

It offers help and advice at both strategic and practical levels, with case studies and examples of good practice from Councils across the Yorkshire and Humber region and beyond.

Strategic support and advice

Advice and guidance on the strategic approach to Apprenticeships can be found in Section 3: Gaining Commitment; Section 4: Strategic Planning and Section 6: Building on Success. These sections are particularly useful to those who have responsibility and capacity to influence the strategic direction of their Council.

Practical help and advice

The practical help and advice provided in Section 2: Definitions and Section 4: Making it Happen will give operational line managers a better understanding of Apprenticeships and enable them to support Apprentices in the workplace.

But before doing anything

It is worth noting that all Councils across the region are doing something in relation to Apprenticeships, so before taking any action it is advisable to contact the relevant officer within your authority to discuss what is already happening to avoid duplicating or undermining existing arrangements. A list of all contacts can be found at Appendix 1 of this guide.

Acknowledgements

This guide has been adapted by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber from original work produced by Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands (IEWM) with sponsorship from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

Thanks to Katrina McGuigan, Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands for sharing the original guide and to colleagues from Councils across the Yorkshire and Humber region and the National Apprenticeship Service for their valuable contributions.

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2. Introduction

'Growing Apprentices' is an important component in Council plans to tackle issues such as rising unemployment and worklessness, budget savings and efficiencies and enhancing skills and knowledge.

Targets

It is the Government's ambition that by 2020, one young person in five will have started an Apprenticeship before the end of the academic year in which they reach their 18th birthday.

Local government employs 20 per cent of the total workforce nationally but employs fewer than 10 per cent of all Apprentices. In January 2009, the Local Government Association (LGA) announced that local government would create 7,500 new Apprenticeships across 800 services by March 2010.

The LGA Group's 2010 Local Government Workforce Strategy highlights a **key performance target of 15,000 Apprenticeships in local government by March 2011.**

3. Definitions

An Apprentice

An Apprentice is an employee, usually but not exclusively aged between 16 and 25, who is following a structured, work-based training programme within a particular occupational area such as Horticulture, Catering or Business Administration.

An Apprentice can be a new recruit or an existing member of staff, working full time or part time as long as this is for a minimum of 16 hours per week¹.

An Apprenticeship

This is the actual structured training programme which an Apprentice follows – a mixture of on and off the job learning referred to as a framework, and leading to nationally recognised accredited qualifications.

An Apprenticeship *must* include the following components:

- a knowledge-based element commonly referred to as a Technical Certificate. This is a nationally recognised, vocationally related qualification (VRQ) which provides the essential knowledge to do a job. It is most often taught off the job and leads to the award of a diploma or certificate such as those offered by BTEC or City & Guilds
- a competency-based element commonly referred to as an NVQ (National Vocational Qualification). NVQs cover practical, work-related tasks designed to develop the skills and capability to do a job effectively. They are based on national standards which specify what a competent person in a job could be expected to do; competence is assessed by comparing skills against these standards
- a Key Skills/Functional Skills element. This includes the mandatory subjects of Communication (developing and demonstrating speaking, listening, reading and writing skills) and Application of Number (skills in interpreting information involving numbers, carrying out calculations, interpreting results and presenting findings). It may also include Information Communication Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance and Problem Solving
- a module on employment rights and responsibilities

¹ Approval must be obtained from a Skills Funding Agency Account Manager prior to appointing a part-time Apprentice – Training Providers will provide support with this

Apprenticeships exist at three levels:

- Apprenticeships – leading to a level 2 qualification (equal to five GCSEs at grades A-C)
- Advanced Apprenticeships – leading to a level 3 qualification (equal to two A-levels)
- Higher Apprenticeships – leading to a level 4 qualification (equal to HND or a Foundation Degree)

Generally, Apprenticeships take between one and three years to complete, depending mostly on the skill levels of the Apprentice and the framework they are following.

All Apprentices spend the majority of their time in the workplace, developing their vocational competencies alongside work colleagues. Sometimes a mentor supports them too to enhance their learning. A specialist provider usually delivers the remaining learning off the job, which may be in a local Further Education College or on the specialist provider's premises.

Frameworks and qualifications

Sector Skills Councils are the Government bodies that work with employers in particular industry sectors to develop national occupational standards and to design and maintain Apprenticeship frameworks to meet the needs of the industries they represent. There are currently 25 Sector Skills Councils, together covering approximately 90 per cent of the UK workforce. Details of these can be found at www.sscalliance.org

At present, there are around 200 Apprenticeship frameworks available, ranging from accountancy and business administration to textiles, engineering and construction. These frameworks cover many of the occupations and service areas relevant to local Councils.

The most common frameworks that Councils use include Business Administration, Customer Care, Information & Communication Technology, Accountancy, Vehicle Maintenance and a variety of craft areas, but there are many others that are relevant to Councils which are currently underutilised.

The National Apprenticeship Service website www.apprenticeships.org.uk/ has a full list of available Apprenticeship frameworks, along with information concerning new frameworks being developed. Currently these include Building Control, Planning and Housing.

Funding - cost for employers

As a contracted employee, an Apprentice must receive a wage. The minimum wage for Apprentices is currently £95 per week², although for nineteen year olds and over, this only applies for the first twelve months after which the National Minimum Wage is payable. Further details can be found on the National Minimum Wage website www.hmrc.gov.uk/nmw/

However, as skills develop, many employers tend to increase wages – in fact; research has found that Apprentices currently earn an average of £170 net pay per week.

Some Councils place Apprentice posts at Scale 1 - currently between £12,678 and £14,492 - for the duration of the Apprenticeship, with the salary rising to match the post grading when the Apprentice qualifies.

² There will be a change to the minimum pay for Apprentices from 1 October 2010.

Clearly, there are other non-visible costs for employers namely for the supervision, support and mentoring that needs to be put in place to support the Apprentice.

Funding from the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

NAS covers the training costs of an Apprentice in full, or in part, depending on their age, i.e.

- for 16–18 year olds, NAS covers 100% of costs, i.e. makes funding available via the training provider to cover the full cost of the mandatory training required to complete the framework
- for 19–24 year olds, NAS will cover up to 50% of the mandatory training costs
- for over 25s, NAS will cover up to 40% of the costs, i.e. an employer would be expected to make a financial contribution of at least 60%

The Training Provider

Training providers are organisations which hold a contract to deliver Apprenticeship frameworks and can be local colleges or specialist training organisations. Some Councils hold contracts and are able to deliver Apprenticeships either internally to their employees, externally to employees within other organisations or both.

Training Providers deliver the knowledge requirements of the Apprenticeship qualification and/or assess an Apprentice's competence in a workplace setting.

All contracted Training Providers receive regular inspections to quality assure their delivery of Apprenticeship frameworks. Your local NAS Employer Services Manager can help to identify the right provider who can deliver the appropriate framework for you from a wide available range. A list of NAS Employer Services Managers is available at Appendix 2 of this guide.

However, you should always discuss any arrangements to procure training provision with HR colleagues first. They may already have established good working relationships with Training Providers and may even have produced an exclusive preferred list, with strict procedures to follow for contracting with providers.

How the Apprenticeship training is delivered

Assessment of competence

Some of the Apprenticeship framework, usually the NVQ element, will be assessed 'on the job', i.e. in the workplace as part of the Apprentice's day-to-day work activities.

The Training Provider will allocate an assessor to the Apprentice who will guide them through all stages of the process.

The assessor will check the Apprentice's capabilities against a set of agreed standards throughout the training, using a variety of methods, including:

- portfolio evidence (i.e. work produced by the Apprentice)
- observations
- structured interviews
- witness testimonials
- video evidence

Further information and details about the actual units which make up an NVQ at the different levels is available on the NAS website www.apprenticeships.org.uk/

Off the job training

It is likely that an Apprentice will need to undertake some of the training away from their job (referred to as 'off the job' training).

This will usually involve the Key Skills/Functional Skills element and/or the Technical Certificate. Depending on the Apprentice's actual job, or the elements of training being undertaken, off the job training could be one day a week or, in a few cases, a block release (e.g. Construction or Horticulture).

Achievement of Apprenticeship Framework

Once competence has been demonstrated, the Training Provider's assessor will 'sign off' the achieved units.

On completion, the Apprentice will receive an accredited, nationally recognised qualification for each of the Framework elements and an Apprenticeship Certificate at the appropriate level on completion of all elements.

4. Gaining Commitment

The Department for Communities and Local Government identified that best performing Councils are creating one Apprenticeship for every 65 employees; the average is one Apprentice per 248 employees.

Three-quarters of Councils nationally are working to increase the number of Apprentices in their workforce or across their suppliers and partners.

Member and Chief Executive Commitment

Member and senior officer buy-in and commitment are crucial to ensure the success of Apprenticeships within your Council.

All 22 Councils in the region have signed up to the [Skills Pledge](#) – a voluntary, public commitment to support employees to develop their basic skills and work towards relevant qualifications to at least a Level 2. Many Councils have included the delivery of Apprenticeships as part of their Skills Pledge commitment.

The drive to increase the number of Apprenticeships is best led by the Leader and/or Chief Executive and then cascaded to all directorates and services through effective communication.

The key to gaining commitment from Elected Members is to present it in the context of their role as community leaders. The skills, worklessness and NEET (not in employment, education or training) agenda is a high priority across all Councils in Yorkshire and Humber. Apprenticeships can offer an opportunity into employment for those facing barriers to work and are central to Local Employment Partnerships, Local Economic Assessments, Work and Skills Plans and Local Area Agreements.

Promoting the financial and organisational benefits of Apprenticeships will help to gain commitment from the Chief Executive. These include:

- savings in sickness absence, recruitment costs, turnover and agency staff spend
- rejuvenation of the workforce, providing new and fresh ideas
- mentoring opportunities for other employees
- a talent pool for future leaders

The Business Case

Developing a strong and robust business case for Apprenticeships, which clearly demonstrates the benefits that they bring to the organisation and the wider community, will help to gain support.

The key areas for inclusion in the business case include:

- an initiative to meet the priorities of the community such as tackling local unemployment, worklessness and skills issues and meeting Local Area Agreement/ Multi-Area Agreement targets
- evidence to support successful inspections, Equality Impact Assessments and Investors in People
- a way to achieve cost savings and efficiencies in relation to recruitment and retention of staff, reduction in sickness absence and improved service delivery
- an opportunity to influence suppliers and partners to employ and train local people by promoting Apprenticeships through procurement
- evidence to support the authority's 'corporate parenting' responsibility by offering employability opportunities to care leavers
- an opportunity to set an example to the wider community as both an exemplary local employer and commissioner of services

For Councils as employers, Apprenticeships:

- are an excellent return on investment
- increase productivity and retention
- reduce turnover and recruitment costs
- improve local service quality
- help increase skill levels, productivity and the employability of local people help to fill current or predicted skill shortages
- bring young people into an ageing workforce
- ensure knowledge doesn't retire when employees do

For local authorities as local leaders, Apprenticeships:

- get young people into paid employment
- help develop skills and knowledge, reducing reliance on public spending
- can engage, motivate and enable care experienced young people to achieve their goals through strong and effective 'corporate parenting'
- help reduce NEET (not in employment, education or training) figures and help achieve national and local targets
- widen choice for school and college leavers and help raise aspirations
- help tackle long-term unemployment
- lead to permanent jobs
- involve the local community in the delivery of local services



A number of local Councils have developed Apprenticeship Strategies or Plans which are linked to their corporate workforce strategies and objectives. Gaining formal approval to the strategies and plans has secured Member and Senior Management buy-in and commitment.

Further details can be obtained from contacts at East Riding of Yorkshire, North-East Lincolnshire and Leeds City Councils.

Senior Management Commitment

In order to sustain a long-term commitment, Apprenticeships should be included in any strategy or policy covering employment, equality and diversity, regeneration, procurement, wellbeing, children's and young people's services, anti-social behaviour, healthy communities and the 14-19 Agenda.

Line Manager/Supervisor Commitment

Raising the awareness of Apprenticeships and their benefits amongst line managers and supervisors will encourage them to think about employing Apprentices within their teams.

Local Government Yorkshire and Humber, with financial support from the National Apprenticeship Service, has developed workshop materials that can be used by Councils to raise awareness of Apprenticeships, their benefits and how they can be effectively supported and managed. These materials are available on the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber website

www.lgyh.gov.uk/

³ Examples of Frequently Asked Questions are available on the [National Apprenticeships](#) and on the [IDeA Communities of Practice](#) websites

⁴ The Framework Map has been developed by London Boroughs on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). A copy can be found on the [IDeA Communities of Practice](#) website

Providing a manager's briefing session is a good way to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and their benefits and dispel any myths or misconceptions they may have. The session could be included as part of the induction for new line managers.

Doncaster Council delivers a training session to all managers and supervisors who are considering employing Apprentices within their team. The training sessions are very informative and extremely well received by managers and ensure they are equipped with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to support an Apprentice through their Apprenticeship programme.

Doncaster Council have also had a DVD made about their successful Apprenticeship programmes which they can use to promote the scheme with other managers

Other ideas include:

- put managers who already employ Apprentices in touch with others who don't
- create a 'Frequently Asked Questions' page for managers on your intranet
- promote the business benefits in internal communications such as staff newsletters and magazines, line manager briefings and the intranet³
- provide case studies of where Apprentices are working well in other departments or similar authorities
- use the Local Government Apprenticeship Framework Map⁴ to identify Apprenticeship frameworks relevant to your business and service needs

Commitment from Employees

Some of the tips above will be useful for getting all employees on board with Apprenticeships, such as promoting them through internal communication mechanisms.

Offering Apprenticeships to existing employees will also help to raise awareness generally (see Section 5 for more information).

A key and valid concern for existing employees may be that Apprentices will be replacing recently redundant staff or taking work away from colleagues who are already concerned about the security of their post. It is important therefore to ensure that Apprenticeships have the backing of your Trade Union.

Trade Union Commitment

Trade Unions play an important role in promoting learning in the workplace as well as encouraging employers to take on Apprentices and make sure they have a fair deal.

Involving the trade unions at an early stage of the Apprenticeship Scheme can help to ensure that you have ongoing support as well as being aware of any potential stumbling blocks later on in the process.

Trade Unions, especially Learning Representatives, will have a wealth of knowledge about how to manage on and off the job training and their insights and support will be valuable in gaining buy-in into your schemes.

[Union Learn](#) has produced useful reports for its members on how to use collective bargaining to ensure quality Apprenticeship schemes are put in place.



5. Strategic Planning

Workforce Plans

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is about:

- identifying what your Council needs in relation to its workforce in order to achieve its objectives
- analysing how the current workforce compares in relation to what is needed (e.g. in relation to skill shortages, attitudes, diversity, age profile)
- developing a strategy to set out how it is going to develop, attract and retain the workforce it needs to be successful
- putting in place an effective programme of action to address the critical workforce issues that have been identified

The Local Government Association's Local Government Workforce Strategy 2010 advises that workforce planning works best in service areas, led by service managers, and then supplemented by corporate workforce planning in relation to generic workforce issues.

Workforce Data

Having a clear understanding of the make-up of your workforce in relation to age, ethnicity and skills is a key factor in workforce planning. As a result of signing up to the Skills Pledge, many Councils are now undertaking an analysis of their workforce to provide them with intelligent data that will enable them to plan for the future more effectively.

Star Training and Consultancy have developed an online skills analysis tool. A number of Councils across the region are using the tool - Barnsley, Craven, Leeds and Scarborough - along with Councils from other regions.

Contact Lee Reddington at STAR on 01904 612231 for further details.

Skills Shortages

Many Councils face skills shortages in areas such as social work, planning and environmental health.

The National Apprenticeship Service has produced a regional summary of strategic demand which sets out the skills shortage areas for the region. These are:

- public sector
- construction
- engineering including building services
- engineering
- hospitality
- wholesale and retail trade including motor vehicle and motorcycle repair

Developing career pathways using Apprenticeships offers Councils the opportunity to promote these occupations to young people and provides a 'grow your own' solution to the problem.

Succession Planning/Talent Management

Using workforce data, Councils are able to identify employees who are coming up to retirement and make plans to ensure knowledge and skills don't retire when the employee does.

Developing career pathways for Apprentices provides a cost effective way of planning for the future as it can result in the majority of external recruitment being for entry level positions, which are the least costly to recruit to.

Rotherham MBC has been leading on a RIEP funded regional Skills Framework Project. The outcomes of the project are to develop a library of job/person profiles, a qualifications audit process, a skills framework and a career progression route map.

The materials produced are available for use by all Councils across the region.

Contact Linda Wilson at Rotherham MBC on 01709 823708 for further details.

Identifying Apprenticeship opportunities for existing employees

Apprenticeships are not just for new employees. Using workforce data, Councils can identify existing employees who do not hold a minimum level 2 qualification and who would be eligible for Government funding towards the cost of their training. Utilising Government funding for those employees who are eligible enables Councils to maximise their training budgets and support more or different training interventions.

Councils can also use their performance and development review process to identify Apprenticeship opportunities for existing employees. This could work through:

- operational managers identifying relevant Apprenticeship opportunities that meet the training and development needs of their employees, or
- establishing close links or co-ordination between those responsible for undertaking performance and development reviews and those responsible for workforce planning in order to identify potential Apprenticeship opportunities that arise from the process

Apprenticeships and the funding that they attract could also be beneficial to Councils to help employees 'at risk' to re-skill so that they are able to be redeployed in to other job roles. This could be particularly useful to address skill shortage areas.

Review of Entry Level Posts

Some Councils have undertaken a review of entry level posts and where appropriate, have converted these into 'Apprenticeship' positions. This means that employees recruited to these posts will automatically undertake an Apprenticeship programme.

This not only achieves savings in recruitment costs (as recruiting Apprentices through Apprenticeship Vacancies is free-of-charge) but Councils are also saving money by introducing a 'career grade' for Apprentices until they complete their Apprenticeship framework.

Councils who have introduced career grades for Apprentices include East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North-East Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire County Council.

Corporate Vacancy Management Process

Implementing a corporate vacancy management process which is co-ordinated and managed centrally will enable Councils to enforce tighter control on recruitment and potentially lead to an increase in the number of Apprentices employed and result in cost savings.

This can be achieved by introducing a criteria-based recruitment process where managers must fill all vacancies with an Apprentice unless they can provide a reasoned argument as to why this would not be feasible.

This process would not take precedence over the Council's existing redeployment policy where 'at risk' employees would be considered first for all vacancies that arise.

Leeds City Council established a Redeployment Board in April 2009 with the main priority of matching 'at risk' employees to current job vacancies.

If there is no 'at risk' employee matched to an entry level vacancy and it fits the criteria for an Apprenticeship, the job is ring-fenced. The Work 4 Leeds team match the job to an Apprenticeship framework and a Provider for delivery and discuss the Apprenticeship requirements with the recruiting manager

The job is advertised as an Apprenticeship post within the normal recruitment process for the Council and also advertised through other partners i.e. Connexions, Training Providers, College and other voluntary organisation that work with young people, encouraging applications from 16-24 year olds.

Apprenticeship Development Strategy

Taking a partnership approach to developing Apprenticeship strategies involving Corporate HR/OD, 14-19 Teams, Economic Development/Regeneration and Procurement will provide significant benefits and result in:

- the input to and ownership of the strategy by a number of key stakeholders
- the ability to establish clear links to other strategies and plans resulting in a more consistent and sustainable approach
- allow others to influence the shape of the Council's workforce plan

An Apprenticeship Development Group was established within Wakefield Council consisting of representatives from Corporate Human Resources/Organisational Development, 14-19 Teams, Connexions, Local Government Yorkshire and Humber and the National Apprenticeship Service.

By working together the group has successfully developed a cohesive Strategy and Action Plan for Apprenticeships.

Learner Services Managers from the National Apprenticeship Service are working to develop similar approaches in other Councils across the region.

Monitoring and Tracking Apprentices

Not all Councils can give an accurate account of the number of Apprentices they have in place. This may be because they do not actually employ the Apprentice, or each department/service manages their own Apprentices and there is no centralised approach to monitoring figures.

It is important that each authority has access to accurate up-to-date information regarding the number of Apprentices it employs. The reasons for this are:

- support for Apprenticeships within your workforce and local community can be used as evidence for key performance indicators within Local Area Agreements and successful inspections, Equality Impact Assessments and Investors in People
- such data will support your strategic workforce planning process by clearly understanding where your Apprentices are and where they will be needed e.g. in skills shortage areas
- Ministers regularly request data on Apprentices in order to gain an accurate picture both regionally and nationally

Using your Council's corporate HR system to 'flag' Apprentices is one of the easiest ways of accurately recording and monitoring them.

It is important however that processes and procedures are put in place to ensure all Apprentices are accurately identified, particularly where management of Apprentices is devolved to individual departments/services and not centrally co-ordinated.

Procurement

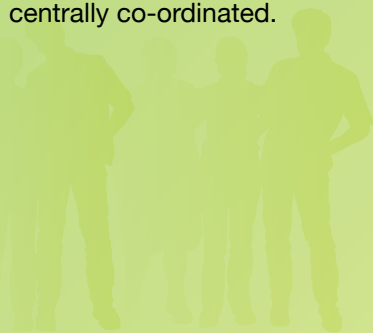
Each year the public sector alone spends around £200 billion on goods, services and capital assets - £42 billion through local authorities.

The Government has committed to the delivery of 22,000 Apprenticeship places over the next three years by encouraging employers working with Government to invest in the skills of their employees and provide Apprenticeship opportunities.

The Government is looking to all public sector procurement professionals to exploit opportunities to embed skills and Apprenticeships at all stages within the procurement process.

Councils can do this by:

- raising awareness of the Government's policies in relation to promoting skills through procurement, particularly with procurement practitioners and policy makers
- exploring opportunities to work with existing contractors to raise awareness of Apprenticeships and secure specific jobs and skills outcomes over a period of time, on a voluntary basis
- identifying opportunities to include clauses in upcoming contracts, particularly those in construction, IT, social care and facilities management
- exploring local and regional opportunities (Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements)
- developing a long-term strategic approach to the use of contract clauses
- developing an action plan to deliver a contribution to the 22,000 Apprenticeship ambition



Advantage West Midlands has produced a procurement framework for jobs and skills which includes a toolkit to support public sector organisations with the development of an approach to this initiative

Meetings have been held with procurement leads from Councils across the region, led by the LGYH Apprenticeship Managers and NAS Employer Service Managers, to raise awareness of the benefits and impact of promoting Apprenticeships through procurement.

Councils are being supported to develop charters or pledges for inclusion on their procurement literature and websites, to use their influence over existing contractors to promote the benefits of Apprenticeships and to identify future contracts where there is potential to include requirements relating to Apprenticeships. They are also being supported to include these approaches within their existing Procurement Strategies and processes.

A regional event, hosted jointly between the RIEP funded 'Smarter Procurement Programme' and LGYH, is to be held to bring regional procurement leads and representatives from Economic Development/Regeneration Teams together with the National Apprenticeship Service in order to develop an approach that maximises the number of apprentices created through regional procurement activity within local government and other public sector organisations.

6. Making it Happen

Recruitment

Promotion

If you ask local people what the Council does, they would very likely say, '... bins, Council Tax.... etc?' It is important to address this limited view and broaden their knowledge about the wide range of jobs available within local government if you want them to respond positively when you wish to recruit.

There are many ways to promote the range of jobs and your Apprenticeship vacancies:

- recruitment fairs and careers conventions provide excellent opportunities to promote the Council and the variety of jobs available. Work with Jobcentre plus and the local Connexions Service to plan ahead
- arrange open days for people to visit departments and workplaces to find out more about opportunities
- advertise vacancies in your local free Council newspaper and on the recruitment section of the website
- place your vacancies with the local Connexions service
- link with local schools and colleges to offer work experience and visits – include teachers in the offer where possible
- use the intranet to promote Apprenticeships to existing staff
- use Apprenticeships Vacancies Online via your Training Provider or local NAS contact. The service is free and available on the NAS website at www.apprenticeships.org.uk

If you are looking to target young people in particular, find innovative ways of engaging with them and their advisers to raise interest in Apprenticeships.

Consider the type of language to use, avoid jargon and present an attractive image. If your advert looks too official, stuffy and boring they may not be interested in applying.

Always provide a name and telephone numbers for someone they can ring to find out more and ensure that this person is enthusiastic and engaging to young people.

North-East Lincolnshire Council looked at different ways to engage young people whilst they were still at school as experience had shown they simply didn't know what Local Government did.

They got together with one of their local academies who were also looking at ways of publicising local careers available to young people across North East Lincolnshire and invited the Council's Community Warden and Sports Development services to come to the School and deliver a full day of career specific related learning.

The Community Wardens spoke to the young people about anti social behaviour, litter and graffiti, as well as getting the young people involved in activities.

The Sports Development Team brought along wheelchairs designed for a basketball court to raise awareness of the difficulty that young people with a disability had whilst playing sport and how their service helps young people with a disability live a full life.

Application and Selection

It is worth remembering that most young people who apply for Apprenticeships may be school leavers who are applying for a job for the first time. Is your process appropriate, or is it too daunting and difficult? Do you have a generic person specification, which includes the basic attributes required of an Apprentice including the skills and knowledge they will need?

Remember also that the Apprentice will not be recruited as an experienced staff member and may not have all of the skills needed for the role but have the potential and willingness to learn and develop.

Think about inviting interested applicants to a special recruitment event in order to explain about Apprenticeships, the recruitment process, legal issues such as Criminal Records Bureau checks and ID verification and to support them with their applications. If possible, have an existing Apprentice available to talk positively about his/her experiences.

Leeds City Council host open days to give applicants interested in Apprenticeships information regarding jobs available. Applicants are given an initial assessment to ensure they are able to complete the Apprenticeship framework and information on how to complete a Leeds City Council Application Form.

Appointment and Induction

An induction programme is the first experience a new staff member has of a new organisation after the recruitment and selection process.

The quicker Apprentices become familiar with their new environment, improve speed to competency, establish good working relationships with other staff members and understand their role and how it fits into the organisation, the quicker they will integrate and be happy and productive employees.

Induction need not be a very formal process but it needs to be properly managed. First impressions and experiences in the first few days, weeks and months of employment can greatly influence an individual's perception of their work area and the Council as a whole and can in turn influence motivation and retention.

However keen new recruits may be, they may have anxieties about how well they will:

- get on with their co-workers
- understand the standards and rules (written and unwritten) of the organisation
- make a good impression on their new manager or supervisor
- be able to do the job

A good induction introduces the Apprentice not only to their immediate colleagues, but to other workers with whom they may have less day-to-day contact, including trade union representatives or employee representatives on any staff committee or Council.

Remember:

- Try not to overload new starters, especially young people, with too much information in a very short time
- Setting out the plan of induction at the beginning avoids the problems that can arise in trying to arrange time in the future, when the employee is established in the job
- Don't forget induction needs for part time workers. They may need some time on days, or modified shifts, to cover the induction period
- Try to let new starters do some practical work, as this will assist their learning and enable them to relate what they are being taught to what they will be doing
- Anticipate problems that may arise for new starters with disabilities and get advice from HR colleagues, the Apprentices themselves and other colleagues such as the Access to Work Officer or the Learning Disability Partnership team

The outcome of a good induction will be that the new starter has a good feel for the organisation, and should continue to feel that they made the right decision in joining as an Apprentice.



Support Networks

Corporate HR

Corporate HR staff will be able to provide support and guidance on a range of employment related issues, and will be likely to have had wide previous experience across all service areas in learning and development and induction of new staff.

Managers/Supervisors

Line Managers/Supervisors should give the Apprentice an induction into their role and provide some on the job training. They can support learning for an Apprentice in various ways including:

- providing opportunities to learn or develop new skills including any relevant 'in-house' training
- identifying meaningful and useful tasks that are relevant to the key skill and designed to address a real business problem in the Apprentice's job and workplace
- setting a clear example, demonstrating and explaining how to do things and why things should be done in a certain way
- encouraging Apprentices to take responsibility and make decisions
- helping the Apprentice to keep a written log of their activities at work
- asking them questions about their work and listen to what they say, also observe carefully how Apprentices are performing and progressing, giving constructive feedback (advice and praise) whenever it is due

- rotating or extending jobs so that the Apprentice can practice new skills and become more valuable to the company – this highlights the fact that the key skills are transferable to different jobs
- above all, Managers should give positive support, time and encouragement

Training Provider

Training Providers can help to recruit Apprentices by placing vacancies on the NAS Apprenticeship Vacancies online website. This website is promoted widely to people searching for jobs and advertises Apprenticeships nationally and regionally as well as locally.

It is always a good idea to discuss how you would prefer the Apprenticeship to be delivered with various training providers, to ensure that they can meet your needs, e.g. flexible delivery outside normal hours.

Some of the best practice has tended to come from authorities who have built strong working relationships with their training providers, based on a sound customer relationship set out in a service level agreement.

Both North-East Lincolnshire and Leeds City Councils use Service Level Agreements with Providers which clearly set out the responsibilities of each of the partners in relation to the delivery of Apprenticeships.

The Training Provider is responsible for managing and delivering all the training and support required for the Qualification Framework. They will also carry out an induction on to their training programme, monitor and support the Apprentice, carry out regular reviews and provide additional support where necessary for the Apprentice to achieve their qualification.

Review meetings

Review meetings normally take place every 8-12 weeks and will include the Apprentice, the Training Provider and the Apprentice's supervisor/manager.

The purpose of the meetings is to assess an Apprentice's progress, identify any potential issues and agree actions to address problems.

It will help to link together targets set by the Apprentice's manager and the requirements of the NVQ and vice versa. The Training Provider will also set targets for coursework and assignments, celebrate achievements and discuss any areas for concern.

Added value

Many Training Providers offer added value sessions such as Customer Services Training, Health and Safety training, First Aid Certification or IT qualifications for free.

It is worth discussing any additional training offered by the Training Provider with HR colleagues to ensure that it meets corporate learning objectives but also to maximise these opportunities for the rest of the Council.

Buddies and Mentors

It is excellent practice to have a buddying and mentoring scheme in place for new Apprentices.

Buddying is a mutual support relationship between employees. A buddying relationship would be equally balanced with no senior partner.

Many Councils have buddying schemes in place for new employees. It is helpful for the buddy to be from the same department or service but not from the same team. This will mean that the buddy will know many of the same people and needs of the service but not be directly involved in the day to day work of the Apprentice.

A buddy will be responsible for showing the Apprentice around the Council buildings and local area, discussing any work issues that the Apprentice might feel is too small to mention to their manager and generally helping them fit in to Council life.

This should not be a formal arrangement and may fall by the wayside after approximately 6 months when the Apprentice develops more support mechanisms within their own team, training provider and with other Apprentices.

Informal Mentoring

[Horsesmouth](#) is a free to use social networking site for informal mentoring. It connects people seeking support and guidance on a wide range of issues - education, career, work, family and health - with others who are willing to give and share from the benefit of their own experiences. It is open to anyone over 16 and users of the site are anonymous.

This unique [partnership](#) with the National Apprenticeship Service will mean that people can get tailored advice and support. Used in conjunction with the range of careers information and guidance services available, the initiative will help people make better informed career decisions by tapping into the knowledge of those that understand their situation.



Formal Mentoring

Employees interested in progressing their own personal learning, development and career as well as contributing to the development of other employees in the Council, may want to become involved with mentoring.

Mentoring is a process where one person offers guidance, advice and support to facilitate the development of another in the organisation. The mentor is unlikely to be the line manager but will usually be a more senior employee with the knowledge, experience and skills to guide the mentee in their chosen direction. There are no prescribed objectives of mentoring; it is for the mentee to establish their own objectives and agree these with the mentor.

A mentoring partnership will provide:

- support for development to ensure effective learning for the future and the transfer of new skills into a workplace situation
- support for learning on the job to enhance job related knowledge and skills for the present role
- support for working towards a specific qualification
- support for developing in a profession
- support during training and development courses/phases

If you have a corporate mentoring scheme, then it is good practice to hook up with this and have certain aspects tailored for Apprentices.

Tailoring could involve graduates from the Council mentoring the Apprentices, or Level 3 or 4 Apprentices who completed their courses the previous year. This would also ensure that the CPD requirements of graduates and advanced Apprentices were covered.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is currently developing a mentor support project for their Apprentices including young people in care and care leavers.

Graduates on the Graduate Trainee Scheme will provide mentor support to the young people and provide guidance in searching for jobs and workplace issues and support for future workplace progression.

Training is being given to the Graduates regarding mentoring skills and an awareness of the potential issues that may arise and how to deal with these.

Although the project is in its early stages East Riding believe it will be a success.



Each authority has a responsibility as a 'corporate parent' to enable young people in care and care leavers to achieve their goals. The National Care Advisory Service's project From Care2Work is working with local authorities and private and third sector partners, enabling relationships between 'corporate parents' and employers in order to offer a breadth of opportunities to young people leaving care. Their aim is to narrow the gap between care leavers and their peers by creating opportunities for care leavers to grow their employability and move towards achieving economic wellbeing.

From Care2Work has provided some brief guidance for managers to help them support young people in care and care leavers (see Appendix 4). Further details are available from Jo Haddrick, Employability Project Manager on 020 7336 4824.

Two case studies have also been provided by Kirklees Council which demonstrate how work experience and Apprenticeships have helped two young people (see Appendix 5)

Some Councils use team members from the Education Business Partnership, Youth Services or from Connexions to act as mentors to the Apprentices. This is a useful tool if you feel that you do not have enough volunteers from your internal officers and managers and does ensure that the Apprentices have excellent support networks. However, if you wish to progress your Apprenticeship scheme throughout different parts of the authority, engaging managers or officers who are yet to have an Apprentice as potential mentors could be a good way of showing them the pedigree of the Apprentices available.

Young Employee Networks (YENs)

Some Councils establish support groups for young employees. These groups provide a vital peer support system for young employees and help authorities retain and grow young talent. Networks are also a useful way for Councils to demonstrate a commitment to their employees and to the equality and diversity agenda.

An objective of the RIEP funded 'Engaging Young People's Project' hosted by Local Government Yorkshire and Humber is to support Councils to set up networks for young people. In order to help with this a DVD toolkit is being developed and will be available from July 2010.

Kirklees Council is working with LGYH to help produce the DVD.

7. Building on Success

Progression and Career Pathways

Apprentices who commit to a long period of study and training to achieve their qualification are often keen to progress.

In the same way as your Council should review its skills profile and needs before deciding where an Apprenticeship can be most relevant and beneficial, by considering future skills and staffing requirements it can ensure that successful Apprentices can continue to develop.

In most of the occupational roles covered by Apprenticeship frameworks, someone who completes an Apprenticeship is well placed, at the right time, to continue to onto an Advanced Apprenticeship – whether that is in a transferable discipline such as customer service or administration or an industry specific pathway such as care or engineering.

The completion of an Advanced Apprenticeship, with all the work experience and achievement of qualifications that it entails, equips an individual for progression in the workplace to a more senior post or, in some areas of work, for a work-related Foundation Degree, a generic management qualification, or perhaps a higher level professional qualification, such as those offered by the Institute of Personnel Development, or other professional bodies in areas such as Accounting, Amenity Horticulture, Sports and Recreation, IT.

Successful Apprentices may also be interested in becoming assessors or mentors to new Apprentices, thereby helping the organisation to enhance its capacity for supporting lifelong learning and development.

To help Apprentices prepare for future progression – including further training and promotion to new job roles - it can be very helpful to encourage them to maintain a personal development portfolio, encouraging them to take personal responsibility for their own learning plan and continuing development.

Measuring success

It is important that Councils measure the success of their Apprenticeship programmes, not only to demonstrate that they have achieved any aims and objectives set, but also to provide factual, statistical evidence which can be used to support future business cases.

Examples of performance measures are:

- starts: number of people starting an Apprenticeship programme
- completions: number of Apprentices completing the scheme
- workforce: percentage and/or ratio of Council workforce who are Apprentices
- services: number of Services who employ Apprentices
- diversity: profile of Apprentices against the profile of the borough, e.g. gender, age, disability, ethnicity
- targeted recruitment: number of Apprentices from vulnerable groups, e.g. NEET, Ex-Offenders, Care Leavers
- return on investment: overall costs and savings of Apprentices

- retention: number of Apprentices who stay within the Council and those who go into full-time education, employment or training after completion of their Apprenticeship
- turnover: length of time Apprentices stay with the Council
- absence costs: sickness absence rate of Apprentices compared to the workforce
- recruitment costs: overall cost of recruiting an Apprentice compared to recruitment of other employees
- satisfaction levels: customer satisfaction (Apprentice, line manager, colleagues, mentors) - compare team satisfaction/morale of those teams with Apprentices to those with none

Celebrate Success

- Celebrating the success of your Apprenticeship programmes will provide the following benefits:
- provide encouragement to current or future Apprentices
- raise awareness of Apprenticeships and their benefits throughout the organisation
- promote the organisation's commitment to Apprenticeships and organisational learning
- promote the organisation as an employer of choice
- create enthusiastic managers
- help with staff motivation

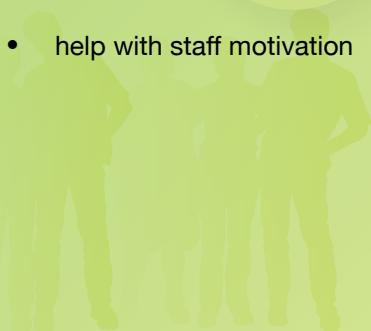
There are a number of ways to celebrate success:

Internally

- staff briefings
- magazines and newsletters
- intranet
- noticeboards
- special rewards/recognition schemes
- internal award ceremonies

Externally

- internet
- local newspapers
- local news
- case studies
- as part of National Apprenticeship Week (see Appendix 3 for information about events which took place across the region during National Apprenticeship Week 2010)
- nominating an Apprentice or your Council for a National Apprenticeship Service Apprenticeship Award



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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF COUNCIL CONTACTS FOR YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER REGION

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APPENDIX 2

LIST OF NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE EMPLOYER SERVICES MANAGER LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS FOR YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER REGION

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APPENDIX 3

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER REGION

A number of activities took place across the region during National Apprenticeship Week - 1-5 February 2010.

The most popular seemed to be where Members or Senior Managers went 'Back-to-the-Floor' for anything between a couple of hours to a whole day to find out what it is like to be an apprentice. This happened in a number of Councils across the region from Kirklees and Wakefield to North Yorkshire.

In Rotherham roles were reversed when an apprentice had the dubious pleasure of shadowing the Chief Executive for the day!

A major event took place at the Keepmoat Stadium in Doncaster where 75 successful apprentices received awards from The Mayor of Doncaster, Peter Davies, including three special awards for Apprentice of the Year, Advanced Apprentice of the Year and Apprentice Line Manager of the Year.

Within North Yorkshire County Council a number of daytime events in the workplace took place to raise awareness of apprenticeships including "I'm an apprentice, get me outta here" and "Apprentice Got Talent".

Northallerton and Scarborough hosted successful evening events in partnership with Connexions and the National Apprenticeship Service to promote apprenticeship vacancies.

People walking around Sheffield City Centre may have seen apprentices sprucing up shop windows during the week as part of the ongoing Sheffield Showcase Project.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council placed an article in the February edition of the East Riding News to coincide with National Apprenticeship week about their Apprenticeship Scheme and advertising a number of apprenticeship vacancies.



APPENDIX 4

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Managed by the National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) and supported by the Department for Education, From Care2Work works with local authorities and private and third sector partners, enabling relationships between 'corporate parents' and employers in order to offer a breadth of opportunities to young people leaving care. Our aim is to narrow the gap between care leavers and their peers by creating opportunities for care leavers to grow their employability and move towards achieving economic wellbeing.

"Many young people outside the care system get their first job or work experience through family, friends and contacts, but young people in care who don't have these types of personal contacts have to rely on the local authority, as their corporate parent, to provide opportunities in the 'family firm'⁵."

There needs to be a shared sense of corporate parenting responsibility across all directorates in authorities and employability should be written into strategic plans and procurement arrangements. Through strong and effective 'corporate parenting', including proactive and creative care planning, local authorities can engage, motivate and enable care experienced young people to achieve their goals.

The From Care2Work Team has worked with care experienced young people to design a quality mark - including a young person led assessment process. This kite mark will recognise the high quality opportunities local authorities offer to their care leavers to support building employability and raising aspirations.

⁵ What Makes The Difference RAINER (2008)

Advice for Managers

Young people who have lived in care are no different from other young people in the community – they've just had different life experiences. Despite the support from the Leaving Care Service, they do not always receive the same level of personal support as their peers living at home. The majority of care leavers are likely to make an accelerated transition to independent living in their late teens and may be dealing with this whilst undertaking an apprenticeship.

Many people don't realise the additional responsibilities living independently can place on care leavers - responsibility for paying bills, maintaining a tenancy and looking after personal health and wellbeing whilst living on a low income can be a significant challenge.

Most young people have the support of their families to turn to in the evening and at weekends – providing an opportunity to discuss work challenges and off load. Care leavers will often be returning to a one bedroom flat with only friends to advise on work related issues. A workplace mentor can provide an additional layer of support to allow for informal advice and guidance in the workplace. This can also provide an excellent personal development opportunity for the member of staff.

Confidentiality can be a big issue for young people leaving care. From Care2Work recommends a learning agreement negotiated between young person, employer and Leaving Care Service can offer clarity regarding information to be shared. This will make clear the boundaries of confidentiality.

In 2008, 14 per cent of looked-after children achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE, compared to 65.3 per cent for all children. Because looked-after children achieve significantly poorer educational outcomes than all children it is a major priority of Government to narrow this gap. An opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship is likely to be the opportunity that allows a young person leaving care to flourish and begin to achieve their potential.

APPENDIX 5

CASE STUDIES RELATING TO CARE LEAVERS SUPPLIED BY KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Case Study for B.P.

B's elder brother proved to be an excellent role model for B – following Work Placement and permanent Employment with Kirklees Council.

2000

- B was taken into care of the Local Authority.
-

2002

- Attended Earlsheaton School from 2002 to 2007.
 - Achieved no GCSE's.
-

2007

- Attended Slip Stream/Up Stream training from July to September.
 - Went to KYT (E2E) Training in October to February 2008
-

2008

- Not in Education or Training from February to April 2008.
 - CMS Training (E2E) in April.
 - Work Experience placement commencing June at Kirklees Council, Building Services, Stores Department.
-

2009

- Attended apprenticeship through Kirklees Council, Building Services as a Stores Assistant.
-

2010

- Still employed through apprenticeship and now awaiting vacancy.
 - Also has been offered re-deployment opportunities.
-

Achieved

- Fork Lift Truck certificates.
 - NVQ 2 Warehouse operations.
 - Key Skills.
 - Building Services pay for Driving Lessons on a weekly basis.
 - Developed key employability skills.
 - Has attended Kirklees Council in-house training courses/development i.e. Health & Safety.
-



CASE STUDIES RELATING TO CARE LEAVERS SUPPLIED BY KIRKLEES COUNCIL

Case Study for M.P.

2000

- M was taken into the Care of the Local Authority at an early age along with his younger brother.
-

2003

- Full Care Order
 - Placed in a Children's Home, Paddock Villiage, Huddersfield.
-

2004

- Left Mirfield Free Grammar – Aged 14
 - Educated on an alternative curriculum programme at Barbados, Batley.
 - Started on Pathways Project at Huddersfield Technical College in September 2004.
 - Not in Education or Training June to September 2004.
-

2005

- Started on GCSE programme at Huddersfield Technical College.
-

2006

- Asked to leave College due to attendance in January.
 - January 2006 to December 2007 not in Education or Training due to illness.
-

2007

- Attended E2E at A & R Training, Huddersfield in March.
 - April 2007 to December 2009 not in Education or Training.
-

2008

- Building Construction January/February achieved CSCS Card.
 - Attended key training (E2E) in February to April.
 - Work Experience offered in April through Kirklees Corporate Parenting agenda.
 - Leaving Care Employability Programme attended for (2 x 2 weeks).
 - Traineeship through Employability Programme completed in May with Kirklees Council, Environmental Waste, Refuse Collection.
-

2009

- Offered of Permanent Employment in April with Kirklees Environmental Waste.
-

2010

- Still employed in May.
-

Achieved

- Permanent Employment.
 - Various certificates/training through Kirklees Council.
 - Employability certificates.
 - Maturity/Confidence/Timekeeping/Motivation.
 - Passed Driving Test.
 - Own Car.
 - Own private tenancy accommodation.
 - Good salary.
 - Holiday etc.
 - Friends/Work Colleagues.
-