

Personnel
Board
11 March
2024



Apprenticeships within Wokingham Borough Council

Why are we here?

01

To consider
'Apprenticeships First'
for recruitment and
training requests

02

To develop the CLT
Workforce Champion to
promote
Apprenticeships, Work
Experience, T-Levels and
other government
initiatives

03

To create a Career
Development Network –
combining the
Apprenticeship
Academy and the
Graduate Academy.

Why Apprenticeships First?

To ensure that no opportunities are missed to spend levy funds and make savings elsewhere.

Over the last 10 years local government has lost 40% of its workforce – every other part of the public sector has grown (LGA) so we need to look at a Workforce for the Future

We are the lowest paying part of the public sector (LGA) – so often ‘outbid’ for talent by employers that can pay higher wages. Pay is a big obstacle in many areas, but in most acute areas is not the silver bullet.

Over half of Councils say their lack of workforce capacity to deliver services is a moderate or large concern for the six months ahead.

Why Apprenticeships First – The Stats (LGA)

- 94% of Councils reporting recruitment and retention problems.
- 88% of Councils with social care responsibilities say the shortage of social care workers is causing acute difficulties in service provision.
- £2.1bn – the amount spent by Councils on agency staff in 2022-23.
- £800m – amount paid into the Apprenticeship levy by Councils Apr17-Dec22.
- £359m – amount spent on apprenticeships by councils Apr17 – Dec22 (44.5%)
- 81% - proportion of Councils that have seen some levy funds expire.

Many of our Skills Shortage areas have Apprenticeship Solutions (LGA)

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Job Role	% LA's Experiencing Recruitment Difficulties	% LA's Experiencing Retention Difficulties	Apprenticeship Available?
Childrens' Social workers	83%	72%	Yes
Adult Social Workers	71%	57%	Yes
Mental Health Social Workers	60%	45%	Yes
Planning Officers	58%	36%	Yes
Legal Professionals	53%	29%	Yes
Occupational Therapists (Adults)	45%	29%	Yes
Environmental Health Officers	45%	18%	Yes
ICT Professionals	43%	29%	Yes
Building Control Officers	43%	21%	Yes
Engineering Professionals	27%	13%	Yes
Teachers	18%	12%	Yes
Teaching Assistants	12%	9%	Yes



Apprenticeship Routes within the Council

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Traditional Route –
recruiting new
apprentices into
apprenticeship roles.

**Professional
Development Route** –
utilising the
apprenticeship levy to
upskill existing staff.

Apprenticeship Information

Since May 2017 we have had 226 staff enrol onto 56 different apprenticeship programmes with 54 different training providers.

The government originally set a target that 2.3% of the workforce should be on apprenticeships per year – this would be 80 for Wokingham Borough Council and its maintained schools.

Since February 2023 8 new staff members have joined the Council as apprentices in Internal Audit, IT, Surveying, Administration and Customer Services.

How can apprenticeships help with recruitment issues?

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Although apprenticeships are not a quick win the long-term benefits are huge.

Example:

∞ There is high agency spend on qualified social workers in the Council.

By utilising the apprenticeship levy and upskilling our existing workforce over time we could reduce agency spend, increase staff retention, boost morale and help to future proof our organisation and grow our own talent.

We could even become a mini social work academy!

Similar approaches could be rolled out in teams across the Council.

Facts

5 staff have completed the social work apprenticeship in Adult Social Care – 4 have remained with the Council.

10 staff have completed their ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) and 9 are remaining with the council.

Apprenticeship Dashboard Data

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Directorate	New starts 2023	Completions 2023	New starts April 2022 to March 2023	Completions April 2022 to March 2023	Total on Programme at 30.09.23
Adult Social Care	0	0	6	4	11
Childrens Services	2	0	1	1	8
Chief Exec	8	1	0	3	9
Place & Growth	2	0	6	1	15
Resources & Assets	1	3	4	0	12
Schools	2	3	15	8	23
Total	15	7	32	17	78

How can we spend more levy, save money, upskill our workforce and retain staff?

What can we do?

Apprenticeships First' – when managers go out to recruit, they must consider apprenticeships first.

How?

Discuss with the Workforce Development Specialist to establish a suitable apprenticeship programme.
Consider Grade 4-6 vacancies as apprenticeships.

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Apprenticeship training as an additional benefit alongside job offers.

Offering CPD benefits to new recruits as part of the job offer.

Apprenticeships First for training requests

Discuss with the Workforce Development Specialist to establish a suitable apprenticeship programme.

Succession Planning

Utilising apprenticeship training to upskill staff within teams and future proof our workforce.
Looking 3,5 and 10 years ahead to allow time to complete apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship Promotion



Scheduled monthly comms via The Download and Share Point



Managers Network



Roundtable discussion with the Director General for Skills (DFE) – 6th February 2024



The Big Chat – National Apprenticeship Week - 8th February 2024



Engaging with the Economic Development team, local businesses and the voluntary sector to promote apprenticeships and work experience benefits

Next steps



Roll out 'Apprenticeships First' for recruitment of grade 4-6 roles and training requests.



Develop the CLT Workforce Champion role.



Create a Career Development Network – bringing together the Apprentice Academy and Graduate Academy.



Continue to strengthen relationships across the organisation, engage with businesses, Optalis and the VCS as part of 'Transfer to Transform'



Offer work experience and T-Level placements