



Apprenticeship Update for Schools – March 2019

Endless Possibilities is Walsall Council's internal Apprenticeship programme which is available for existing staff who may want to 'upskill' or for new recruits across the council and maintained primary schools.

We are fast approaching the 2nd anniversary of the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and Enterprise Act. Our Public Sector target is 2.3%, we actually over achieved (2.4%) and Walsall Council were the only West Midlands Council to achieve this. We are working on validating data for our next annual report but in the meantime we have 302 Apprentices and the numbers are continuing to grow daily.

The Apprenticeship programme has been very well received by schools and we now have 123 Apprentices within schools across the borough this consists of:

- Existing Staff = 36
- New Recruits = 87

We have ensured that all schools have been contacted numerous times regarding their levy allocation. Certain schools have confirmed they will not be spending their levy so with their permission we have now released extra funds for other schools to bid for by an Expression of Interest process.

All Schools have now received a Statement of Finance detailing what they have paid into the levy, year to date, and what they have spent on Apprenticeship Training. Please note that there have been some issues around payments with training providers so if you have any discrepancies we are currently working through any payment issues with training providers.

We were due to have confirmation on what would happen with any 'unspent funds' but at the moment nothing has been clarified so we are still continuing to spend. Overall our spend has been £1.5 million, however, please be aware that payments are made on a monthly basis for the duration of each Apprenticeship. We will give further updates on 'Expiry of Funds' as and when official ESFA guidance becomes available.

Raising the Profile of Apprenticeships within the Community

To encourage more young people to apply for our Apprenticeship vacancies, we now have our 'Apprentice Ambassadors' who are attending Careers Events across high schools/academies in Walsall to promote Apprenticeships and the variety of career opportunities within the Council and schools across the borough. We are attracting between 30 and 40 applicants for each vacancy advertised and this is within a quiet time for Recruitment. We are using Social Media to increase awareness. We also attend the Skills Expo and work closely with our 'Walsall Works' colleagues, who support other employers across the borough with Apprenticeships.

Moving Forward

New Apprenticeship Standards are frequently being released, so we are now looking at some additional Apprenticeships to enhance the offer to schools:

- Teaching Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6) – currently piloting over 6 schools
- Senior Leaders and Chartered Management Degree Apprenticeships – we are looking to develop a specialist Educational Leadership offer which aligns to traditional qualifications such as NPQSL and NPQH.
- School Business Professional level 4 Higher Apprenticeship
- Playwork for Lunchtime Supervisors, Breakfast Club and After School staff
- Caretaking/Facilities Management – certain schools are looking at sharing an Apprentice
- SEND Support – Teaching Assistant Apprenticeships but specialising in SEND
- IT/Digital – to support overall school but also classroom delivery.

We continue to have a schools representative on our Apprenticeship Working Group – which meets bi monthly – we use this forum to consult and steer the direction of travel. We have presented to various Headteacher school forums to ensure everyone is aware of the programme and the procedure for accessing the levy pot and we will continue to use this forum to keep everyone updated. We are about to produce edition 4 of our newsletter and we will circulate this to schools when it is published.

We will be promoting Apprenticeships throughout National Apprenticeship Week 4th to 9th March 2019 and have offered every High School/Academy an Apprenticeship talk or assembly for their students. We are also involved with supporting Mock Interviews and have launched an ‘Opening Doors’ activity where schools can visit the Council and students can ‘Meet our Apprentices’ and hear about the variety of careers available.

One of our priority groups is Walsall ‘LAC/Care Leavers’. As a Council we are ring-fencing Apprenticeship vacancies for Care Leavers and we have already supported 10 Care Leavers into Apprenticeships through a Pre Apprenticeship Programme. There are now 3 of these Apprentices who are progressing onto the next level. We are also now looking at ring-fencing a vacancy for a young person with Special Educational Needs and from the probation service so that all vulnerable groups have an opportunity to engage.

Walsall is still ahead of the game! We are determined to keep spending our levy and be in a good position to receive any further funding if and when available. We continue to be highlighted for our pro activity in engaging service areas within the council and schools in the Apprenticeship programme, we are working towards continually achieving the designated target figure. Good practice has already been recognised especially around the Diversity of the programme we offer.

As a reminder to Schools if you are wishing to ‘Recruit an Apprentice’ you must:

- Follow the required recruitment procedures
- Pay the Apprentice at least [the Apprenticeship minimum wage](#) - £3.70 per hour (£3.90ph from April 2019)
- Create opportunities for your Apprentice to work alongside experienced staff
- enable them to learn job-specific skills through an Apprenticeship Standard or Framework
- Include 20% study during their working week (for example, at a college or training organisation)
- contract work for a minimum of 30 hours per week – this is flexible within schools and can be reduced to 16 hours however the duration of the Apprenticeship would need to be extended

Agenda Item 6

There is never a guarantee of a job at the end of an Apprenticeship, however, 9 out of 10 Apprentices are staying with us as their employer and progress further. If schools do not have the opportunities available our role is to ensure that we do not lose that individual and they have access to information, advice and guidance from our Learning and Development Team to ensure they can progress to another role within the organisation. We now have a range of case studies and have also developed a case study from one of our schools where the Apprentice has now become a full time member of the team so we can promote to a wider audience.

Apprenticeships are available in 1000's of job roles from Facilities Services (Caretaking), Business Administration, Finance, Management, Digital and Technology, Hospitality and Catering, Supporting Teaching and Learning to name but a few.

It is worth noting that schools receiving funding for the PE and Sports Grant can be used to pay the salary of an Apprentice employed to enhance school PE and Sport provision. The schools levy allocation can then pay for the Apprenticeship Training.

Please remember Apprenticeships are open to all ages now from 16 years to 64, for new recruits and for existing staff and at levels 2 to 7 which is equivalent to a Masters Degree. The Apprenticeship Levy really does represent an excellent opportunity to enhance the skills and competencies of the workforce at a time of rapid change and transformation.

If you would like to discuss Apprenticeships especially Recruiting an Apprentice to your team then please get in contact with Helena Baxter Helena.baxter@walsall.gov.uk or 07767 615214 for any Apprenticeship information, advice and guidance.