



Public Sector Apprenticeship Target

Reason for Report: The Department of Education require public bodies with more than 250 employees to report annually on progress towards their target of 2.3% apprenticeship starts.

Financial Implications: The partial spend of the Apprenticeship Levy.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Apprenticeship Levy came into force on 6th April 2017 and the Council could begin to access funds in May 2017. The Levy was introduced by the Government in an attempt to address the shortage of skilled workers in the UK, by increasing the number of apprenticeships. Organisations with a PAYE wage bill of £3 million or over pay a monthly fee of 0.5% of their wage bill. Apprentices can be new employees and/or you can retrain current employees to take the next step on their career ladder, or to change direction.

1.2 The Department of Education have set a target for public sector bodies with more than 250 employees in England to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentices from 2017 – 2021. New apprentice starts can include both existing employees who start an apprenticeship as well as newly employed apprentices. This will be assessed as an average over this timeframe.

Public bodies will be asked to publish information identifying their progress towards the target. Public sector bodies have a **legal duty** to have regard to the target. To have regard to means that it should be considered when making workforce planning decisions the organisation **must actively consider apprenticeships**, either for new recruits or as part of career development for existing staff.

1.3 The Council submitted their report to the Department of Education on 14th September 2018.

2.0 The Councils progress toward the Department of Education's target

2.1 The Taunton Deane Borough Council figures are set out below:

Number of employees who were working in England (01/04/2017)	635
Number of employees who were working in England (31/03/2018)	664
Number of new employees who started working for you in England between 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2018*	64



Number of apprentices who were working in England 31/03/2017	0
Number of apprentices who were working in England 31/03/2018	3
Number of new apprentices in England between 01/04/2017-31/03/2018 (includes both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship)	3
Full-time equivalents (average)	574

Reporting Percentages:

Percentage of apprenticeship starts (both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship) as a proportion of employment starts between 01/04/2017 - 31/03/2018	4.69%
Percentage of total headcount that were apprentices on 31/03/2018	0.45%
Percentage of apprenticeship starts (both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship) between 01/04/2017 to 31/03/2018 as a proportion of total headcount on 31/03/2017	0.47%

*Please note that the total number of new employees who started working for the Council 01/04/2017 – 31/03/2018 includes a large number of staff transferring into the Council from other organisations, staff on fixed term contracts and staff within roles funded or partially funded by external agencies.

3.0 The Narrative

3.1 Actions taken to help progress towards meeting the public sector target

The Council have reviewed any new roles and any skills training to determine whether there is an opportunity for an apprenticeship for a new or existing employee. We have recently finished an apprentice recruitment exercise and have 6 new apprentices starting in October 2018. These apprenticeships will be eligible for the Levy.

When the Apprentice Levy came into force in 2017 there were 13 apprentices across the Council. These apprentices had started their apprenticeships before that date, therefore we could not use the Levy for these individuals. The Council had agreed funding and support for these apprenticeships and therefore many departments did not have the resources to support further apprenticeships. Despite this, over the past 18 months, there have still been 3 new apprenticeship starts, all accessing the Levy.



3.2 Factors that impacted on ability to meet the target

Over the past 18 months the Council has been going through a transformational restructure process affecting all staff. Transformation will be completed and a new structure in place in April 2019. During transformation the Council have implemented a recruitment freeze and have filled any vacancies with internal staff or agency workers. Skills training over the past 18 months has been limited mainly to fulfil our statutory duties, e-learning modules and specific training to support staff through transformation.

3.3 What the Council is going to do to meet the target in the future

In recognition of the importance of our “people” to the Councils future ambitions, we are investing significantly in the new area of people management. New People Managers will be developing and supporting the implementation of new people initiatives, such as how we manage performance, our talent management approach how we build enriching career pathways. This includes our commitment the use of apprenticeships, for both existing and new employees.