

Report of the Head of HR & OD

Apprenticeships Update

Summary

1. This report gives the Committee an update of apprentices across CYC, our performance against the public sector apprenticeship target and details of how we are developing the apprenticeship offer further across the Council.

Recommendations

2. Staffing Matters and Urgency Committee is asked to:
 - a. Note the current and proposed activity around apprenticeships, including the performance against the public sector target.

Reason: To support the recommendation in the OD plan to maximise use of Levy funds available and promotion of apprenticeships across the workforce.

Background

3. In order to increase the provision of apprenticeships nationally and to meet the government's commitment to create 3 million more apprenticeships, from 1st April 2017 an apprenticeship levy was introduced for all organisations with a payroll exceeding £3m p.a. The levy equates to 0.5% of payroll and is returned with an additional 10% to the organisation to support apprenticeships and work-related vocational and professional qualifications.
4. Funds into levy can roll over 24 months and can be used to pay for training and assessment for apprenticeship standards for both new and existing employees. They cannot be used for salary costs or any other associated costs (i.e. travel, books).

5. Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to strengthen succession planning and innovate our workforce for the future, committing to staff and giving great opportunities for growth and personal development, whilst obtaining qualifications and resulting in highly trained staff across the organisation. They can also help the council to grow staff where there are current recruitment difficulties e.g. in social care.
6. In addition, the commitment to apprenticeships and the use of the levy transfer by the council provides an important statement to partners about the commitment to the local economy through the increase of skills within the city and within the council to grow our own.
7. To support the wider city agenda, the council's Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme was launched late May 2021 and to financial year end (March 2022), circa £160,000 has been committed to support nine local businesses and 27 apprenticeships over a maximum of 51 months. Funded apprenticeship standards include, Data Analysis, Adult Care, Lead Practitioner Care, Children, Young People and Families Practitioner, Chartered Manager and Early Years Educator.

Public sector target

8. The public sector was set a target of 2.3% of the workforce to be made up of apprentices and for Local Government this target includes schools that are maintained by the authority.
8. The Council's outturn against the public sector target of 2.3% was:

Year	No. of apprentices	Percentage
2017/18	27	0.47%
2018/19	60	1.04%
2019/20	52	0.79%
2020/21	50	0.72%
2021/22	79	2.3%

9. Following significant work from the HR and the Skills team, performance against the public sector target has improved significantly over the past year. As of 31 March 2022, there are 79 active apprentices within the council and Local Authority Maintained

schools', compared with 52 on 31 March 2021. 36 apprentices started an apprenticeship in 2021/22 (excl. schools).

10. The public sector target ended on the 31 March 2022. There will be no formal targets moving forward, though public sector bodies are free to set their own internal targets. However, the Government still intend to monitor and record the progress of public sector apprenticeships, and therefore, public sector bodies will still need to report their progress annually. Performance on starts will continue to be expressed as a percentage of headcount and league tables will be created for each sub-sector to rank performance, including for local government.
11. CYC have committed to achieving the 2.3% target going forward to provide a framework for maximising the levy.

Future Pipeline

12. Covid and budget pressures mean that it has been difficult to persuade managers to take on new apprentices. Of the 36 new apprentices who started in 2021/22, only 11 were new to the organisation. The pressure is both from the cost of the salary and the perceived time commitment to induct and support a new apprentice through their training. Both HR and the skills teams are actively supporting managers to help them overcome these challenges.
13. Despite this, apprenticeships remain an integral part of the Council's strategy to support succession planning and upskilling of the existing workforce. Apprenticeships are being used increasingly to support skills development within the existing workforce and help fill skills gaps. Examples of this include higher and technical apprenticeships in Social Work, Senior Leader Degree, Chartered Manager, Solicitors, Welder, Electricians, Gas Engineers, Leader in Adult Care, Chartered Town Planner and Civil Engineering.
14. People directorate currently use this approach to create a pipeline of newly qualified social workers. 3 cohorts of 4 apprentices have been recruited from existing staff with a 4th cohort planned for 2023. Currently we have 12 apprentices on program.

15. We have encouraged apprenticeships through providing match funding to help cover salary costs. This funding is separate to the apprenticeship levy. This limited match funding for apprenticeships, is set at £120,000 per annum which equates to around 7 apprentices per year. Apprenticeships and therefore, the match funding are often committed for a 2 year period and hence money is limited.
16. In 2021, unused match funding was earmarked to fully fund 6 Business Admin apprentices across the Council. 6 Business Admin apprentices started in November 2021 and January 2022. The apprentices are located in Democratic Services, Business Support, Transport, Virtual School, Public Health and York Learning. Feedback from managers, the apprentices and the training provider show that this cohort approach has worked well and enabled the apprentices to gain valuable support from each other.
17. It is proposed that we undertake the same exercise in 2022. Finance have estimated that we could full fund 3 apprentices for 2 years. A further £120K has been allocated for 2022/23 and the apprenticeship will promote this to teams across the Council.
18. There is also the possibility to ring fence some of the business admin opportunities to care leavers and actively encourage applications from young people with End/EHCP as part of the Council's corporate parent responsibilities and commitment to social inclusion and mobility.

Future pipelines – non apprentices

19. The apprenticeship team also support a number of other pathways including interns and work experience placements. T levels are technical-based qualifications in England developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the qualification meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work, further training or study. T Levels are two-year courses that can be studied by 16-18 year olds after finishing their GCSEs. T levels offer another potential pathway to encourage more people into work and prepare them for apprenticeships. They offer students a mixture of classroom learning and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours - approximately 45 days.

20. CYC are working with the LGA who provide support to local authorities to help them bring in T levels and we have been in discussion with York College about partnering with them. Signing up to the support requires us to commit to taking on at least one placement and we have committed to this.

Unison Apprenticeship Charter

21. The Unison apprenticeship charter provides a tool to ensure apprenticeships deliver positive outcomes for both apprentices and employers. The charter covers pay, terms and conditions and the working environment. This would further demonstrate our commitment to Apprentices and our overall aim to ensure that we enrich and provide quality apprenticeships for existing members of staff and new apprentice roles. The unison charter requires employers to commit to offering all apprentices a role at the end of the apprenticeship. We do not offer this but we do offer every opportunity to retain skills and experience within the council and we are looking to agree a bespoke charter with the three recognised CYC unions; GMB, Unison and Unite who all support and champion apprenticeships.

Council Plan

22. The Council Plan identifies eight priorities, three of which are relevant:

- Well-paid and an inclusive economy;
- A better start for children and young people;
- An open and effective council.

Implications

23. The following implications are for noting;

- **Financial** – the Apprentice levy funding is dedicated to funding apprenticeship training only. As a Council we do not have a choice to the paying of the levy and we must abide by the funding rules. Apprenticeship funds expire after 24 months and return to the Government if they remain unused.
- **Human Resources (HR)** The Council's strategy is to maximise the spending of the apprenticeship funding and the organisational development plan has key linkages to the use of

apprenticeships in growing and investing in existing employees (funds cannot be used on agency staff) and offering new apprenticeship roles at numerous levels across the diverse range of roles in our workforce.

- **Equalities** – Apprenticeships are available to all ages, the only criteria to is to have Level 2 qualification in Maths and English on completion of the apprenticeship to receive their apprentice qualification. Applicants without English and Maths qualifications at the time of starting their apprenticeship can be supported to complete these in addition to and alongside their apprenticeship qualification. The Council does make provision ring fence some of the business admin opportunities to care leavers and actively encourage applications from young people with End/EHCP as part of the Council’s corporate parent responsibilities and commitment to social inclusion and mobility.

There are no known **legal, crime and disorder, information technology, property** and other implications.

Risk Management

24. There are no risk management issues known

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Report
Approved

Date *28th July*
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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

Yes

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes:

None