

Rotherham MBC

APPRENTICESHIP STRATEGY 2017-2020



Big hearts

Big Changes

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1 Introduction

Historically apprenticeships have offered millions of young people and adults in the UK an effective route to gain valuable skills and find work. For public and private sector organisations, apprenticeships provide a trusted route for unlocking talent, plugging skills gaps, gaining commercial growth and increasing productivity.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council has offered apprenticeships in a range of areas for a number of years, but more recently the number of places available has remained static at around 30.

From April 2017 the Government has introduced a new Apprenticeship scheme to fund its 3 million new apprenticeships policy. The Apprenticeship Levy is set at a rate of 0.5% of an employers' gross pay bill.

Public Sector Targets for the number of apprentice starts annually will match 2.3% of the total employee headcount. For the Council this will mean that we will aim for 150 apprentices by 2020 and each year thereafter..

It is important to note that the Levy, accessed via a Digital Apprenticeship Account, may be used for training costs but not for the employment costs of an apprentice.

This change also means that apprenticeships are no longer just for entry level posts. The Levy offers great new training opportunities for current employees – jobs with an identified training route. These could be used for management development or professional qualifications, from level 3 /4 up to graduate status.

As a result of these changes, in October 2016 the Council agreed to expand the number of apprenticeships across the Council to maximise the drawdown of the Apprenticeship Levy which will be imposed from April 2017.

In the current economic climate, there is a need for public sector organisations to play a leading role in developing the skills for the future and set an example to other employers in the region.

Our approach is designed to ensure that managers are aware of the Council's vision for apprenticeships, their role in supporting the strategy and the valuable contribution that apprentices can make to organisational performance. It illustrates a firm commitment to the identification of appropriate posts for apprenticeships and to ensure appropriate training and support is in place.

The strategy also recognises that we cannot do this alone and that we need to proactively work with a range of partners.

2 Where we are in Rotherham

The Council faces a number of challenges, which need to be addressed through our Apprenticeship Strategy. These are:

- ▲ Raising the profile of the Council as an attractive employer
- ▲ Recruiting suitably qualified young people
- ▲ Supporting young people in care/leaving care into employment
- ▲ Ensuring that the workforce is appropriately qualified through development apprenticeship opportunities
- ▲ Supporting the retention of a skilled workforce
- ▲ Responding to the current economic climate.

Children and young people growing up in workless households are more likely to suffer long-term consequences in terms of school performance, later unemployment and other social problems. We therefore need to build on our links with local schools and Colleges to raise awareness of the opportunities we offer.

We also need to increase the aspirations and motivation of local people, breaking the cycle of unemployment by improving real work experience opportunities and employability.

In addition we aim to increase our use of graduate placements and internships, specifically linked to the planned HE provision in Rotherham due in 2018.

To ensure that we are making a positive contribution to support the needs and aspirations of young people in the Borough, we must be agents for change to improve the range of apprenticeship opportunities throughout the authority.

How we deliver the strategy

This strategy links closely to a range of other workforce-related strategies and plans. These are:

The Council Plan

Workforce Strategy

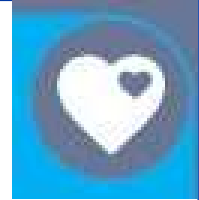
Workforce Plan

Directorate and Service Plans

In particular Key Priority 4 of the Workforce Strategy and the Workforce Plan is relevant to this strategy

Key Priority 4

Recruit and Retain a Skilled and Capable Workforce



What this looks like

- People want to work for the Council
- The workforce reflects the diversity of our communities
- Future managers are identified, developed and supported
- We work together to innovate and develop shared solutions

Where we want to be:

- Recruitment is efficient and effective
- New joiners have a positive experience when joining the Council
- Apprentice numbers increase both in the Council and across the Borough
- More entry level posts enable apprentices to transition into employment
- Succession planning is embedded in business planning practice
- Employees work across boundaries with partner organisations

3 Vision, Aims and Objectives

This strategy underlies the following vision, aims and objectives for apprenticeships in the Council:

Vision

The apprenticeship programme will offer high quality learning and development to a wide cross section of the community, enabling the local authority and the Borough to benefit from a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce.

We will particularly work to focus on providing opportunities for hard to reach communities and for Care Leavers.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's vision for apprenticeships is that they will raise the aspirations both of young people in the Borough, and of its community and workforce. We recognise that, as an employer, everything we do depends on the quality of our workforce, their commitment and skills.

Aims

Through increased partnership working across a range of education and training providers, the Apprenticeship Strategy aims to:

- ◆ Increase the number of new start apprenticeships available and identify work opportunities so that the Council has 150 apprentice places by 2020
- ◆ Increase the range of apprenticeships available in the Council, with a specific focus upon skills shortages, looked after children and those under-represented from our community
- ◆ Ensure that young people, parents and carers are aware of apprenticeships and the financial support offered
- ◆ Actively promote apprenticeships within the Council as a valuable vocational and recruitment option
- ◆ Unlock our own talent by identifying existing job roles within the Council which will lend themselves to development apprenticeships
- ◆ Increase skills and productivity levels within the Borough's workforce

Objectives

The main objectives for the Council are to:

- Raise the quality and number of apprenticeships so that all our apprentices gain skills and competencies which support their future employability whether this is through a new starter apprenticeship or a development apprenticeship.
- Ensure that we improve on the range of apprenticeships on offer. We envisage increasing the apprenticeship offer in areas where there are skills shortages during the life of the strategy
- Increase the number of people taking up apprenticeships with the Council year on year between 2017-2020 up to 150
- Ensure that our apprenticeship frameworks meet with our needs and provides all learners with the skills they need. Working with Training Providers and colleges, we will ensure that they are able to deliver the standards and quality we expect, to enable us to realise the benefits to the organisation that are required to maximize our investment.
- We will embed our approach into our aim for career pathways and progression routes in all areas of the Council.

4 The Council Apprenticeship

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council believes apprenticeships are programmes of learning that give an individual the competence, knowledge and transferable skills for work and progression. To gain this full range of employment and development needs, an individual will train and learn in the classroom and in the workplace.

An apprentice should be in employment whilst completing the programme so that they can practice what they have learned.

There are aspects of training and learning that can take place within a college or simulated environment. Also there are aspects of training and learning that should take place in the workplace but it is important that the assessment of an apprentice's ability to "do the job" takes place in the workplace. It is this and the full development of an individual that makes the apprenticeship distinct from other qualifications and programmes of learning. This applies equally to new start apprenticeships and development apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are about achieving standards rather than placing people for a set period of time. The Council envisages an average completion period of 18 months to two years for most programmes. However, it is recognised that this may not be the case in all situations, for example, craft apprenticeships and adult apprentices may complete the programme in a longer or shorter periods.

We have demonstrated our commitment to the Apprenticeship programme by providing all apprentices with the opportunity to be considered for redeployment 12 weeks prior to the end of their apprenticeship. This now means that all existing apprentices, who 3 months prior to completing their NVQ will be eligible to apply for jobs up to Grade C in the council on the redeployment register.

5 Conversion of Entry Level Posts to Apprenticeships

The process of ring-fencing entry-level posts at Grades A to C would be to convert these to apprenticeships, and enable the individual to gain a qualification and be better prepared for a career in local government.

Job descriptions would reflect the need to complete either an NVQ level 2 or 3 to satisfy the job requirement. Discussions will take place with appropriate Training Providers

To enable us to make a significant contribution to up-skilling the people of Rotherham, we must ensure that our skills agenda is cascaded into the operational planning processes. To do this effectively, each Directorate should include in their service area strategic plans details of the skills required to achieve delivery of their plans and how they intend to meet the challenges for the future.

This approach would enable each Directorate to have a better understanding of the importance of systematic and robust workforce planning which is pivotal to the success of the organisation. A key driver for change will require managers to think differently in terms of how people are recruited and in preparation for succession planning, particularly in areas where skills shortages are evident and where a career pathway is unclear.

Directorates will be asked to identify entry level posts which could be converted into apprenticeships and the Workforce Management Board which currently approves the release of all vacancies will oversee potential vacancies for conversion.

In addition, Directorates are asked to consider all jobs which would lend themselves to development apprenticeships.

6 Developing a skilled workforce

The implementation of an Apprenticeship Strategy will enable the organisation to plan the investment made in its people and help managers to think more strategically about career pathways both for new entrants and also for existing roles. The benefits to the organisation will be realised over the lifespan of this strategy and beyond.

7 Workforce planning, development and addressing skills gaps

To effectively deliver services now and in the future the right employees need to be in place. To achieve this we need to know what is needed for the future; what workforce we currently have; where our skills gaps are; the areas of recruitment difficulty; and what the supply of labour is likely to be – and plan accordingly.

Pivotal to the success of developing our workforce we would need to consider the apprenticeship offer to both new entrants and also in existing roles.

To do this effectively we will align our corporate priorities by offering qualifications in appropriate disciplines to individuals to enable them to do their job more effectively; gain a qualification and become more employable as the demand for qualifications increases. One way to do this would be to convert the existing CMI management qualification programme to an apprenticeship standard, thereby maximising use of the levy. Clearly this is very different approach in terms of time commitment where an apprenticeship –based programme is around 2 year's duration, as opposed to the current 3 month programme. Consideration would therefore need to be given to organisational impact versus cost benefit.

8 Pre-Apprenticeship Programme

Recognising that some young people who may not be high achieving academically in particular some 'looked after children' (LAC) we aim to explore the possibility of a pre-apprenticeship programme. The aim of the programme would be to equip young people with work ethics, develop their functional skills and develop confidence and self-esteem.

9 Funding requirements

In order to fulfil the Council's ambition to significantly increase the number of new start apprenticeships across the council there will be a need to invest to support the number of conversions of entry level posts. This will be overseen by the Workforce Management Board, where evidence will be required of the ability of services to support the on-going development of the apprentice, including their time away from the workplace, and any transitional issues arising out of their change to employed status, if appropriate.

Where development apprenticeships are identified we will draw down funding to support the qualification obtained. However, the service will also need to be able to demonstrate their ability to manage workloads appropriately in the absence of the apprentice whilst undertaking off-site training (20%)

Apprenticeship Strategy action plan

Objective:

To increase the number of apprenticeships offered by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Actions completed to date:

To work with senior managers across every directorate to identify areas where apprenticeships can be created, building on the work so far which includes

- ◆ Engagement with Directorates by presentation to Directorate L&D co-ordinators to explain about the Levy
- ◆ Presentations at Manager forums by Directorate
- ◆ Assistant Director with responsibility for schools/HR BP working together to ensure a consistent approach.
- ◆ Contacted all existing training providers in respect of their intentions and portal registration
- ◆ Registered on the Digital Apprenticeship Account Portal
- ◆ Met with other neighbouring authorities to discuss their approach and ensure consistency.
- ◆ HR Business Partners working with DLTs to identify areas of work that could ideally be converted to either new entry level apprenticeships or development apprenticeships (supporting career development) and if entry grade or lower level vacant posts could be transformed into one or more starter apprenticeships.
- ◆ Amendments made to Business Case forms to Workforce Management Board to consider if roles could be suitable for Starter or Development Apprenticeships.
- ◆ Amendments made to PDR process to prompt discussion and consider development opportunities.

Next Steps

ACTION	TIMESCALE AND ACTION OWNER
Identify infrastructure support requirements as part of the HR re-structure	April 2017 – Head of HR
Embed the process to procure, manage, pay and audit approved training provider services via the Digital Account	April 2017 – Finance BP/HR Officer
Consider how best to procure services – consideration of our options to either collaborate regionally or procure provider(s)	April 2017 – OD Manager
Creation of Contracts for services between RMBC and provider – identify who will be responsible for interpretation of funding rules and manage draw down of funds.	May 2017 – Legal, HR and Finance/Procurement
Identify methods by which we ensure quality and sufficient capacity of training providers and assessors.	May 2017 – OD Manager
Draw up a marketing plan to attract young local school and college leavers to apply for apprenticeships; we pay the min rate for apprenticeships £3.50 per hour for first year	June 2017 – OD Manager/Communications lead
Establish RMBC as an employer of choice	June 2017 – Head of HR/OD Manager
Build on this strategy to support Care Leavers and those with Education, Health and Care Plan by a specific and focussed initiative to identify opportunities, including a pre-apprenticeship programme	July 2017- OD Manager/AD CYPS
Ensure Trade Unions are informed and actively promote and support our approach.	April 2017 – Head of HR
Consider if and how can work collaboratively with Rotherham NHS Hospital Trust.	August 2017 – Head of HR
Further work with maintained schools and how we ensure they have some access (albeit managed) to the levy. For example individually a schools contribution to the levy will in many cases not be sufficient to fund training for 1 apprenticeship, so we would promote working across clusters	April 2017 – HR BP/AD CYPS

