

APPRENTICESHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Workforce Development Team

fulfilling the ambitions of our people and organisation

Policy Schedule		
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Policy Statement

This apprenticeship policy defines the council's approach to the use of its Apprenticeship Levy funding to support our workforce development strategy, recruiting new talent, upskilling both new and existing staff to fill our skills gaps.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees at Slough Borough Council. This policy does not apply to SBC Volunteers, agency workers, casual 'as and when' workers or non-maintained school-based staff.

All employees are eligible to express an interest in embarking on an Apprenticeship Training Programme, providing they are over the age of 16.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Learning and Development policy and other related HR policies - <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/> and the Apprenticeship Performance Framework (Appendix A).

Objectives

The Council's objectives are as follows.

- To use the Apprenticeship Levy fund as a development resource for existing and new staff
- To increase the number of people within the council undertaking apprenticeship training programmes to meet the government target
- To implement the council's long-term goal to grow our own talent and reduce spend on agency / contractors usage
- To use apprenticeships to fill hard to recruit roles and upskill recruits to the desired level
- To upskill existing staff, creating a career pathway encouraging retention and a talent pipeline for the future
- To give priority to strategic apprenticeship posts through business case review and evaluation
- To provide line managers with the opportunity to develop the workforce through apprenticeship programmes
- To enhance the reputation of the council as an employer
- To develop a workforce that is diverse and inclusive, and promote equality of opportunity for under-represented groups

Definitions

Apprentice:

An apprentice is the learner who is taking part in an Apprenticeship training programme whilst in a specific role, learning new skills and applying them in the workplace.

An apprentice will:

- combine practical training in a job with study
- work alongside experienced staff

- gain job-specific skills
- get time for study related to the role (currently set at 20% of working time)

Apprentices have the same employment rights as other employees, as set out in their contract of employment.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship training programmes are designed to provide technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills needed for the current role and also prepare them with the basis for future career opportunities.

Apprenticeships take 1 to 5 years to complete depending on their level. The minimum duration for an Apprenticeship is 1 year as dictated by the Apprenticeship Funding rules.

Apprenticeships provide a variety of nationally recognised qualifications ranging from GCSE equivalent to Bachelors or Masters degrees depending on the appropriate level for the role and experience.

Apprenticeship standards – each standard covers a specific job role and sets out the core skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to be fully competent in their job role.

The new Apprenticeship standards have been designed by employers to meet the needs of different industry sectors and the economy more widely. The standards are written definitions of the learning requirements for Apprenticeship programmes and have been developed to ensure that they are delivered and measured consistently.

Details of apprenticeship standards are available at:-

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

It is essential that the roles that apprentices are employed to undertake provide them with the opportunity to develop and apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the programme.

The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working 30 hours a week or more, including the off-the-job training they undertake. If the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week the training provider must extend the minimum duration of the apprenticeship (pro rata) to accommodate this. This will also apply to any temporary period of part-time working.

Where a part-time working pattern is needed, the extended duration of the Apprenticeship programme must be agreed by the apprentice, the line manager and the training provider. Where part-time working is agreed, the training provider must:

- record the agreed average number of hours each week
- evidence why this working pattern is needed
- extend the minimum duration using the following formula :-
$$12 \times 30 / \text{average weekly hours} = \text{new minimum duration in months}$$

The council will appoint an appropriate training provider to deliver the detailed technical elements of the Apprenticeship training programme but will maintain responsibility for the

overall apprenticeship. Therefore, an apprenticeship is an agreement between three parties all working towards successful completion of the apprenticeship: the apprentice, the training provider and the relevant line manager.

English, Maths & ICT Pre-requisites

Apprenticeships, contain minimum English and Maths requirements. In some cases there may also be a requirement for an ICT minimum standard. Where apprentices do not meet these requirements, they will be required to undertake additional learning to achieve this minimum standard as part of the apprenticeship.

All applicants undertake an initial entry requirement assessment irrespective of prior qualifications, which indicates basic capability to undertake the programme. Achievement of the Apprenticeship qualification however is still dependent on the Apprentice to pass functional skills, if they did not have them before.

This can normally be provided by the training provider or an alternative agency. If this is required, training can be undertaken in advance of going on the Apprenticeship training programme, reducing the pressure to successfully complete all study concurrently. Alternatively, in some cases this training can be undertaken in tandem with the Apprenticeship training programme, as agreed. Training to achieve these minimum standards will not be counted within the 20% 'off-the-job' training. The apprenticeship cannot be achieved without successful completion of the required functional skills.

Roles And Responsibilities

Apprentices

Apprentices are responsible for having a clear understanding of the training programme they are committing to. This includes:

- following instructions or guidance given to them by their line manager and asking for clarity if required
- following SBC policies and procedures and ensuring they comply with their job role
- considering the health and safety of themselves and others whilst undertaking their role
- ensuring they deliver the highest quality work they are able to, working hard to fulfil the requirements to pass their assessments, assignments and qualification
- completing the apprenticeship standard and meeting the deadlines for work submissions
- meeting regularly with the training provider, assessor and their line manager
- uploading assignments, recording development and training activity, in particular 'off the job' training and a time sheet on the Training Provider's tracking system

Line Manager

In addition to their usual people management role, line managers are responsible for all operational aspects of the apprenticeship, specifically but not limited to:

- carrying out local induction
- being committed to supporting the apprentice for the duration of the training programme
- supporting and dealing with any issues in accordance with the apprentice performance framework
- working with and supported by the training provider to ensure that appropriate work is planned to develop the required skills and knowledge
- using the Training Provider's tracking system to monitor the apprentices progress, 'off the job training', ensuring that it meets the minimum of 20%. In addition the line manager should review the quality of the assignments and should use the data to inform their regular 1:1 conversations
- providing informal coaching, guidance and feedback to help apprentices develop knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard
- allocating a mentor and buddy who has the appropriate skills and capabilities for each apprentice to provide additional support
- meeting with the training provider and the apprentice monthly, to discuss their progress and any issues which may need to be addressed
- informing the training provider of any issues which may affect the successful completion of the apprenticeship qualification in the agreed timescale
- conducting risk assessment for the job role
- preparing and guiding the apprentice through their End Point Assessment (including reviewing submissions, mock presentations etc.)

Workforce Development Team

The Performance Development Partners will support line managers to:

- identify apprenticeship opportunities in their areas
- identify suitable training providers to support the relevant Apprenticeship programmes
- develop robust business cases to support the requirement and approval by the Business Services Associate Director
- develop a recruitment strategy and plan
- support the line manager through the recruitment process (e.g. interview, assessment etc.)
- manage the apprenticeship induction day with the Training Provider
- monitor apprenticeship progress against the programme
- prepare the apprentice for the successful completion of their End Point Assessment
- provide a corporate monitoring and reporting facility for council Apprenticeships

Requesting Allocation Of Levy Funding

All requests for Apprenticeship levy funding must be submitted using the business case template available on the staff intranet (Appendix B). Submit your business case for approval via the apprenticeships@slough.gov.uk mailbox.

Business Case review

Your business case will be reviewed and the decision to approve or decline will be made by the Slough Academy Board.

If approved, the Apprenticeship specialist will take you through the next steps required for selection of a training provider, recruitment and selection of the apprentice/s, start date/s, etc.

If declined, you will be provided with feedback setting out the rationale for the decision.

Apprentice Recruitment & Onboarding

All new apprenticeship posts will be recruited to in adherence with the council's existing recruitment policy and procedure - <http://insite/people/recruitment/recruitment-process/>.

In addition to the above, where the organisation is looking to further develop specific professions or disciplines, expressions of interest may be sought from existing colleagues in these 'ring fenced' teams. The rationale and advantage of this approach is that we build on existing knowledge and experience present, rather than recruiting from scratch. It also supports the organisations drive to encourage continuous professional development within service areas and across the council.

The apprenticeship Expression of Interest (EoI) form allows all staff within the service area to show their interest in an apprenticeship training programme (Appendix C).

Where the apprenticeship is a new role and is taken by an internal or external candidate, a new contract of employment will be provided, setting out the terms and conditions including salary defined for the pay level of the role.

Where the apprenticeship is undertaken to further develop an existing candidate in their existing role or discipline, this is classed as 'Continuous Professional Development' (CPD) and there will be no change in salary. The apprenticeship is regarded as a development opportunity.

DBS

All supervisors and trainers directly involved with young and vulnerable adult apprentices must have the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check.

People under the age of 18 are legally classed as "vulnerable" – and this should be taken into account when recruiting them as apprentices. However this does not mean that every person coming into contact with the young person must have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

A line manager or supervisor may require a DBS check in the following circumstances:

- where the apprentice is likely to be regularly alone with that adult as part of their work;
- where the placement has a residential component.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment, or EIA, is a way of ensuring that this policy and its practices, do not disadvantage any equality group and maximises opportunities to advance equality, diversity and inclusion. An EIA will be conducted every six months and equalities monitoring data will be collected on applicants and appointees to the apprenticeship scheme. (Appendix D).

Apprentice Induction

In addition to the corporate induction, all new employees should also receive a local induction, providing them with fundamental information about the team, location, building, systems and functionality of the team that they have joined etc. A manager's checklist is available on the intranet - <http://insite/people/recruitment/induction/>.

In addition to the standard local induction the line manager should also cover off the following with new apprentices:

- Apprenticeship commitment statement
- training provider meetings
- introduction to the training provider system, our apprenticeship training recording, management and tracking system, where relevant.

Training on the training provider system will be managed by the Apprenticeship specialists for both the line manager and apprentice, where relevant.

'Off the job' training must:-

- be planned, reviewed and evaluated jointly between the apprentice and a tutor/line manager
- allow access as and when required by the apprentice either to a tutor or line manager
- be delivered during contracted work hours
- be delivered through one or more of the following methods:
 - The teaching of theory (e.g. lectures, role play, simulation exercises, online learning, self-directed learning or manufacturer training)
 - Practical training: shadowing; mentoring; industry visits and attendance at conferences
 - Learning support and times spent writing assignments/assessments
 - Be formally recorded, either in a diary, workbook or software program and can be verified by the use of a timesheet.

'Off the job' training does **not** include the following.

- Functional skills training- e.g. English and maths (up to level 2/new GCSE 9-4), where the assessment plan states that the individual must either have achieved this level or gain it during their apprenticeship.
- Progress reviews or programme assessments needed for an apprenticeship standard.
- Training which takes places outside the apprentices normal working hours.

It is important to consider the health and safety requirements for the apprentice at the start of, and during, their employment. In cases where we may be recruiting a young person under the age of 18, an additional risk assessment (Appendix E) should be completed that takes into account the following.

- risks to all young people under 18 years of age, before they start work;
- their psychological or physical immaturity, inexperience, and lack of awareness of existing or potential risks;
- control measures introduced to eliminate or minimise the risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Apprenticeship Pay, Terms and Conditions

All new apprentices recruited into SBC will be employees of the council, on the council's terms and conditions and will receive pay that is commensurate with the role and level.

SBC pay, terms and conditions can be found on the intranet - <http://insite/people/>

The minimum duration for an apprenticeship is one year.

Where an apprentice has completed the learning before 12 months, training must continue for the minimum duration of the training programme set.

Should the apprentice be part time, the duration of the training programme will need to be extended pro-rata to ensure the apprentice is able to complete all the required modules.

At the end of the Apprenticeship Training Programme, if successfully completed, the apprentice will be able to apply for the job for which they have been trained and qualified to perform, if the role is available.

There can be no guarantee of substantive employment at the end of an Apprenticeship Training Programme for new apprentice posts. However, wherever possible, the council will seek to permanently employ an apprentice at the end of their successfully completed training programme, should the apprentice wish to remain with us.

If towards the end of the Apprentice Training Programme, a substantive post is not available for an apprentice to apply for e.g. due to organisational change/restructure and the apprentice has successfully completed their training programme, the apprentice will be placed 'at risk' and every effort will be made to redeploy them. Please refer to the SBC Redeployment policy - <http://insite/people/hr-policies/redeployment/>

Apprentices have the right to attend college and take examinations. 20% of the apprentice's working hours will be in relation to study time, either at college or away from work.

Continuation of the apprenticeship will be dependent upon adequate attendance and performance at work and at their place of study.

Apprentices must comply with the review and monitoring arrangements for their particular training programme in accordance with the SBC Apprenticeship Performance Framework.

Should an apprentice be absent (from work and /or study) for any statutory reason i.e. adoption, maternity, paternity etc., their Apprenticeship Training Programme will be extended to enable them to complete their apprenticeship.

The council will support apprentices who need to take a break in learning for over 4 weeks where they plan to return to work and it is agreed by their manager. Reasons for this could include medical treatment, parental or personal reasons, but would not include short-term absences, such as annual leave or occasional sickness.

Existing employees' amendments to pay and terms and conditions will be dependent upon the nature of the selected Apprenticeship Training Programme. However, where an existing employee wishes to undertake an apprenticeship as part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and remains in their current role, their terms and conditions will remain unchanged, just as would happen when they take any other training agreed.

Employment Hours

Apprenticeships can be full time or part time. If part time and less than 30 hours a week:

- the minimum duration of the apprenticeship must be extended on a pro rata basis
- 20% of any hours contracted must be given to off-the-job training

Therefore, if the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week, the council will extend the duration of the training programme to accommodate this where feasible. This will also apply to any temporary period of part-time working.

Changes to an Apprenticeship

The council will consider a change to an apprenticeship level within the first 3 months of the Apprenticeship, subject to there being no additional costs to the organisation.

Performance Reviews

Throughout their employment the apprentice will be expected to undertake performance reviews in accordance with SBC policy and the Apprenticeship Performance Framework.

Leaving SBC whilst undertaking an Apprenticeship

If an apprentice leaves the council, their Apprenticeship Training Programme with the council will cease and the appropriate notice will need to be provided.

Levy funding cannot be recouped from an employee leaving the organisation, in accordance with the government Apprenticeship funding rules.

Apprenticeship Training Programme Complaints

If an apprentice is not satisfied with the quality of the training they are receiving from their training provider, they should in the first instance discuss this with their line manager who will determine the appropriate course of action.

If there is no satisfactory resolution, this can be escalated to the Slough Academy to investigate and take the necessary action.

If an apprentice is not satisfied with the level of support they are receiving from their line manager, they should discuss this with the line manager and attempt to resolve this informally, with support and guidance from the Slough Academy apprenticeship specialists if necessary. Should this prove unsuccessful, the apprentice should refer to the council's Grievance Policy and Procedure for further guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A

SBC Apprenticeship Performance Framework

<http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>

Appendix B

Apprentice Business Case Template

<http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>

Appendix C

Apprenticeship Expression of Interest form

<http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>

Appendix D

Equality Impact Assessment – Service

<http://insite/people/diversity-and-inclusion/equality-impact-statements/>

Appendix E

Code of Practice and Risk Assessment template

<http://insite/people/health-and-safety/codes-of-practice/>
<http://insite/people/health-and-safety/hs-templates/>

Appendix F

New Apprentice/New Role recruitment workflow

<http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>

Appendix G

Existing Employee via CPD recruitment workflow

<http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>