

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Employment & Appeals Committee

DATE: 14th June 2022

CONTACT OFFICER: Surjit Nagra, Associate Director, Customer

AUTHORS: Edwin Fernandes Workforce Development Manager

WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

APPRENTICESHIP REPORT

1 Purpose of Report

Following the request from the committee at the last meeting in April, this report provides an update on the current status of Apprenticeships in Slough Borough Council and progress made.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to note and provide any comments on the information outlined in this report.

Commissioners Review

Commissioners have reviewed this report.

3 Project Update

3.1 Apprenticeship Update Summary

The Slough Academy was originally created to set up and manage the Apprenticeship framework in SBC, in response to the new Apprenticeship reforms.

The aim of the Apprenticeships was to upskill the existing workforce and create new job opportunities for recruits of all ages and at all levels to achieve professional standard qualifications. The benefit to the organisation would be from receiving a return on investment.

Within the first six months, we had already launched Apprenticeships in the council and had created a process and supporting documentation to successfully take us forward. We are now in our third year and Apprenticeships have become business as usual, where we have used these to address some hard to fill roles and prepare staff to take on agency roles. Our focus to achieve this is ongoing (see Appendices A & B which illustrate our current breadth and scope).

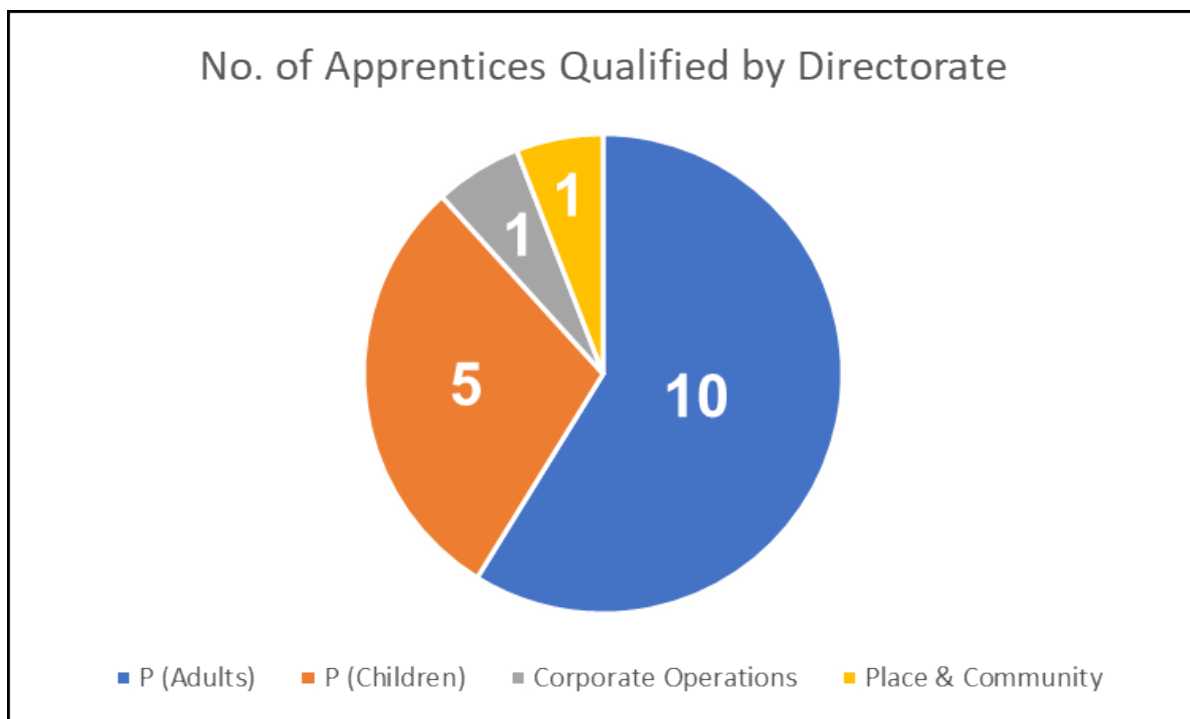
As part of the Our Futures organisational restructure, the ownership of Apprenticeships has been incorporated into the role of the new Workforce Development team.

In order to reach the widest audience, in addition to the traditional methods of recruitment, we also promote Apprentices using social media, Facebook, Linked In, Twitter and Instagram. Everyone can identify Slough Borough Council apprenticeship vacancies through any of these media.

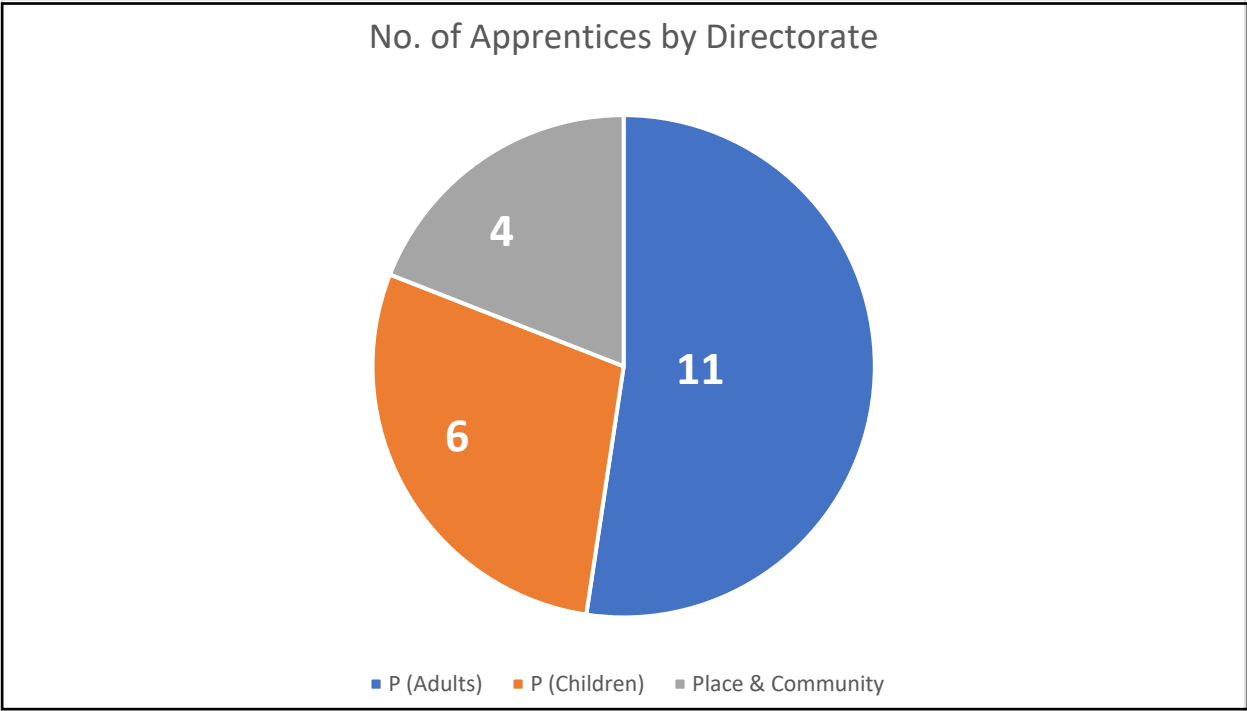
Slough Children's First are always sent vacancies to promote these opportunities for Children Looked After as a standard practice.

In addition to the above we have also worked closely with schools to promote Apprenticeships. We have shared guidelines for introducing Apprenticeships into schools on their hub site, as well as how they might develop apprenticeships for both teaching staff and administration roles. We have continued to provide advice and encourage schools to promote apprenticeships. We are aware that one school now has an apprenticeship in flight, undertaking the Early Years Educator Level 3 programme.

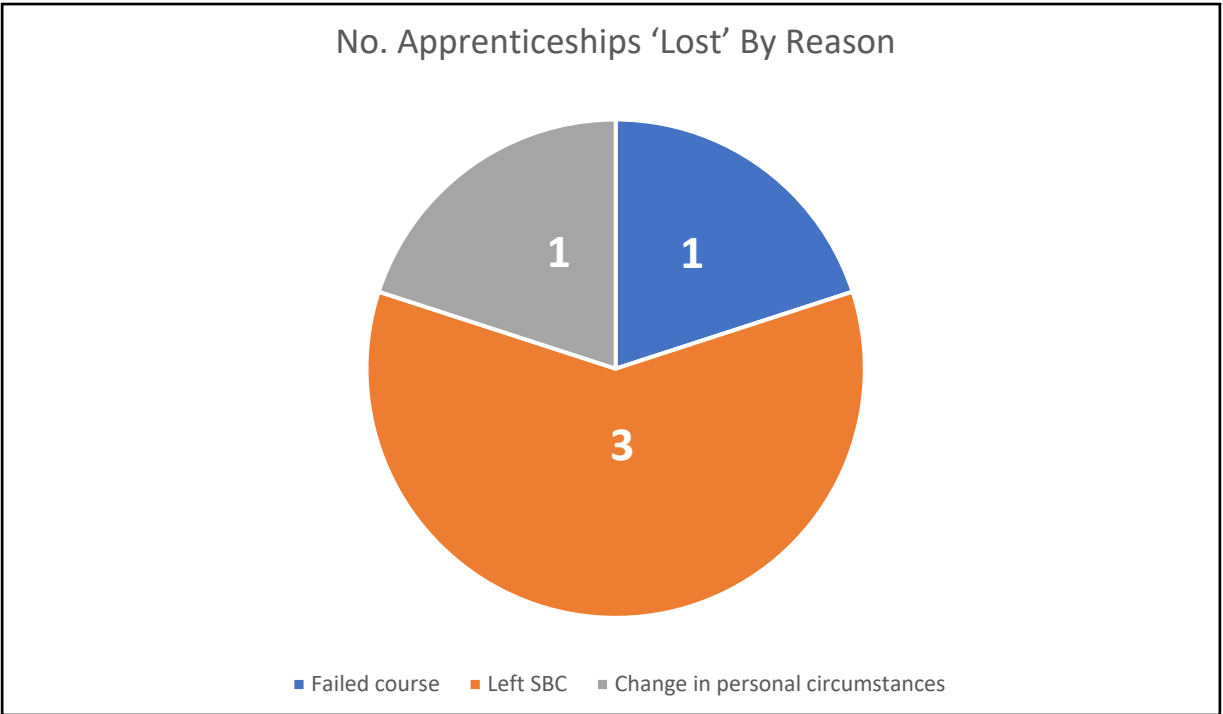
Since our last report in April 2021, we have had a further 6 Apprentices successfully achieve their qualifications taking our tally to 17, across all 4 directorates. See Appendix A for a full breakdown.



At present we have 21 Apprentices in flight, with another 2 new apprenticeships in process. We have 11 different programmes spanning 3 of our 4 directorates. See Appendix B for a full breakdown.



5 of our original apprenticeships have not progressed over the last financial year for the following reasons shown in the diagram below.



We encourage diversity and inclusivity and our Apprentices have the following broad diversity profile. The following table sets out the diversity of our inflight apprentices.

We have set out below our current Apprenticeship candidate profiles, for your reference.

Gender Profile	Nos.
Female	12
Male	9

Ethnicity Profile	
White - British/White European	6
Black, Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME)	11

Age Profile	
20-29 year olds	8
30-39 year olds	7
40-49 year olds	3
50+ year olds	3

The above data demonstrates that we offer equal opportunities to all existing staff and new recruits.

Additionally, 71% of our apprentices are Slough residents.

3.2 Challenges

The impact of the Our Futures restructure programme has led to a slowing down in development of new Apprenticeships in the organisation. Managers have been reticent to promote apprenticeships as they were not clear what the restructure would look like, who would be retained, what the new roles would encompass and if there would be enough resources in new teams to support apprenticeships in their area.

The churn in the organisation has also meant that some teams that would have normally taken on apprentices do not have sufficient resources in the team to both support business as usual services, the apprentice development on the job and the 20% absence due to study leave (this is a mandatory requirement of the levy).

The Workforce Development team itself were impacted by the restructure, which has resulted in re-prioritisation of work to support the wider training and development agenda.

As a result, the focus on Apprenticeships has been diluted, and we expect our management community to be more proactive in seizing and managing these as we highlight new programmes or opportunities.

We recognise that we also face competition for Apprentices from the following:

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- Commercial organisations in the Thames Valley and London areas (London being a short commute).
- Other Local Authorities.

In addition, we potentially face a loss in 'brand' attraction, following the announcement of our section 114 and negative press, when we post

vacancies externally. We have seen this in our experience of other recruitment exercises.

Previous experience has demonstrated that functional skills (Maths and English) present a barrier to an apprenticeship, both internally and externally, as without these apprentices will not pass the apprenticeship programme and not be awarded any qualification (Apprenticeship Levy Rules).

The BBC have reported the following:-

‘At least 55 of the largest employers in England have each released more than £1m back to the government which was meant to be spent on apprentices. In total around 5,000 English employers relinquished more than £400m of funding raised by the apprenticeship levy in the first eight-month period when sums could expire.’

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-51505625>

In the face of these challenges we are taking the following action:-

- Continue to flag new programmes which become available to our service managers where appropriate and set clear expectations of what this involves, roles and responsibilities
- Highlight to our HR Business Partner colleagues that apprenticeship opportunities may present an alternative solution when discussing recruitment/reorganisation in the business
- Increase capacity Workforce Development Team, by recruiting to current vacancies in the team
- We continue to lobby the EFSA to change the Levy rules and allow all organisations to use the levy pot for salaries also, which would allow us the funds to recruit more apprentices into the organisation. Most organisations are not meeting the apprenticeship levy target and there have been calls for reform.

APPENDIX A – Qualified Apprenticeships Breakdown

Qualified Apprentices	As @ 13/5/2022					
Programme Name	Directorate	Completed	Apprenticeship Level	No. of Apprentices	Cost per person (£)	Levy fund spent (£)
Lead Adult Care Worker	P (Adults)	Jan-20/Aug-21	3	5	3,000	15,000
Leader in Care	P (Adults)	Jul-20	5	1	2,000	2,000
Adult Care	P (Adults)	Oct/Nov-20	2	3	3,000	9,000
Commercial Procurement Supply	P (Adults)	Oct-21	4	1	9,000	9,000
Children Young People	P (Children)	Sep-20	2	1	1,800	1,800
Children Young People * now undertaking L3	P (Children)	Sep-20	2	4	1,800	7,200
Customer Service	Corporate Operations	Jan-22	2	1	3,500	3,500
Town Planning Technical Support	Place & Community	Jan-22	3	1	9,000	9,000
TOTALS				17		56,500

APPENDIX B – In Flight Apprenticeships Breakdown

In Flight		As @ 13/5/2022				
Programme Name	Directorate	Planned Completion date	Apprenticeship Level	No. of Apprentices	Cost per person (£)	Levy fund spent (£)
Commercial Procurement & Supply	P (Adults)	Jul-21	4	2	9,000	18,000
Operations Departmental Manager	P (Adults)	Jun-22/July-23	5	3	7,000	21,000
Occupational Therapy	P (Adults)	Dec-24/Feb-26	6	2	24,000	48,000
Social Work	P (Adults)	Jan-23/Mar-24	6	4	23,000	92,000
Early Years Educator	P (Children)	Jun-22	3	5	5,400	27,000
Early Years Educator	P (Children)	Jan-22	3	1	6,000	6,000
Civil Engineering Technician	Place & Community	Jan-24	3	1	12,000	12,000
Surveying Technician	Place & Community	Feb-22	3	1	9,000	9,000
Building Control	Place & Community	Sep-24	6	1	24,000	24,000
Housing/Property Management	Place & Community	May-22	3	1	7,000	7,000
TOTALS				21		264,000