

Academies Trust

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Apprenticeship Data & Activity

Report for the period 2019 to 2020

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Apprenticeship data & activity 2019-20

1.0 Introduction

Under the Public Sector Apprenticeships Targets Regulations 2017 public sector bodies with 250 or more staff in England as at 31 March each year are required to publish a return demonstrating how they have had regard to the target. The target is to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period from 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2021.

The Government considers the duty to “have regard” to the target to mean that in making workforce planning decisions, public bodies should actively consider apprenticeships, either for new recruits or as part of career development for existing staff. Apprentices are only considered as new apprentices and count towards the target in the year that they start their apprenticeship.

2.0 Reporting Period

This report covers the period from 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

3.0 Data Publication

The Trust is required to publish the following data, which will enable the Government, the public and wider stakeholders to understand our headcount and the number of apprentices we employ.

A. Number of employees whose employment with the Trust began during the reporting period	340*
B. Number of employees who began an apprenticeship during the reporting period (both new apprentice hires and current employees who started an apprenticeship)	16
C. Number of people employed by the Trust at the end of the reporting period	2389
D. Number of apprentices who worked for the Trust at the end of the reporting period	17
E. Figure B as a percentage of figure A	4.71%
F. Figure D as a percentage of figure C	0.71%

G. The number of apprentices who worked for the Trust immediately before the start of the reporting period	6
H. The number of employees in the Trust immediately before the start of the reporting period	1564
I. Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure H	1.02%

*This figure reflects recruitment activity during the reporting period. It does not include TUPE transfers into the Trust.

4.0 Apprenticeship Activity

4.1 Progress against public sector apprenticeship target

The Trust's headcount was 1564 on the day prior to the first day of the reporting period, and there were 16 new apprenticeship starts during the reporting period. The percentage of staff employed as new apprentice starts was therefore 1.02%, against a target of 2.3%.

This is the second year that the Trust has been required to report against this target. In comparison with the previous year this is an increase of 0.7%.

4.2 Action the Trust has taken to 'have regard' to the target

Apprenticeships have been included in the Trust's 4 year strategic plan and the HR team's strategy action plan.

An HR Manager has been given a lead role on apprenticeships specifically working with academies to increase the number of apprenticeship starts year-on-year. Work this year has included the creation of promotional material which includes information on accessing apprenticeships, the process for registering apprentices centrally, and case studies outlining how apprenticeships have worked in practice within our academies and the benefits to the colleague and the academy. The money available in (and being lost from) the levy pot has been highlighted.

HR Managers have been asked to include apprenticeships in their workforce planning discussions with Headteachers, both in relation to recruitment and colleague development.

Two HR Apprentice roles have been created within the Central and West Yorkshire HR Teams in a bid to continue 'leading by example' and to build in succession planning.

The Trust continues to manage the levy pot centrally, giving opportunity to smaller academies whose 'share' of the levy pot could be too small to fund apprentice training on its own.

Our Apprentice Pay Policy agreed with our recognised trade unions and approved by the Trust Board is still applicable and is due to be reviewed by the end of 2020. It ensures that apprentices are paid above the £4.15 minimum national rate.

4.3 Challenges faced / mitigating factors

4.3.1 Workforce

The Trust's workforce comprises approximately 46% teaching staff and 54% support staff.

Teachers: the apprenticeship route for teachers is not widely established, and other teacher training routes are more cost effective.

Support staff: the vast majority of our support staff work term time only, and approximately 25% of them are contracted to work fewer than the 30 hours per week necessary for an apprenticeship.

Tight budgets in the public sector mean limited opportunity to create new apprentice roles, so the Trust is reliant either on staff turnover in relevant roles, or identifying existing support staff who are not already fully trained and who would benefit from and wish to complete an apprenticeship.

It is worth noting that although the Trust is in scope for reporting due to the number of academies within the group, none of our academies would be in scope as a stand alone entity.

4.3.2 Resource

The 20% off-the-job training requirement continues to be a barrier in engaging academies, who can be reluctant to see a colleague take time away from the classroom where cover for the absence needs to be provided, at an additional cost and with potential impact on teaching and learning. Within academies, capacity to provide coaching and support to apprentices can also be limited. At the moment, it isn't possible to use the levy funding to cover these additional costs.

During the reporting period the Trust underwent a significant growth period, TUPE transferring seven academies into the Trust. At a Trust level, managerial / HR resources that may otherwise have helped to facilitate action towards the target were directed to supporting this growth.

4.4 Proposed actions to assist in meeting the target in future

A number of academies, including some that are new to the Trust, have embraced apprenticeships and we intend to draw on their experiences.

All HR Managers are expected to include apprenticeships in their workforce planning discussions, and our newly developed "recruitment toolkit" and the communication materials outlined above will add emphasis to this.

In an attempt to address the loss of our levy funds and to provide development for existing staff, we are in the process of exploring the possibility of working in collaboration with the National College of Education (NCE) to create a bespoke programme of professional qualifications specific to our roles/academies accessed through the apprenticeship assessment route.

This would include Masters level professional qualifications and also offer quality CPD for our non-teaching staff.

We have an ongoing piece of work on career pathways and succession planning, and will link apprenticeships with this work.

Report compiled by: Jemma Livesley, HR Manager Date: 28/09/20