



Apprenticeship data & activity 2018-19

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 2018 to 31 March 2019.

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	314*
B. Number of employees who began an apprenticeship during the reporting period (both new apprentice hires and current employees who started an apprenticeship)	4
C. Number of people employed by the Trust at the end of the reporting period	1564



D. Number of apprentices who worked for the Trust at the end of the reporting period	6
E. Figure B as a percentage of figure A	1.27%
F. Figure D as a percentage of figure C	0.38%
G. The number of apprentices who worked for the Trust immediately before the start of the reporting period	5
H. The number of employees in the Trust immediately before the start of the reporting period	1249
I. Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure H	0.32%

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

4.0 Apprenticeship Activity

4.1 Progress against public sector apprenticeship target

The Trust's headcount was 1249 on the day prior to the first day of the reporting period, and there were 4 new apprenticeship starts during the reporting period. The percentage of staff employed as new apprentice starts was therefore 0.32%, against a target of 2.3%.

This is the first time that the Trust has been required to report against this target, so it is not possible to make a comparison with previous years.

A further 5 apprenticeships which began prior to the reporting period were ongoing for all or part of the year, as were a number of apprenticeships in schools who transferred into the Trust part way through the year.

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.



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

The Trust “took the lead” by creating an Apprentice Administrator role in its central team.

Action was taken to scope out the possibility of using the teacher apprenticeship route to develop existing colleagues not currently working as teachers.

The Trust manages 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.

An Apprentice Pay Policy has been agreed with our recognised trade unions and approved by the Trust Board.

The manager of the Co-op’s apprentice programme has provided advisory support, and the Trust has also been working closely with the Co-op to identify apprenticeship opportunities for our students. Although not directly relevant to the Trust’s own apprenticeship target, this work has helped to raise the profile and status of apprenticeships within the Trust.

4.3 Challenges faced / mitigating factors

4.3.1 Workforce

At the start of the reporting period, the Trust’s workforce comprised 46% teaching staff and 54% support staff.

Teachers: the apprenticeship route for teachers has only been available since September 2018 and at present is not widely established / available or well recognised as a teacher training route. Other routes are more cost effective and recruitment to teacher training takes place well ahead of start dates. This apprenticeship route was not a viable option during the reporting period.

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. 80% work term time only.

Tight budgets mean that staff numbers are static or reducing, so there is limited opportunity to pay the salaries necessary to create new apprentice roles. The Trust is therefore 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, only one of our academies would be in scope as a stand alone entity.

4.3.2 Resource

The 20% off-the-job training requirement has proven to be a barrier in engaging academies, who can be reluctant to see a colleague take time away from the classroom - cover for the absence needs to be provided, which introduces an additional cost. Within academies, capacity to provide coaching and support to apprentices is limited. It is not possible to access the levy funding without spending more on salaries, release to train and scheme administration.

During the reporting period the Trust underwent a significant growth period, TUPE transferring 6 academies in to the Trust and preparing for a further 5 to join in the months immediately following. At a Trust level, managerial / HR resources that may otherwise have helped to facilitate action towards the target were directed to supporting this growth.

4.3.3 Interest in and knowledge of apprenticeships

There are varying levels of interest in apprenticeships, which is partly due to limited understanding of what is on offer. If we were able to use some of our levy funds to resource the administration of apprenticeships within the Trust, then this might help to undertake the work necessary to identify starts and deliver a sustainable programme.

4.4 Proposed actions to assist in meeting the target in future

An HR Manager has been given a lead role on apprenticeships and this work continues to be included in our strategic action plan.

A number of academies, including some that are new to the Trust, have embraced apprenticeships and we intend to draw on their experiences. We will develop case studies to outline how it has worked in practice and the benefits to the colleague and the academy. These will be shared with all academies along with information on accessing apprenticeships and a reminder that the money in the levy pot has come from their budgets.

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

We are commencing a piece of work on career pathways and succession planning, and will link apprenticeships with this work.

Report compiled by: Juliet Caunt, Chief People Officer

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