

Apprenticeships and Levy Funding Briefing Note

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017. OCC's Apprenticeship Levy pot is approx. £1.2m per year; this funding can only be spent on apprenticeship training and not on salaries or support costs. The levy is generated by a monthly charge of 0.5% on the council's pay bill plus a 10% government top-up and lasts for 24 months. Any unspent levy in the council's account that is older than 24 months is returned to the treasury.

Only qualifications aligned to agreed apprenticeship standards can be funded by the levy. When the levy was first introduced, standards were under- developed however there are now over 300 standards available in the UK with more being continuously developed.

Apprentices must evidence at least 20% "off the job training" which is directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard. This includes lectures, workshops, practical training, shadowing, mentoring, learning support, time writing assignments/assessments and research. Off the job training can take place in the workplace or off site.

Public Sector Apprenticeship (PSA) target

The Organisational Development team is responsible for managing the Apprenticeship Levy and for monitoring the Public Sector Apprenticeship target (PSA).

The PSA target requires large public bodies to have regard to a target of having 2.3% of the workforce made up of apprentices based on the average of apprenticeship starts since 2017.

PSA figures are published annually. The most recent national report is for 2019 which indicates that County Councils averaged 1.05% against the target of 2.3%.

The figures that will be nationally published for 2020 for OCC are Cumulative 0.94% (an average of new starts since 2017) of target.

The PSA target includes maintained schools in Oxfordshire, including Foundation schools and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Apprenticeships and how they can be used

Apprenticeships can be undertaken by staff in a variety of different ways and under various contractual arrangements.

Apprenticeships training contracts

These are fixed term contracted for the duration of the apprenticeship and often referred to as training contracts. Training contracts are offered as both internal and external opportunities for entry level and higher-level apprenticeships. For example, an apprentice can start at Level 3 Paralegal and upon successful completion, progress

to a further training contract to study for the Level 7 Solicitor. These types of training contracts appeal to people of all ages who do not wish to enter or go back to university to study or re-train. These types of posts are offered with no guarantee of a permanent role at the end of the apprenticeship.

Permanent posts with career development

These are permanent posts within the organisational structure that are offered as a permanent training post with career development or progression whereby the post holder (who can be internal or external) is not expected to be either qualified or fully qualified upon entry to the role. The relevant level of apprenticeship is mapped to the role to support the employee to gain their professional qualifications via a levy funded apprenticeship. Recent examples of this are Finance (AAT), Audit (Intelligence Analyst) and Transport Planning (Transport Planning Technician). Completion of the apprenticeship is a mandatory part of the role. These roles will often be the first step of a defined career pathway in the specialist area using apprenticeship training throughout.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

These are opportunities for existing staff to gain additional continuing professional development opportunities via the apprenticeship route. For example, staff may wish to undertake a Learning Mentor apprenticeship to enable them to take the next step in their career towards a management role when a suitable vacancy arises and then undertake a first line management apprenticeship which will stand them in good stead for more senior management roles where they could undertake higher level management and leadership apprenticeships.