

Apprenticeship data and activity

April 2021 – March 2022

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 apprentices start over the period from 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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	159
B. Number of employees who began an apprenticeship during the reporting period (both new apprentice hires and current employees who started an apprenticeship)	6
C. Number of people employed by the Trust at the end of the reporting period	697
D. Number of apprentices who worked for the Trust at the end of the reporting period	5
E. Figure B as a percentage of figure A	3.77%
F. Figure D as a percentage of figure C	0.72%
G. The number of apprentices who worked for the Trust immediately before the reporting period	1

H. The number of employees in the Trust immediately before the start of the reporting period	556
I. Figure B expressed as a percentage of figure H	1.08%

4.0 Apprenticeship Activity

4.1 Progress against public sector apprenticeship target

The Trust's headcount was 556 on the day prior to the first day of the reporting period, and there were 5 new apprenticeship starts during the reporting period. The percentage of staff employed as new apprentice starts was therefore 1.08%, against a target of 2.3%.

This is the first year the Trust has reported against this target.

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

Apprenticeships have been considered for all new vacancies within the Trust, and have been considered following performance management processes as part of a suite of CPD available to staff. We encourage and promote apprenticeship programmes and emphasise the need for staff to discuss their development plans with their line managers as part of performance management.

The HR team regularly discuss the inclusion of apprenticeships as part of their regular meetings with Headteachers, both in relation to recruitment and staff development. Particularly when vacancies have arisen consideration has been given as to whether roles would be suitable for apprentices, and whether relevant apprenticeship standards or frameworks are available.

4.3 Challenges faced / mitigating factors

4.3.1 Workforce

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 52% 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 an employee take time away from either the classroom where cover for the absence needs to be provided, at an additional cost and with potential impact on teaching and learning, or from non-classroom roles where staffing is necessarily maintained at minimum levels due to financial constraints on school budgets.

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 all resources were given to support academy operations during the global health crisis, therefore there has been a limited amount of managerial /HR resources that may otherwise have helped to facilitate action towards the target.

4.4 Proposed actions to assist in meeting the target in future

The Trust will continue to promote apprenticeship programmes for our teaching and support staff up to and including Masters level professional qualifications and also a greater offering of quality CPD for our non-teaching staff.

The Trust will identify potentially suitable frameworks for existing staff and external apprentices in specialist areas such as Finance, HR, IT and Maintenance. Key leads within the Trust are now working to build on succession planning for staff in these areas.

5.0 Summary

The creation and expansion of the Trust allows for greater opportunities of employment of apprentices as new recruits, as well as the ability to offer access to apprenticeship programmes as part of a wider commitment to staff professional and personal development. We aim to build on previous activity to deliver year on year improvement in this area.

Report compiled by: Janet Robinson, Director of Human Resources

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