



# **Apprenticeship Policy**

**September 2016**

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## **Halton Borough Council Apprenticeship Policy**

This Policy comprises of 4 elements:

- 1) Context
- 2) A Practical, 'How to Guide'
- 3) Apprenticeship Agreement
- 4) Frequently Asked Questions (To be placed on SharePoint)

### **1) Context**

#### **Background**

Like all Local Authorities Halton Borough Council (HBC) have a low proportion of young people working for the organisation, with our Workforce Profile 2015 indicating that from over 1600 responses (67%), and just under 2% were aged between 18-24.

Conversely, the high proportion of older workers, (in comparison to the 2012 Workforce Profile), has increased – the 55-64 age group by 3.6% and the over 65`s by 1.4% to nearly 23% and over 4% respectively.

This has implications for the resourcing of future service delivery, indicating the need for a more targeted approach to succession planning. One specific approach to address this age imbalance is to offer apprenticeships. This will help the organisation to address specific skills shortages by 'growing our own', as well as encouraging more young people to consider careers in local government.

As the biggest employer within the Borough we can seek to lead by example, offering younger people opportunities to study for relevant national qualifications at the same time as earning a salary, at the same time contributing effectively to the Borough`s economy.

#### **Benefits of introducing an Apprenticeship Scheme within HBC**

##### **Organisational Benefits:**

- Supports key strategic objectives of the Council. Examples include the Organisational Development Strategy, Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy, City Region Employment Strategy and Halton's NEET Commissioning Statement.
- Will contribute towards achieving a more balanced workforce. Our 2015 Workforce Profile found that only 1.8% of Council employees are below the age of 24. The average age of a Halton employee is between 45 and 54.
- Help to raise the educational attainment of the HBC workforce by identifying those staff who do not hold a minimum Level 2 qualification (i.e. equivalent to 5 GCSE Grades (A\*-C) / BTEC First Certificate). This approach could also be extended to include employees 'at risk'.
- Apprentices provide positive role models of the Council in their own communities.

- A means of replenishing the HBC 'Talent Pool' as older and more experienced workers leave the organisation.
- By 'growing our own' – securing higher retention rates through career pathways and reducing recruitment costs.
- Succession Planning – ensuring that we can identify employees coming up to retirement and ensuring that knowledge and skills are not 'retired' when the employee departs.
- Help tackle some staffing shortages, and reduced reliance on agency/temporary staff, for example Adults and Children`s Social Care and the Registration Service.
- Greater staff retention / reduced turnover.
- Apprentices have a positive impact on staff morale by stimulating new and fresh ideas.
- Provides existing staff with coaching and mentoring opportunities, contributing to CPD.
- Opportunities to work closer with partners and training providers; as well as actively exploring the option of becoming a training provider in our own right.

### **Community Benefits:**

- Strengthen links and relationships between the Council and local communities – particularly if we recruit apprentices who reside in the Borough.
- Demonstration of a Council commitment to promoting inclusion, wellbeing and reducing poverty.
- A tool to tackle high local levels of Worklessness in specific groups – for example NEETS, (Not in Education, Employment and Training), particularly if we target recruitment to local people.
- Raise attainment and aspirations for the young people of Halton.
- Contributes towards targets, both internal and with external partners.
- Contributes to raising skill levels in the local labour workforce.
- Contribute towards the Council`s Social Value outcomes.

### **What are apprenticeships?**

An apprenticeship is a way for young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a real qualification and skills for the future.

### **How long do they take?**

Depending on the sector and job role, an apprenticeship can take anything between one and five years to complete. It is a package of training and qualifications.

### **Apprentice Framework**

This provides for the establishment of the most appropriate apprenticeship structure, facilitating liaison with both the Corporate Policy Team and the Employment, Learning & Skills Division to identify a suitable provider and possible funding.

Agreeing with the apprentice the amount of release time / time on the job, managers will provide support apprentices to complete their Apprenticeship Framework. Agreeing the amount of time for assessor access and the additional input required by the line manager or colleagues to provide evidence or witness testimonies.

All apprenticeships combine work with qualifications and are available up to Degree level:

- Intermediate – Level 2
- Advanced – Level 3
- Higher – Level`s 4, 5 and 6

An apprentice would not be able to replace a trained member of staff as they need time to develop their skills and gain experience. However, apprenticeships offer an excellent way to build additional capacity within teams.

### **Funding the Apprentice`s Wages**

The Team/Division employing the apprentice will be responsible for their wages.

With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy from April 2017 this will remain the case. However, from this date, the Council will make available a finite corporate fund. In order to acquire this funding support, providing all other potential funding opportunities have been exhausted, Teams/Divisions will need to complete a profoma outlining their business case.

It should be noted that not all applications to this fund will be successful.

As a guiding principle the organisation will aim to pay 75% of the bottom of HBC 3, which equates to £8.54 per hour / £315.98 per week and £12,338 annually.

The minimum wage will be the National Apprenticeship Wage £3.30 per hour / £122.10 per week and £6,366 annually (This rate applies when the apprentice is aged 16 – 18 and/or 19 or over in the first year of apprenticeship only).

Thereafter all apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage, which equates to:

Aged 18 – 20: £5.30 per hour / £196.10 per week and £10,224 annually.  
Aged 21 and over: £6.70 / £247.90 per week and £12,925 annually.

Rates may also vary depending at what stage of the apprenticeship a they are at.

Apprentices will not be entitled to any enhancements to their agreed salary, or be eligible to undertake any overtime.

### **Funding the Apprentice`s Training**

Training Costs will vary, depending on the Training Provider. The National Apprenticeship Service may contribute some funding if apprentices meet a certain criteria, such as being aged 16-18; although this route will cease once the Apprenticeship Levy comes into effect in April 2017.

Thereafter the Council will be able to use their levy funding to invest in apprenticeships through the Digital Apprenticeship Service. This will cover **ALL** the training costs of the Apprenticeship.

### **New Trailblazer Apprenticeships**

From July 2015 the Government introduced a new initiative in line with specific business demands. Trailblazer standards have been designed by over 1300 employers for new apprenticeship frameworks. These schemes are open to all ages and to new and/or existing employees, with a further advantage being that they are able to attract significant Government funding. As an example, currently the Government will double whatever the employer contributes, up to £27,000.

### **The Apprenticeship Levy and the English Apprenticeships 2020 Vision**

The Government`s ambition is to create 3 million apprentices by 2020, with the aim in doing so that apprentices will become an integral part of the wider workforce.

In order to meet this figure the public sector, and more specifically local authorities, will need to deliver more apprenticeships.

From April 2017 all public sector organisations will be required to pay an apprenticeship levy which will be based on a percentage of its total overall annual wage bill.

Also from this date a new independent and employer-led body will be established, namely The Institute for Apprenticeships.

### **Intermediate Labour Market (ILM)**

An ILM is an Intermediate Labour Market Job Role offered to an eligible person over the age of 16 for between 26 weeks and 52 weeks.

It will specifically target Halton participants who are unemployed, especially those from disadvantaged groups.

All such positions are grant funded, with the funding having to be used to supplement the participants wages.

It is envisaged that these positions could possibly lead onto apprenticeships within the organisation.

For further information about ILM`s please contact Lynsey Carr, Employment & Careers Services Manager, Halton People into Jobs.

Tel: 0151 511 7547

### **Contracts, Terms & Conditions**

A standard HBC contract will be issued along with an Apprenticeship Agreement. Apprentices will be a HBC employee and thereby be entitled to all benefits, such as annual leave, flexible working, flexitime and employer pension contributions. They will also be encouraged to take up learning and development opportunities offered by the organisation, with line manager's permission.

Apprentices may be required to attend college or a training provider on a specific day per week or be assessed mainly in the work place, depending on the job role. Apprentices will be given paid time off to attend this and may also be given time off for study at additional times, depending on the needs of the course. During College term holidays it would be expected that the apprentice attends their 'normal place of work'. An apprentice must work a minimum of 30 hours per week for 12 months.

Apprentices will not be eligible to undertake any overtime and nor will they be entitled to any enhancements to their agreed salary.

It is hoped that apprentices will continue to work for the Council and gain a permanent or temporary contract at the end of their apprenticeship and they will be able to apply for internal vacancies as and when they arise. If their apprenticeship ends and they have not secured employment, then support will be given to them to find employment with other organisations within the borough by the Employment, Learning & Skills Team.

### **Human Resource Considerations**

Status – apprentices are treated no differently to any other HBC employee and accordingly all terms and conditions are equally applicable, such as sickness absence, annual leave entitlement, etc.

Time recording – ensuring that apprentices understand the guidelines and expectations – who they go to for authorisation of leave/flexi etc. Apprentices must work 30 hours per week.

Apprentices will require a tax code and a P45 will be required if they have previously been employed.

Pension – All apprentices will be enrolled into the pension scheme, with an option to withdraw within the first 3 months (in which case all contributions paid are refunded). After the first 3 months, an apprentice can withdraw from the pension scheme, but contributions remain in the scheme and cannot be refunded.

Progress Reviews – These will take place at regular intervals between the apprentice, their Line Manager and the Learning Provider.

Probationary Period – this will be the same as any other HBC employee, i.e. 3 months.

Annual Leave – Leave entitlement of 25 working days per leave year, in addition to Bank and Public Holidays.



Sickness Absence entitlement and policy – comparable to that of a HBC employee.

Employee Development Reviews (EDR`s) and other personal reviews – clear targets and expectations need to be set by the line manager at the outset and the apprentice should understand that these will form the basis of the probationary review. Any additional training needs outside of the apprenticeship should also be picked up at this stage.

### **Responsibilities of Managers**

Managers will be responsible for:

- Initial identification of apprenticeship opportunities in their service areas
- Sourcing funding to pay the wages for an apprentice, whether that be via an in-house source and/or successfully accessing the corporate fund.
- Recruitment of apprentice, in partnership with the Employment, Learning & Skills Division through the Halton Employment Partnership.
- Ensuring the apprentice is given appropriate time to complete the relevant qualifications, including paid time off for day or block release

Line Managers/Supervisors will be responsible for:

- Providing any necessary equipment or clothing / uniform
- Planning an appropriate work programme for the apprentice
- Working with the college or training provider to support the relevant qualification
- Mentoring and supporting the apprentice

In addition to the above for Apprentices aged 16-18:

- Ensuring the appropriate young person`s risk assessment is completed
- Complying with health & safety regulations relating to the area of work and any particular requirements or restrictions on young people

### **What an apprentice can bring to your team**

As with any new member of staff starting in post, bringing an apprentice into a team can alter the dynamics and this will need to be managed. Involve colleagues as much as possible and appreciate that at times jobs will take longer as the apprentice gets used to the work. Quality standards will need to be very clear from the

start. What we sometimes take for granted with experienced colleagues, will need to be explained in detail for apprentices. Find out from the apprentice what they enjoy and what they are good at to identify and maximise strengths that can contribute to team performance.

### **Welcoming your apprentices into the organisation**

Orientation into a service is important, as is understanding the specific needs of new recruits, particularly young people who may be entering the world of work for the first time.

Getting the team ready to welcome the apprentice is important, outlining what you expect from line managers and colleagues in terms of setting the right example and role modelling.

Induction should be undertaken, as with any new employee. The HBC induction checklist should be used. A place should also be reserved on the next Corporate Induction.

### **Role of Employment, Learning & Skills Division**

The principal aim of this Division is to create an economically prosperous borough. In this regard it keenly supports the community/social value benefit associated with recruiting the local unemployed to apprenticeship positions.

In terms of HBC and apprenticeships, the Division can:

- help recruit and sift potential applicants
- advise of relevant apprenticeship frameworks/standards and help identify the relevant training provider
- run, if it merited it, bespoke Halton Employment Partnership courses as a pre-requisite for applicants.

### **Further information**

For further information and support on apprenticeships please contact either:

John Gallagher, Principal Policy Officer,  
Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division  
Tel: 168092 / 0151-511-8092  
Email: [john.gallagher@halton.gov.uk](mailto:john.gallagher@halton.gov.uk)

Or;

Michael Harley, Halton Employment Partnership Manager  
Employment, Learning & Skills Division  
Tel: 167414 / 0151-511-7414  
Email: [michael.harley@halton.gov.uk](mailto:michael.harley@halton.gov.uk)

## **Guiding Principles**

- Apprentices will be employees of Halton Borough Council.
- Apprenticeships will provide individuals with practical work experience and a qualification needed for their respective chosen career and within a structured framework.
- Each vacancy will be considered on a case by case basis and if suitable as an apprentice opportunity the manager will compile a business case. This will be submitted to Management Team and the Trade Union Steering Group for consideration / approval.
- Apprenticeships will not replace existing staff, duties and functions.
- The length of an apprenticeship placement will be determined by the actual apprenticeship. Typically they range from 12 months to 2 years; however some last up to 5 years.
- Although HBC staff will be permitted to apply for any apprenticeship vacancy if they are on a permanent contract then they would have to relinquish this in order to commence an apprenticeship.
- The Council will aim to pay Apprentices a maximum 75% of the bottom point of HBC 3 which will equate to £8.54 per hour / £315.98 per week and £12,338 annually and a minimum in line with the National Apprenticeship Wage of £3.30 per hour / £122.10 per week and £6,366 annually.
- Apprentices will be on a fixed salary and therefore not eligible to salary progression through increments, although negotiated NJC pay increases will be applied.
- Managers appointing apprentices will be supported through the process by the Council's Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division (John Gallagher) and the Employment Learning and Skills Division (Michael Harley).
- Apprenticeships will be funded through either existing Divisional budgets or by accessing a finite corporate fund, as outlined in a business case bid.
- Apprentices will not be eligible to undertake any overtime.
- Apprentices will not be entitled to any enhancements to their agreed salary.
- A probationary period of 3 months will be applicable to all apprentices in line with the terms and conditions of all new HBC recruits. Progress will be monitored by Line Manager and Training Provider.

- Performance and progress of Apprentices will be monitored using existing performance management criteria and processes e.g. EDRs, 1 to1's, capability procedures.

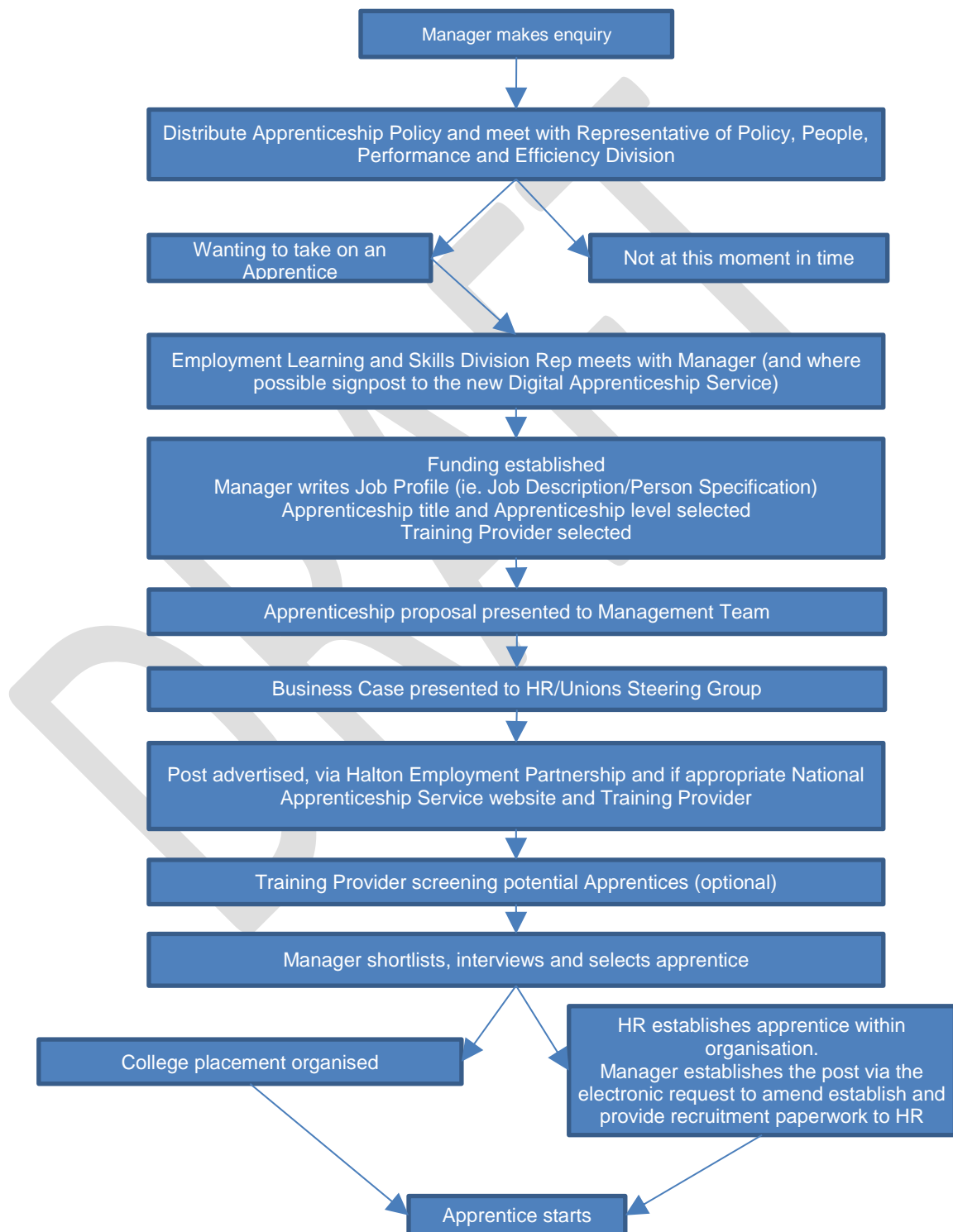
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## 2) Pactical, 'How to Guide'

### Recruitment

The process of recruiting an apprentice is slightly different to that of any other member of staff purely due to the specialised nature of apprenticeships, see Flow Chart below.

#### APPOINTING AN APPRENTICE - FLOW CHART



## **Steps to Appoint an Apprentice**

STEP 1 – Vacancy is identified

STEP 2 – Should the post be filled?

STEP 3 – If no, Efficiency Saving. If yes STEP 4

STEP 4 – Can the post be designated as an Apprenticeship? If no, recruitment to the post via HR. If yes, STEP 5

STEP 5 – Manager works with the Council's Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division and Employment Learning Skills Division to identify an appropriate Apprenticeship Framework, Training Provider, etc.

STEP 6 – Manager completes a business case (proforma attached)

STEP 7 – Advertising of the vacancy via Halton Employment Partnership

STEP 8 – Screening will take place with potential apprentices identified / short listing and interviews carried out

STEP 9 – Apprentice is appointed. Reviews of progress take place

STEP 10 – Post is continued, or post is deleted

## **Example scenario – Appointing an Apprentice**

**The scenario below provides an illustration of how this step by step process would work:**

Jane Bloggs is currently graded at HBC 4 SCP 18-21. She leaves Halton Council and her post becomes vacant.

Jackie Jones, Jane's line manager after discussing the post at her directorate SMT/DMT presents a business case to the Council's (Chief Officer) Management Team to demonstrate that the post is still required.

In presenting the business case, she explains that she has reviewed the options for how the vacancy could be filled. She has considered whether the post is still 'fit for purpose' and has taken into account job evaluation requirements. In consulting with HR and TU colleagues and taking advice from both the Council's Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division and the Employment Learning and Skills (ELS) Division, it is felt that an apprenticeship is an option.

(Chief Officer) Management Team agree that the vacancy can be filled. Jackie is given delegated authority to fill the post in the best interests of delivering an effective service, but is asked to further explore the filling of the post as an apprenticeship.

Jackie contacts colleagues in both the Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division and ELS Division. An appropriate apprenticeship framework is identified. Advice is provided on possible funding apprentice level options. Following completion of a request to advertise and change to establishment form recruitment begins.

An appointment is made. The successful candidate has some transferable skills experience but requires further support. Jackie appoints the candidate on SCP 14 to reflect this. Salary is paid monthly at 75% of SCP 14.

The candidate commences his or her post and meets Jackie as part of the usual supervision arrangements.

The post holder is provided with a work plan which reflects the agreed apprenticeship framework. This includes time allocated for college work. Mentoring support is offered to the newly appointed post holder. This is initially on a weekly basis, but rises to monthly.

The post holder successfully completes the apprenticeship modules. At the end of the apprenticeship it is anticipated that the post holder is made 'permanent' and is paid the full rate. However, this would be dependent upon a business case having been made for the continuation of the post and satisfactory performance.

## APPRENTICESHIP BUSINESS CASE PROFORMA

Manager name and contact details	
Title of Apprenticeship and level to be offered	
Directorate	
Division	
Team	
Start Date	
Rationale as to why an Apprentice is required	
How the Apprentice is to be funded	
Funding options that have been considered	
HR Consultation – date(s) and outcome	
Trade Unions Consultation – date(s) and outcome	
Management Team Consultation – date(s) and outcome	



### 3) Apprenticeship Agreement

## APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

This Agreement will be appended to the Contract of Employment, of which the Apprentice will sign both.

The purpose of the Apprenticeship Agreement is to:-

- identify the skill, trade or occupation for which the apprentice is being trained; and
- confirm the qualifying Apprenticeship framework that the apprentice is following.

The Apprenticeship Agreement is incorporated into and does not replace the written statement of particulars issued to the individual in accordance with the requirements of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

The Apprenticeship is to be treated as being a contract of service not a contract of Apprenticeship.

Apprentices will also be issued with a Halton Borough Council 'Contract of Employment' as the organisation views them all as employees.

#### Apprenticeship Particulars:

Apprentice name:	
Skill, trade or occupation for which the apprentice is being trained:	
Relevant Apprenticeship framework and level:	
Start date:	
Estimated completion of learning date:	

#### Signatories:

Apprentice:		Date:
Employer:		Date:

#### **4)Apprentices – Frequently asked questions (To be placed on SharePoint)**

##### **How will I benefit as a Manager?**

As well as possibly helping local unemployed people to get ready for work, the scheme will provide you with an opportunity to obtain some additional resources to support the work of your team.

##### **How will Managers be supported?**

Managers will be guided through the process by both the Council's Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division and the Employment, Learning & Skills Division. Apprentices also follow a framework with support from the new Digital Apprenticeship Service, in terms of:

- Selection of an apprenticeship framework or standard
- Selection of a training provider or providers to deliver the training
- Selection of an assessment organisation

In time we also envisage an in-house mentoring network where other managers who have provided apprenticeships in the past will be on hand to offer advice.

##### **How do I apply to recruit an Apprentice?**

First, you will be asked to complete a proforma (link [xxx](#)) outlining the business case. You will be provided with examples of job descriptions and person specifications which you can adapt to meet your requirements. Advertisements will be made via the Council's Employment, Learning & Skills Division via the Halton Employment Partnership.

##### **How much will an Apprentice be paid?**

Maximum: 75% of the bottom point of HBC 3 which will equate to £8.54 per hour / £315.98 per week and £12,338 annually.

Minimum: In line with the National Apprenticeship Wage of £3.30 per hour / £122.10 per week and £6,366 annually.

However they will not be entitled to any enhancements to their agreed salary or eligible to undertake any overtime.

##### **Who pays for the Apprentice?**

The Team/Division employing the apprentice will be responsible for their wages. With the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy from April 2017 this will remain the case. However, from this date, the Council will make available a finite corporate fund. In order to acquire this funding support, providing all other potential funding opportunities have been exhausted, Teams/Divisions will need to complete a proforma outlining their business case.

It should be noted that all applications to this fund will be successful.

##### **How and when will an Apprentice be paid?**

They will be paid as an employee of the Council i.e. monthly, with the monies paid direct into a bank/building society account.

##### **How will the performance of an Apprentice be monitored and assessed?**

Whilst managers will be expected to supervise apprentices as they would with other staff, apprentices also have to meet targets set out in their apprenticeship framework and in this respect would be supported by the learner provider.

**How much off- the job training will be required?**

This will vary according to the apprenticeship, for example the apprenticeship may require day release for training/study.

**How will an Apprentice benefit?**

They will receive an opportunity to get real and practical work experience, whilst studying for a suite of qualifications. The Council is a large employer with a wide range of jobs and professions.

**What will be Apprentice Terms & Conditions?**

An apprentice will be a HBC employee, thus being entitled to join the Trades Union, the local government pension scheme, etc.

Annual Leave entitlement of 25 working days per leave year, in addition to Bank and Public Holidays.

**How long will an Apprenticeship last?**

An apprenticeship with the Council will last anywhere typically from 12 – 24 months and up to 5 years.

**What happens when an Apprenticeship finishes?**

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that an Apprentice will be offered a job with the Council upon completion. However, the experience and skills gained in acquiring the apprenticeship will put them in a better position to apply for jobs both within and outside the Council.