Apprenticeship Scheme

Effective Date | May 2013
Applicable To | All employees
Review Date | October 2013
Policy Owner | Ruth Aldridge, Human Resources

1. Introduction

1.1. The Council is committed to working proactively towards increasing the recruitment of apprentices within its workforce.

1.2. The term “apprentice” can mean different things to different people. For the purposes of this scheme an apprenticeship is a fixed term contract for a period of 1 year that provides 16-24 year olds with an opportunity to develop skills and competences in business administration, supported by government funded training.

1.3. The scheme is delivered in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency and Adult Education (Gloucestershire County Council). Contracts are negotiated on a yearly basis and they lay down rules and regulations covering such things as number of apprentices, minimum pay, holiday entitlement, hours of work, standards for health and safety etc., which contributes to a unique set of terms and conditions. Apprentices are not guaranteed a job at the end of their apprenticeship, but every effort is made to enable them to compete for jobs.

1.4. This learning and development opportunity supports the Council’s HR Strategy which aims to raise the aspirations of young people in the community and the Council’s workforce plan.

1.5. Apprentices are expected to adhere to any of the Council’s policies and procedures that are relevant to their post.

2. Objectives

- To provide a framework to facilitate the use and development of apprentices within Gloucester City Council.
- To assist in workforce and succession planning in relation to addressing any skill shortages.
- To raise the aspirations of young people in the community.
- To add value and build the skill levels of the wider community.

3. **Recruitment**

3.1. Each year the Corporate HR team recruit new apprentices to join the Council's scheme. We have two intakes, usually April and September/October. The process starts by establishing the training opportunities available from the various service units to fill vacancies on our apprenticeship scheme. Service Units who are interested in providing an apprentice placement should contact the Apprenticeship Manager to discuss.

3.2. We advertise the vacancies on the Council’s website, in The Citizen, and on the National Apprentice Service (NAS) website. Typically the apprentices will start work with us at the end of April and again in September/beginning of October.

3.3. The Council guarantees that an apprentice will receive the following:
- A structured training programme to provide on and off the job training and work experience. This may include experience in more than one service unit.
- An opportunity for young people to gain sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to equip them to find a satisfactory and rewarding career.
- A chance for young people to develop and grow in confidence and to develop personal skills in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

3.4. All service units are encouraged to employ an apprentice. Vacant positions which fall into the grade A range should be considered for recruitment on the basis of an apprenticeship.

3.5. Apprentices will be recruited in line with the Council’s Recruitment and Selection Policy.

3.6. The apprenticeship will be a 1 year contract and apprentices will be paid the 'apprentice minimum wage' of £2.65 an hour.

Note: Apprentices aged 19 and over in the first 12 months of their apprenticeship are also entitled to the apprentice minimum wage. If they stay in post for longer than 12 months as an apprentice they are entitled to the National Minimum Wage. National Minimum wage rates are age dependant and rise from £4.98 an hour for 18 to 20 year olds and £6.19 an hour for people aged 21 and over (Direct Gov, National Minimum Wage rates website – link below).

4. Training

4.1. Apprenticeships last for one year and apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications in Business and Administration. These include Functional Skills; an NVQ and a Technical Certificate.

4.2. **Functional Skills** are practical skills in 3 areas – English, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Mathematics. They help develop important skills like communication, team working, presentation and problem solving. Apprentices may be exempt from these depending on their grades in GCSE Maths, English and ICT.

4.3. **National Vocational Qualification** (NVQ) e.g. Level 2 for Intermediate Level Apprenticeships, Level 3 for Advanced Level Apprenticeships. This is a work-related, competence-based qualification. They are assessed in the workplace and show that the employee has the knowledge and skills needed to do the job.

4.4. **A Technical Certificate** is the qualification required to demonstrate up-to-date knowledge in a chosen area of study.

4.5. There are two levels of Apprenticeship; an ‘Intermediate Apprenticeship’ and an ‘Advanced Apprenticeship’.

4.6. Apprentices have an individual training plan which identifies opportunities within the workplace that will enable them to gain the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge to compete for jobs within the Council.

4.7. They also take part in other training courses, e.g. telephone, email and letter writing etiquette, health & safety, equal opportunities, assertiveness at work, CV writing, application form filling and interview techniques etc.

4.8. The apprentice will be employed by Gloucester City Council, and will normally be required to attend a 1-2 hour NVQ assessor meeting once a month.

4.9. Apprentices will also have access to other learning and development opportunities within the Council (approximately one 4-hour learning session every month) and will be required to attend monthly meetings with the Apprenticeship Manager.

4.10. Following recruitment, a waiting list will be maintained for candidates who have met the required standard but where an insufficient number of placements are available. Candidates who do not meet the required standard will be offered feedback on why they did not get a place.

5. Funding

5.1. The minimum age for undertaking an apprenticeship is 16 and the maximum is 24. Apprenticeships for people aged 19 and over are funded by the Department for Education (DfE). Apprenticeships for people aged 19 and under are funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).
5.2. DfE and BIS cover a proportion of the cost of training apprentices dependent on the age of the apprentice, through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). They contribute:

- 100% of the training cost if the apprentice is aged 16-18.
- 50% of the training cost if the apprentice is aged 19-24.
- Up to 50% of the training cost if the apprentice is aged over 25.

5.3. All salaries will be paid by the relevant service unit as a recharge from HR.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Managers are responsible for:

- Identifying the skills gap within their team which could be filled by employing an apprentice.
- Identifying sufficient funding within service unit budgets for the apprenticeship role.
- Interviewing prospective apprentices.
- Ensuring that the apprentice has time for study and is given work that develops their skills, knowledge and experience.
- Ensuring the appropriate young person’s risk assessment is completed (Appendix 1).
- Allocating a work space for the apprentice and ordering any equipment required need.
- In conjunction with the Apprenticeship Manager, planning and implementing a work programme that is appropriate and supports the development of the apprentice’s skills and competence.
- Ensuring appropriate mentoring/support mechanisms are in place.
- Allowing reasonable time off to support the apprentice’s learning and development.

7. Apprentice responsibilities

7.1. Apprentices are responsible for:

- Attending planned and agreed formal learning and development sessions whilst working towards the apprenticeship framework.
• Completing assignment/coursework related to their programme by the set deadlines.

• Performing the job to the best of their ability.

• Discussing any problems, issues or concerns about the programme or their work with the Apprenticeship Manager.

8. Supervision

8.1. Both the apprentices and service unit mentors/supervisors are fully supported by staff from the HR team. Regular reviews will take place between the apprentice, mentor/supervisor and the Apprenticeship Manager to ensure that the apprentices and mentors/supervisors meet to formally discuss progress and plan future work and training programmes. Mentors/supervisors will also be required to sit on reviews between the NVQ Assessor and the Apprentice to assess their NVQ portfolio.

8.2. The role of the workplace mentor/supervisor:

• To ensure that quality training is given to the apprentice which is as comprehensive as possible.

• To ensure that apprentices operate safely at all times and are not placed in any situation which is likely to be detrimental to their health and well-being.

• To monitor progress and provide honest and open feedback on the apprentices ability and attitude in a supportive and helpful way.

• To ensure as far as possible that timesheets are accurate before signing.

• Liaising with the Apprenticeship Manager over any problems or areas of concern.

• To ensure equality and consistency of treatment.

9. Continued employment

9.1. Employment is not guaranteed once the apprenticeship is completed. However, the apprentice will be encouraged to seek permanent employment via the normal recruitment and selection process.

9.2. Apprentices will be provided with an employment reference on completion of their Apprenticeship and NVQ qualification.
10. **Additional Information**

10.1. Apprentices are covered by Health and Safety Legislation and a risk assessment should therefore be completed.


10.3. Apprentices should be treated with exactly the same degree of professionalism and duty of care as a regular employee, including access to disciplinary and grievance procedures.

10.4. Young workers have special rights under the Working Time Regulations. The rights of young workers - those over the minimum school leaving age but less than 18 should not work any more than eight hours a day and 40 hours a week.  
[www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/hours.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/hours.htm)

| Revision History |
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