

Case studies

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Apprenticeship
programmes
case studies
with *top tips*
for employers



The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has more than 145,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

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Case studies

The CIPD's report *Assessing the Early Impact of the Apprenticeship Levy: Employers' Perspective* explores employers' views and attitudes towards the UK Government's apprenticeship levy, their likely response to it in terms of their investment in apprenticeships, as well as the likely effect on their wider learning and development strategies. It gives an indication of the impact of the levy on both apprenticeships and overall employer investment in workforce training and development.

The appendix to the report provides three examples of organisations using the levy to make an innovative approach to addressing workforce challenges. Employers considering their own apprenticeship programmes and their engagement with the levy can make use of these examples and glean the top tips for implementation. This appendix is reproduced here for the reader's convenience.

Case study 1

Transport for London – engaging with schools to build a talent pipeline

Background

Transport for London (TfL) are the integrated transport authority responsible for delivering the Mayor of London's strategy and commitments on transport. With a workforce of around 27,000 permanent employees, they are responsible for running the day-to-day operation of the capital's public transport network and managing London's main roads.

Apprenticeships at TfL

TfL's vision for equality and inclusion is that *'every person matters in helping London thrive'*. One of the key drivers for their apprenticeship programme is to ensure that it is representing the same demographic diversity in their workforce as that of the city that they serve. It is important that the organisation reflects London's diversity and it is working hard to do this through a number of initiatives, especially as it is part of an industry that typically tends to attract more men than women. Alongside this, they have identified challenges such as an ageing workforce and acute industry skill shortages, for instance in engineering.

TfL has a long history of providing apprenticeships and they play a key role in TfL's workforce development. This year they have 24 apprenticeship schemes across their organisation: this includes three degree-level programmes, and programmes at levels 4, 5 and 6.

This means that TfL has one of the largest and most diverse apprenticeship offers in the industry. The sheer scale of their programmes, alongside the need to diversify their workforce, means that they need to have a strong, and diverse, talent pipeline going into these schemes. To support this TfL has embarked on an innovative, and successful, school outreach programme.

Building a talent pipeline and addressing diversity

To build a strong and diverse talent pipeline, TfL has developed a school-level outreach programme across 15 of London's most deprived boroughs. The aim was to build deeper partnerships with these boroughs and to engage with young people and schools to promote TfL as a career destination. As a result of this they have held 120 events at target schools, providing employability sessions and promoting their higher-level apprenticeship opportunities as an alternative pathway to disadvantaged young people.

'Teachers and principals are often bombarded by offers from businesses. You need to demonstrate the benefit of working together. You need to have a long-term strategy. It's not just about going in and doing one intervention; it's about listening to what their needs are and developing a relationship. We

know this is working, because we are having different conversations now, schools are actively asking for expertise and help.'

Rebecca Foden, Early Careers, TfL

Their approach is already achieving great results; for instance, they have achieved a 153% increase in applications for quantity surveyor apprentices, a key skill shortage area, in 2017 compared with 2016; this is one of the areas where there is a skills gap across the industry. Alongside this, they have seen a 100% increase in female hires from 2016 to 2017 applications during their last round of recruitment in 2017 for apprentices.

Top tips for organisations wanting to take a similar approach

- 1 **Develop a plan and strategy.** Have a razor focus on what you want to achieve, be brave and go after it. You need to use a multi-pronged approach to engage with schools, and to be really flexible. Use your networks; don't be afraid to pick up the phone; perseverance is key.
- 2 **Make good use of the data available.** Map the schools and colleges in your area, identify ones that are compatible with your hiring needs. For instance, if you want to engage with schools to widen access and increase workforce diversity, you could target engagement based on the proportion of pupils on free school meals.
- 3 **Take apprentices who are alumni back into their schools.** This can help you gain access more easily and provides a powerful example to young people about the benefits of becoming an apprentice.
- 4 **Make sure you also think about what's in it for the school.** Listen to their needs; try and talk to the principals. They can give you the best understanding of what their pinch points are and how you can help.
- 5 **Work in partnership with local authorities and charities.** We work in partnerships with charities that are already linked with key schools that we would like to target. For smaller businesses that don't have the resources to call all the schools in their area, you can develop alliances with youth charities and they will help you to develop relationships with the schools.
- 6 **Bring your organisation with you.** Particularly if you are changing the way you are doing things that have been in place for a while. To do this, build a strong business case and make good use of data; this way you can demonstrate the impact of your approach.

Case study 2

BT Fleet Solutions — tackling skills shortages and selecting the right training provider

Background

BT Fleet Solutions is one of the biggest fleet management companies in Europe. A wholly owned subsidiary of BT Group, they have more than 120,000 vehicles on their books — from cars and vans to trucks and heavy-duty plant.

A key part of what they do is vehicle service, maintenance and repair (SMR), which is undertaken predominantly through 64 owned and operated garages. These workshops are also the setting for their apprenticeship scheme, which supports and trains young people to become qualified motor technicians with a job guarantee and career path, both within BT Fleet and the wider BT Group for the future.

Apprenticeship programme

The BT Fleet Solutions apprenticeship programme was designed to address a key future skills shortage. In-house analysis showed that 30% of current technicians were within ten years of retirement, and there was a need to bring in new talent to address this upcoming skills and knowledge gap.

BT Fleet Solutions worked with their apprenticeship awarding body, the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), to establish which colleges local to their Coventry headquarters had the best NVQ pass rates. As a result of these

discussions, they developed a partnership with Warwickshire College in 2015, which included:

- fully-funded, campus-based residential training (consisting of three 3-week blocks spread across the year, with time in the garage in between to consolidate learning supported by their on-site buddy)
- development of an innovative replica BT Fleet Solutions garage within the college, for hands-on seminars/practical sessions
- six used fleet vehicles (rotated periodically), enabling apprentices to practise on 'real-life' vans, trucks, cars and plant
- an electric vehicle and IMI-approved training programme, giving apprentices up-to-the-minute, practical training on this emergent technology
- training for college tutors in vehicle manufacturer-specific diagnostic courses, so they're better able to support apprentices' needs
- an agreement to add bolt-on courses to the standard NVQ Level 3 in Automotive Engineering. These include welding qualifications and a sub-diploma in heavy vehicle studies.

Selecting the right provider: *'The training provider is key — criteria for selection are both the quality of the training and also the experience for the apprentices. We didn't want to do in-house so we needed to select someone who could accommodate national coverage but also someone we could have an ongoing relationship with. The selected provider is on our doorstep.'*

Working with the training provider:

provider: *'Go through the curriculum with them, and define the objectives — the new standards offer flexibility to do this. This ensures that they are teaching what the business needs. You can have some input; we have co-created content so our apprentices are training with the same type of equipment and vehicles that they will deal with when they come back to the workplace.'*

Scaling up your programme:

'You need to recruit where you have both the need and also the support for apprenticeships. You need the right capability on the ground and training in place for the line manager. You need to have mentoring in place for the apprentice and space for them to grow in the workforce. There has to be a reason for the hire; they are not cheap labour and there has to be a job and a career path there.'
Steve Webb, Head of HR, BT Fleet Solutions

Top tips for organisations wanting to take a similar approach

- 1 **Start from the role and the career path.** Think about why you are recruiting for the role. Understand your need – this helps you recruit, helps you find the partner and helps you find the right person for the role.
- 2 **Understand why apprentices are important for your business.** This has to be through a quality, not quantity, lens.
- 3 **Get your internal and external partnerships and stakeholders in place from the start.** This includes great partnerships with parents/carers, because there is a residential element of the programme where some people are staying away from home for the first time – it's key to get them on board.
- 4 **Keep an eye on emerging trends to future-proof the programme.** For instance, electric vehicles are going to be a high-growth area. Make sure that your training provision is flexible enough to respond to the skill needs of the future economy.
- 5 **Think about the overall apprentice experience as a journey.** It's critical that you have the support network and duty of care policies in place. Make sure that both the line manager and the apprentice have a clear understanding of the role and what the development pathway is. This is really important, and takes a lot of work and thought. You have to be clear that this is not just a normal hire.

Case study 3

Ofsted – developing an inclusive recruitment and selection campaign

Background

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. The organisation employs around 1,500 people across eight regions: East Midlands; East of England; North East; Yorkshire and Humber; North West; South East; South West; West Midlands; and London. They are responsible for:

- inspecting maintained schools and academies, some independent schools, further education and training providers and programmes including higher level apprenticeships delivered by universities
- inspecting childcare, adoption and fostering agencies and initial teacher training
- publishing reports of findings to support and improve the overall quality of education and training
- regulating a range of early years and children’s social care services, making sure they’re suitable for children and potentially vulnerable young people
- reporting to policy-makers on the effectiveness of these services.

Apprenticeship programme

In May 2016 Ofsted launched their apprenticeship programme. The aims and objectives were to:

- Provide opportunities for all, irrespective of background, age, gender or ethnicity, to embark upon a programme of learning that offers a genuine chance and promotes social mobility.
- Support the UK Government’s pledge to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020 and contribute to the Civil Service’s pledge to deliver 30,000 apprenticeships by 2020, annually achieving 2.3% of the workforce as apprenticeship starts in England.
- Deliver a high-quality apprenticeship programme that reflects Ofsted’s values of putting children and learners first, achieving excellence, behaving with integrity and valuing people’s differences.

Before they started the programme, Ofsted’s talent and resourcing team held discussions with the executive board and key managers across the organisation to ensure buy-in and joint ownership of the programme. This highlighted the benefits of apprentices and the fit with organisational values and allowed them to help influence the shape of the programme. As a result of this engagement, the team was

able to identify twice as many vacancies as they had hoped for across five office locations.

Developing an inclusive national campaign

Ofsted developed a visually engaging job specification to attract a younger and more diverse candidate pool, and a strengths-based selection process focused on outcomes from group and individual assessments rather than a candidate’s previous academic achievement.

They drew on their internal schools and social care intelligence data to target apprenticeship programme adverts as well as working with local charities and youth services in areas of high deprivation. As a result, they attracted more than 200 applicants; the social mobility data they collected showed that more than 60% of the apprentices appointed were from a disadvantaged background, in the care of the local authority or a care leaver.

‘The first thing was getting vacancies out there and known. We contacted schools with high levels of young people on free school meals; we worked with youth services and charities, and used our local intelligence.

‘We were lucky that it really caught the imagination of people working in Ofsted because of the fit with our values, so people were

more than willing to spread the message. Now the programme is up and running, we can use our current apprentices as advocates for future vacancies – this is the best way to spread knowledge.'

To help their apprentices adjust to the working environment and support them through any personal/social issues, they provided additional training to meet their specific needs, such as:

- bespoke personal safety training for in/outside the workplace, including resources and guidance from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, information/tips on how to keep safe and alert someone if they feel unsafe
- bespoke training on personal finances, including guidance/tips on managing money, pitfalls/dangers of loans, credit cards and managing bills
- additional support for those apprentices who are in the care of the local authority, including a joined-up approach with line managers and social workers
- opportunities to gain further qualifications, by offering to fund re-sits for those apprentices who do not have GCSEs A*–C in maths and English, in addition to completing their functional skills.

Top tips for organisations wanting to take a similar approach

- 1 **Get your senior managers on board right from the start.** Work with them to shape the programme – this way you will get buy-in and it will be so much easier when driving the programme forward.
- 2 **Clearly communicate and set behavioural expectations.** Make sure you do this for apprentices early on, for instance dress code, attendance and attitude.
- 3 **Make pastoral support available from the start.** Ensure you put in place regular contact with both the line manager and the apprentice: *'Line manager support was crucial as they were dealing with issues they have never dealt with before. For the apprentices it was also really important and allowed them a space to speak outside their reporting structures.'*
- 4 **Be as flexible with internal processes as possible.** Although we follow procedures, such as performance management, we have flexed where appropriate, such as by providing salary advances when an apprentice didn't have a budget to buy appropriate workwear.
- 5 **Build in evaluation from the start and adapt the programme as you learn.** Initially we didn't include sessions on personal safety, finance and budgeting. However, following feedback from managers, we built these in and the next cohort will have them from the beginning.
- 6 **Ensure your provider is on the same page as you are from day one.** It's useful if they have a good knowledge of your sector and the type of apprentice you are wanting to attract. Make sure you listen to their advice; they will know what will work and what won't work.
- 7 **Face-to-face contact.** This includes contact with the training provider, line managers and apprentices – meeting in person is essential to establish relationships; there's only so much you can do over the phone.



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