Apprenticeships: FAQs for Schools and Academies

The Government launched the new Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017. We look at what these changes mean for Schools and Academies.

1. What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeships are government funded work-based training programmes. They combine on the job training with nationally recognised qualifications is a work. An apprentice combines work with a programme of study towards an apprenticeship standard. Apprenticeships can help Schools / Academies to develop their workforce and enable individuals to acquire new skills and qualifications.

2. Who can be an apprentice?

An apprentice can be anyone age 16 or over. Both newly appointed and existing staff can undertake apprenticeships.

3. What do apprentices study?

Apprentices can gain job related skills in a wide range of work areas. In schools this may range from educational support roles, administration roles or site and technical posts.

Individuals work towards an apprenticeship standard at a particular level from NVQ level 2, the equivalent to GCSE, to level 7, which equates to degree level.

4. How long do apprenticeships take to complete?

Depending on the level apprenticeships take 1 to 5 years to complete. An apprenticeship must be for a minimum 12 months.

5. How do Schools / Academies recruit an apprentice?

Schools / Academies interested in recruiting an apprentice or placing an existing employee on an apprenticeship programme – are advised to contact KCC’s Schools and Employability Service in the first instance.

The team can advise on

- Appropriate apprenticeship programmes and providers
- How to access funding from the Apprenticeship Levy account
- Recruiting and engaging an apprentice

To contact the team please email kep@kent.gov.uk or telephone 03000 414005

Terms and Conditions of Employment

6. Are apprentices employees of the School / Academy?

All apprentices are engaged on a contract of employment with the school. This sits alongside an apprenticeship learning agreement between the individual, school and training provider.
7. Do apprentices have to be employed in full time positions?

Apprentices or those staff undertaking an apprenticeship standard can be either full or part-time. Where apprentices are part time the length of their training period may be extended to allow them to fully meet the apprenticeship standard.

8. How much of the working week does an apprentice spend under taking off the job training?

20% of an apprentices’ working time should be spent undertaking off the job training – this may include day release, e learning or group study sessions. The nature of the time off for training will be determined by the training provider in conjunction with the School / Academy.

9. Do apprentices need to be employed on a permanent basis?

Where a School is engaging a new apprentice they should specify whether any employment is permanent or temporary.

It is usual for posts to be temporary for at least the duration of the apprenticeship training programme and conditional on the individual successfully completing this agreed programme.

Within the contract of employment there should be a clause indicating that should and individual fail or withdraw from the apprenticeship training programme their contract may be terminated.

10. What rates of pay should apprentices receive?

New apprentices may be appointed to a specific vacancy and paid in accordance with the benchmarked Kent Range grade for that post.

Where an apprentice is appointed in a development role, KCC has developed a salary framework for new apprentices, which allows for pay progression. New recruits should be appointed to the appropriate apprenticeship rate aligned to the level of study. The expectation is that maintained schools follow this salary framework.

Academies have discretion to determine an appropriate pay framework at a local level but may wish to consider a similar salary structure.

The salary framework for apprentices can be accessed here

https://the-sps.co.uk/pdf_resources/KCC_Apprenticeship_Pay_Framework_-_April_2017v2.pdf

In all cases apprentices must receive a minimum of £3.50 per hour if they are under 19 or over 19 and in the first year of their apprenticeship. Where and individual is over 19 and has completed the first year of the apprenticeship – they should be paid at least the minimum wage / national living wage appropriate for their age group.

Existing staff undertaking training through an apprenticeship standard as part of their job will not experience any contractual changes and will continue to be paid their normal salary at the grade for their substantive post.

11. What other terms and conditions of employment are apprentices employed under?

Apprentices are employees of the School / Academy and as such are subject to the same staffing policies and procedures as other staff. Schools / Academies must offer the same terms as other employees working at similar grades or in similar roles. This includes:

- paid holidays
- sick pay
- any benefits available to staff

Where Schools / Academies engage apprentices on the KCC Apprenticeship Pay Framework they should receive the annual leave and sick pay entitlement offered under Kent Scheme Conditions of Service.
12. Who is responsible for undertaking pre employment checks for a newly recruited apprentice?

The recruiting School / Academy is responsible for ensuring that the usual pre employment checks are undertaken including an Enhanced DBS / Barred list check, verification of the right to work in the UK, references and pre employment medical clearance.

13. Are there any other conditions relating to the employment of apprentices which Schools / Academies need to be aware of?

All apprentices will be required to sign an Apprenticeship Agreement provided by the training provider.

Any arrangements for the payment of additional costs – i.e. reimbursement of travel costs / course materials should be discussed and agreed with the Employee prior to the start of the apprenticeship programme.

14. Are Schools / Academies obliged to offer apprentices appointed on a temporary basis ongoing employment?

Where an apprentice is engaged on a temporary basis the School / Academy are not under any obligation to offer the individual permanent ongoing employment once the programme is completed. However Schools / Academies are advised to make apprentices aware of any permanent vacancies which may arise and consider any application in line with other candidates.

15. What should Schools / Academies do if they wish to end the employment of an apprentice before the end of the agreed term?

Schools / Academies are advised to contact their SPS consultant for further advice and guidance should this situation arise.

**The Apprenticeship Levy & Funding**

16. What is the Apprenticeship Levy?

The Apprenticeship Levy came into effect on 6th April 2017. It is a new national way of funding and accessing apprenticeships.

The levy is payable by all organisations with a wage bill in excess of £3m per annum and is paid at the rate of 0.5% of an employer’s class 1 national insurance contributions. It is paid via the employers PAYE system.

For the purposes of the levy Community and Voluntary Controlled Local Authority maintained schools are regarded as being connected to KCC and are therefore all required to contribute towards the levy.

Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Academies, including Multi Academy Trusts, will not be required to paid the levy unless their pay bill is in excess of the £3 million threshold.

For further guidance on the levy please refer to:


17. How can Schools / Academies access funding from the levy?
Schools / Academies interested in recruiting an apprentice or placing an existing employee on an apprenticeship programme – are advised to contact KCC’s Schools and Employability Service to confirm how to access the relevant funding for your school.

KCC Community and Controlled schools which are required to pay into the levy will be eligible to apply to draw down funds from the KCC Digital Apprenticeship Account.

Foundation, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies (including MATs) who are liable to pay the levy will have their own Digital apprenticeship account from which they can access funding.

Non levy paying Schools / Academies may also purchase apprenticeship training from an approved provider. In this instance the government will pay 90% of training and assessment costs and the employer will be responsible for the remaining 10%.

There are also additional government incentives for small schools employing school leavers as apprentices.

18. Can Schools / Academy’s choose their own training provider?

Schools / Academies will be only able to draw funds from the levy to pay for training from a list of approved apprenticeship standards/frameworks offered by from certain Government approved providers.

19. How much funding can a School / Academy access for apprenticeships?

Funding is allocated per apprenticeship. The amount awarded per apprenticeship is based on a pre – determined funding band agreed for a particular apprenticeship standard or level.

20. Does funding accessed from the levy cover additional expenses such the apprentices salary or as travel costs?

No - the levy only covers the cost of the training and any assessment.

21. Can schools use the levy funding to pay for non-apprenticeship training?

No - the levy pot can only fund government approved apprenticeship standards.

22. Can claims be made against the levy pot for training which is already taking place or has taken place?

No - the levy pot can only fund new apprenticeship training starting from May 2017.

If you are a School or Academy and want to find out more about apprenticeship opportunities…..

KCC Skills and Employability Service

For further guidance on the levy, apprenticeship programmes and recruiting apprentices please contact KCC’s Skills and Employability Service:

Tel: 03000 415005
Email: kep@kent.gov.uk

Schools’ Personnel Service

For further guidance on HR issues associated with the employment of apprentices please contact the Schools’ Personnel Service:
Tel: 03000 411112
Website: www.the-sps.co.uk

Further Information

National Apprenticeship Service
https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship;

Apprentices in Kent
www.apprenticekent.com

Additional Guidance for Schools is available via: