



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 19/25

MEETING	Finance & Governance Committee
DATE OF MEETING	24 July 2019
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Apprenticeships progress update
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	To note
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report provides an update on the progress which Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) is making with apprenticeships.
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to maximise the Service's potential return on the apprenticeship levy will mean missed opportunities to resource and diversify the workforce.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report
RECOMMENDATION	Members are asked to: 1. Note the contents of this report
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None
APPENDICES	None
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2017 changes were made to the funding and delivery of apprenticeships as part of the Government's wider reform agenda. A key Government priority was to deliver a national target of three million apprenticeships by 2020. To encourage employers to make greater use of apprenticeships the Government established both a levy set at 0.5% of an employer's salary costs above £3 million, and a 2.3% public sector target. As well as introducing a new style of apprenticeship, the changes meant that apprenticeships could be undertaken at any age or at any point in a person's career and were available at a variety of qualification levels.

2. Current position

- 2.1 The Service is keen to increase the number of apprenticeships as a means of both developing our talented staff and creating a more diverse workforce. However, delays in developing the new national firefighter standard and associated end point assessment have meant that we have been unable to commence any firefighter apprenticeships.
- 2.2 The Service currently have three apprenticeships in place, two corporate members of staff undertaking Project Management programmes, and a uniformed member of staff undertaking a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Project Management. In September 2019, one corporate member of staff will commence a Level 2 Finance apprenticeship and another a Level 3 Human Resource apprenticeship.
- 2.3 Nationally the new firefighter apprenticeship has been slow to roll out with only a handful of fire and rescue services actively operating the programme. Northampton Fire and Rescue Service and Kent Fire and Rescue Service are more advanced with their firefighter apprenticeship programmes and we are taking a lead from them. Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is piloting an On-Call apprenticeship and should this prove successful there are opportunities to collaborate, particularly as we use the same main provider, Bridgwater and Taunton College (the college).
- 2.4 Attendance at the National Fire Chiefs Council Apprenticeship Seminar in December 2018 identified the need to apply to register as an apprentice training provider and to secure external accreditation arrangements. The Service has now completed the registration process and received confirmation of approval on 2 July 2019. This enables us to become a training provider for both Firefighter and Emergency Contact (Control) Handler qualifications. Officers are currently undertaking a due diligence process on our Register of Apprenticeship and Training Providers status processes with the college.

- 2.5 Whilst this does not significantly alter our existing firefighter and fire control recruit training programmes, it requires additional modules to be provided by the college to achieve the apprenticeship qualification. This will enhance the learning experience and enable the nationally recognised qualification to apply across the fire and rescue sector.
- 2.6 Organisations offering the end point assessment are limited. The assessment is currently available through the Skills for Justice, but the National Fire Chiefs Council's central programme office and Cornwall Fire and Rescue are considering offering this service in the future.

3. Future plans

- 3.1 As indicated earlier in this report, public sector bodies with 250 or more staff have a target to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentices, annually from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. Based on our headcount this equates to an annual target of 32 new starters per annum.
- 3.2 The Authority currently contributes £13k per month into the Levy of which £1.2k is currently recovered.
- 3.3 There are no penalties for not achieving the target and it is anticipated that many public sector organisations will struggle to achieve it. The main reasons why the Service is unlikely to achieve the target is that a high percentage of our staff are On-Call and therefore part time, which impacts on their ability to undertake apprenticeship programmes. Moreover, the delay in developing specific standards, such as the firefighter apprenticeship and the associated end point assessment has meant that the appropriate apprenticeships are not in place for our largest staff group.
- 3.4 As part of our approach to talent management we have previously offered individuals financial support to undertake further and higher education opportunities where relevant to the individual's role. We are now actively looking at utilising the Levy when offering this opportunity to staff. Our leadership programmes, delivered in partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, are in the process of being cross mapped to the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) Levels 3 and 5 management qualifications. It is hoped such accreditation will enable us to draw on the Levy as well as benefiting our staff by providing them with a nationally recognised qualification.
- 3.5 We are also currently exploring a number of other apprenticeship programmes for roles within the Service. These are set out in Table 1.

Role	Apprenticeship
Safe and Well Advisors / Education Advisors	Level 2/3 Community Safety apprenticeship
Control Firefighter	Level 3 Emergency Contact Handler
Newly promoted Group Managers and corporate equivalent, Grades G and H	Level 6 Business and Management Apprenticeship (CMI L6) Chartered Management Degree
Newly promoted Area Managers and corporate equivalent grades	Business and Organisational Strategy Level 7 Senior Leader Master's Degree
Supervisory and Middle Managers	*ILM Level 3 and 5
Fire Safety Advisors	Business Fire Safety Advisor Level 3
Fire Safety Inspectors	Fire Safety Inspector (Level 4)
Human Resource Business Partners	**CIPD Level 5

Table 1

* The Institute of Leadership & Management

**Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development

4. Summary and Key Points

- 4.1 The Service is fully committed to offering staff a range of apprenticeship opportunities. Whilst challenges exist, and delays have occurred, we are making good progress in setting in place an appropriate apprenticeship infrastructure. The Service has now completed the registration process and received confirmation of approval on 2 July 2019. We will continue to learn from other fire and rescue services and seek out opportunities to collaborate with partners.

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