

Your employees

[Who counts as an employee](#)

You should include the following staff when calculating your employee numbers:

- Anyone on your payroll on whose behalf you make National Insurance contributions
- Staff on fixed-term contracts
- Staff on maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Staff on sick leave or extended paid leave
- Apprentices employed by the public body through an Apprenticeship Training Agency
- Employees on secondment or loan if you are paying more than 50% of their wages

Do not include:

- Anyone employed through employment agencies
- Those working on a zero-hour contract
- Bank staff
- Employees in sub-contracted organisations who are not paid directly from your payroll
- Those on career breaks

Number of employees who were working in England on 31 March 2018

454

Number of employees who were working in England on 31 March 2019

443

Number of new employees who started working for you in England between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

38

Your apprentices

[Who counts as an apprentice](#)

You should include the following staff when calculating your apprentice numbers:

- Anyone doing an approved English apprenticeship framework or standard with an apprenticeship agreement in place

Number of apprentices who were working in England on 31 March 2018

37

Number of apprentices who were working in England on 31 March 2019

45

Number of new apprentices in England whose apprenticeship agreements started in between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

This includes both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship

42

Your full-time equivalents (optional)

[How to calculate your full-time equivalent numbers](#)

Firstly, work out the number of weekly hours each part-time employee is contracted to work divided by your organisation's standard full-time working week. For example, 10 hours divided by 37 hours equated to 0.27 full-time equivalents.

Then add your full-time employee numbers to come up with a total number of full-time equivalents. Round your total to the nearest whole number.

Number of full-time equivalents (optional)

Outline any actions you have taken to help you progress towards meeting the public sector target

250 words

The Authority supports the Government's Workforce Reform agenda through early (pre-levy) employment of apprentices as part of our own strategic workforce reform. Apprentice firefighters are being recruited on to the Operational Firefighter trailblazer standard and support services apprentices predominantly through the Business and Administration framework.

Twelve members of the current workforce were enrolled onto apprenticeships at various levels during this reporting period, to develop their professional leadership skills and as part of the Authority's strategy for the retention and upskilling of existing staff and to develop future leaders. This also helps to profile, embed and mentor apprenticeship programmes within the organisation.

An Apprenticeship lead sits on the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) for apprenticeships to promote apprenticeships both within our organisation and for the sector. Various staff have supported the development of apprenticeship standards with their area of competence.

The Authority continues its pledge to the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN). Information, guidance and resources from this network is being used in the attraction, engagement and recruitment of apprentices.

Various apprentices have volunteered to work with external bodies i.e. The Young Apprentice Ambassador Network and the Institute of Apprentices and Technical Education, This allows them to promote apprenticeships both locally and nationally, through seminars and also social media.

The Authority has also had representation at the WorldSkillsUK live at the NEC and the National Apprenticeship show at the MK Arena, so enabling our service to encourage individuals from a vast demographic, and to help shape the future generation.

Tell us about any challenges you have faced in your efforts to meet the target

Funding bands: The FRS sector accepted lower than required funding bands for the Operational Firefighter, Business Fire Safety Advisor and Community Safety Advisor trailblazer standards, to ensure that these standards were in place for the start of Year 2 of the Apprenticeship Levy. This will be reviewing this after first tranche completed in 2020.

The lack of registered training providers available locally for Business Fire Safety Apprentices and Community Safety Advisors has made us unable to recruit these apprentices.

Having limited involvement from End Point Assessment (EPA) organisations has made it difficult to deliver the firefighter standard to meet this requirements, making it hard to prepare apprentices.

The lack of knowledge from educational providers for the qualification of Level 6 leadership and management apprenticeship and recognising previous fire sector qualifications to enable enrolment.

250 words

How are you planning to ensure you meet the target in future?

Working with other fire and rescue services (FRS) including our Thames Valley partners (Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire) and partner agencies to establish a procurement framework for the provision of training. A collaborative procurement tender process has already commenced.

Continuing to work with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to identify and progress a range of actions that meet FRS requirements. These include events, workshops, training, and specific guidance and communications to share across the FRSs.

NFCC Workforce Committee has set up an Apprenticeships Board to reinforce profile, and to optimise resources to best support FRSs deliver their plans.

Continuing to work with Emergency Services to deliver joint trailblazers and identify further opportunities for collaboration.

Continuation of the Authority's strategic workforce planning, where apprentices are an integral element of a blended approach to resourcing. This also involves developing career pathways for upskilling existing staff based on the FRS leadership framework.

Continuing to support apprenticeship trailblazers for sector-relevant standards by providing resources and subject matter experts to the trailblazer groups.

Continued membership of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network, improving networking opportunities, and learning from other members and organisations about ways in which we could improve the diversity of our apprentices and, therefore, our workforce.

Optimising the use of national resources to promote apprenticeship careers.

Working with local training providers to develop new opportunities for new starters and existing members of staff.

Reviewing Apprenticeship options for On-Call employees and how they can meet the apprenticeship criteria to helping us attract and retaining On-Call FF's.

250 words

Do you have anything else you want to tell us? (optional)

For local authorities this could include commenting on how schools and fire services in your control have contributed to the target

With current and previous apprentices now embedded across departments and fire stations within Bucks this has enabled a culture change allowing experience to be shared and also serving firefighters to become mentors for those new apprentices.

The decision to keep the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) open is welcome, and should provide opportunities for more organisations and FRSs to apply, and so deliver more apprenticeships.

We will be exploring the exciting work that Devon & Somerset have been doing with the delivery of on-call firefighter apprenticeships and looking to see how we can utilise this model for our future on-call staff giving us the ability to standardise the training and development offered to all new firefighter recruits regardless of contract.

The Authority continues to work with its Thames Valley Fire Service partners to determine a collaborative approach to operational and apprenticeship recruitment. Work is ongoing with Thames Valley Police (TVP) on apprenticeships and, in particular, in looking at improving diversity and working together to resolve common issues. Specific actions were identified, both internally and through this collaborative work, to improve the diversity of applicants, primarily from both female and BAME candidates. These actions include awareness campaigns, 'have a go days' and allocation of 'recruitment buddies'.

Future apprenticeship strategy considerations include career pathways, of which pre-entry qualifications and functional skills form part. Government funding to support organisations in the development and implantation of this would be beneficial.

250 words