

Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting 2019 - 2020

[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 2019

443

Number of employees who were working in England on 31 March 2020

465

Number of new employees who started working for you in England between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

46

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 2019

45

Number of apprentices who were working in England on 31 March 2020

30

Number of new apprentices in England whose apprenticeship agreements started in between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

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

4

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)

468

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

Support services apprentices are being recruited predominantly through the Business and Administration standards with one other being within the finance sector. We have been working hard to transform enrolment of our operational firefighters. As an organisation we have moved away from our previous Apprentice Training Agency (ATA) model and have decided to employ directly and appoint a separate training provider. This has enabled the organisation to utilise its levy and all new starters to benefit from local terms and conditions and national pay rates which will enable us to employ the right candidate from a larger range of applicants.

The appointment of an apprentice development officer has given the organisation dedicated support for all of its apprentices. This role will also assist the organisation in future attraction pieces for both operational and support roles.

Two 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.

Various staff have supported the development of apprenticeship standards with their area of competence by providing representation on trailblazer groups.

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 had representation at WorldSkillsUK live at the NEC which was led by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and a collaboration of other national fire and rescue services. We also had a stand at the National Apprenticeship show at the MK Arena. Both of these enabling our service to encourage individuals from a vast demographic, and to help shape the future generation.

Commissioning of an advertising campaign to target all demographics within our targeted area. This was achieved by social media and digital advertising. We also utilised our internal expertise to advertise through our own website, people strategy and social media.

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 (April 2018)

The lack of registered training providers available locally for Business Fire Safety Apprentices and Community Safety Advisors has made it unable for us to utilise these apprenticeship Standards.

Some training providers only wanting to take on cohorts of apprentices and not being able tailor their delivery to meet the requirements of only one apprentice i.e. project management and learning and development level five.

The perception of being an apprentice as being a low age, low wage position. Adverts relating positions as being young school leavers and sometimes not for the wider audience.

The lack of availability of the training provider courses for our operational firefighters based around our own workforce planning

The service is better placed than it was last year due to having taken a cohort of operational firefighters through end point assessment. We have been able to gain from this experience and by having regular engagement with awarding bodies through the NFCC Apprenticeship forum and being involved in the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship standard review. This has allowed us to enable our apprentices with a more round appreciation of this process which will better equip the organisation in the future.

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

NFCC Workforce Committee has set up an Apprenticeships Board to reinforce profile, and to optimise resources to best support FRS's to deliver their plans. The Authority has representation on this committee to ensure our local proposition aligns National developments.

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.

Building relationships with local training providers and other FRS's to develop new opportunities for new starters and existing members of staff to promote and deliver best practice.

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.

Promotion of our apprenticeship programmes through National Apprentice week, social media campaigns and local events to attract our apprentices of the future, this will also help break down previous challenges and myths. Continuation of frequent "have a go days" to promote the operational firefighter role to include the targeting of specific groups. Utilising our station crews to champion apprenticeship programmes throughout the service when they carry out visits to include engagement sessions with local colleges that run emergency services courses.

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

It should be noted that the organisations numbers for new apprentice starts is low for this reporting period. This was due to cohorts starting just before and just after this reporting period.

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.

As a service we will be exploring the possibility of signing up to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) as a supporting provider as this will enable us to deliver training to our own staff. It is also always encouraging that the National Apprenticeship service is open and available to discuss opportunities at the NFCC Apprenticeship forums.

We will be exploring the exciting work that Devon & Somerset continue to do 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 this is also something that we would be interested in delivering to our Flexi-Firefighters.

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'.

Cadet courses and T- Levels are areas that will be looked as a source for future apprentices within the organisation.