

## Apprentice progress update 2017-18 report – ESBC data

Reporting period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

- Headcount on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 = 354
- Headcount on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 = 346
- Number of employees who started work in the reporting period = 36
- Number of apprentices who were working on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 = 2
- Number of apprentices who were working on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 = 6
- Number of apprenticeship new starts in the reporting period = 6
- Percentage of apprentice starts as a proportion of new employee starts = 16.67%
- Percentage of total headcount that were apprentices on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 = 1.73%
- Percentage of apprenticeship starts in the period as a proportion of total headcount on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 = 1.69%

Our approach to recruiting new apprentices has been to consider every vacancy as it arises, this has been incorporated in our recruitment and selection guidance to managers. This has achieved success in 3 of our required 8 apprenticeship starts being new employees recruited to permanent jobs along with supported study for a qualification. A further 3 apprentices have come from existing employees who have taken up study of suitable new qualifications. The apprentices that we have offered overall are of a high quality, only one has been for a 12 month period, the others are all longer qualification programmes but unfortunately we are unable to count them except in year 1. In total we had 6 apprentice starts which is 2 short of the required number, based on our headcount. In addition we also have a commitment to the continued training and development of 2 apprentices that were employed under the old apprentice framework, and are now in permanent jobs.

The profile of our workforce contains a large proportion of part time workers, a significant proportion of our vacancies arising were not suitable for apprenticeships due to them being part time posts, 33.33% of our vacancies were posts that were less than 30 hours per week, and a further 13.89% were temporary positions of less than a 12 month duration.

The remaining vacancies during this period, where an apprentice was not recruited, were unsuitable for apprenticeships due to the nature of the job role, either requiring: an already qualified professional (e.g. solicitor); no apprenticeship standard in place; or manual work that does not require any qualification (e.g. refuse and recycling service labourers); or lengthy training (e.g. HGV drivers).

When considering new apprentice starts either for new vacancies or existing employees as part of career development, we are hindered by the lack of apprentice standards in place, though we are watching out for some being developed and some new ones coming in to being this year.

We have also struggled to recruit an opportunity recently at the national apprenticeship rates with local market competition.

It is notable that if the apprentice target was based on the full time equivalent number of our employees (295) then our target would be 7 apprentice starts per year, which is closer to the number we have achieved.