

LANCASHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM
Date of meeting 19 October 2021

Item No 12

Title: Recommendations of the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group

Executive Summary

On 5 October 2021, the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group considered an update on school apprenticeship levy issues, including:

- School Apprenticeship Levy Overview
- Pooled Payroll issue
- Procurement
- New School Course Menu
- New courses development
- School Engagement
- Financial Position
- 2.3 % Public Sector Target
- Update on Levy Transfer
- Looking forward

A summary of the information presented, and the Steering Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) **Note the report from the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group held on 5 October 2021**
- b) **Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.**

Background

On 5 October 2021, the Apprenticeship Levy Steering Group considered a school apprenticeship levy update. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

School Apprenticeship Levy Update

Colleagues from the Apprenticeship Levy team delivered a presentation to members providing an update on the latest school related developments.

Overview

98 new Requests for Funding had been received and approved since June 2021, with a total value for this window of opportunity of circa. £718k over the duration of the apprenticeships.

There are currently 271 on-going apprentices, 40 awaiting enrolment, and 239 have completed since April 2017.

Currently, there are 7 live apprenticeship vacancies.

29 Schools have taken advantage of the new employment incentives with 38 potential new apprentices having been recruited who are eligible since April 2021.

Upskilling requests are up in 2021 with 141 requests registered compared to 58 in the previous 12 months .

Key Developments

Pooled Payroll issue

The Pooled payroll issue is still unresolved . Apprenticeship levy team colleagues had recently attended a LGA round table meeting with the ESFA to discuss possible solutions but there was no immediate prospect of a solution being found and work was continuing on this.

Procurement

Following a large procurement exercise over the summer, the stand still period had now finished, and contracts are being awarded to providers, as follows:

- **Nelson & Colne** will continue the delivery of TA ,EY and SBP L4 and Facilities L3
- **NLTG** (North Lancashire Training Group) will now deliver Business Admin and the Leadership and Management (L5 Ops Manager) & Project Management portfolio
- **UCLan** will now deliver Senior Leader L7 and CMDA L6 degree apprenticeships
- **Blackburn College** will deliver all finance/accounting related apprenticeships
- **Kendal College** will continue with Outdoor Activity Leader and **Star Academies** will continue with Teacher L6
- IT apprenticeships are still being reviewed

It was noted that existing apprentices will remain with their current providers.

New School Course Menu

A new school menu of courses is now available to download from the schools portal

New courses development

A number of new courses are currently under development including Play Therapist and EY Lead Practitioner L5

School Engagement

Whilst the majority of school contact remained via video and phone calls, face to face visits were now available on request.

Financial Position

An update on the latest financial position was shared with the group, including:

- Annual Schools Levy fund approx. is now £1.4 million – down due to academisation (was £1.5 Million)
- Spend across Levy schools in 2017/18 £28,098
- Spend across Levy schools in 2018/19 £314,414
- Spend across Levy schools in 2019/20 £566,115
- Spend across Levy schools in 2020/2021 £619,564
- Spend to date 2021/22 £345,676
- Forecast spend this year 21/22 approx. £809,958
- Total spend to date £1,873,867

2.3 % Public Sector Target

Information was shared about the county council had the following levels against the target:

- 0.70% - 2017-2018
- 1.36% - 2018-2019
- 1.37% - 2019-2020
- 0.81% - 2020-2021

It was noted that schools account for 58% of total number of employees as of 31st March 2021.

Update on Levy Transfer

The Annual Levy Transfer pot was circa. £242,000 and 19 transfer requests, across 12 schools and early years settings, were going ahead, with 5 still awaiting enrolment in the first window.

Looking forward

The apprenticeship levy team intend to resume marketing activity and information sessions to schools. They will also continue to contact schools directly to promote apprenticeships and to focus on the need to upskill and as well as recruit

Pooled payroll issues will continue to be discussed as we endeavour to find a workable solution for VA schools

It was noted that it was National Apprenticeship Week 7th – 13th February 2022 and Case studies were needed !

The Working Group:

- a) Noted the information;**
- b) Expressed frustration at the continued difficulties caused by school pooled payroll issues;**
- c) Requested that schools and early years providers be encouraged to engage with the apprenticeship levy, via the schools portal and early years bulletins;**
- d) Requested that a more detailed breakdown of early years take-up be provided directly to the Forum early years representatives;**
- e) Thanked the Apprenticeship Levy Team for their continued hard work and dedication during difficult circumstances.**