

THE IMPACT OF THE APPRENTICESHIP LEVY

**CALDERDALE SKILLS
FORUM REPORT
14th May 2018**





The world
of work is
changing.

Introduction

We know the world of work is changing and the World Economic Forum says that by 2020 the skills that you need to succeed in work are unrecognisable from the skills you needed in 2010.

It's much more about creativity, problem solving, motivation and vision. What this means is that harnessing more of the actual potential of people and relationships is really important.

Also, after a 20% drop in Apprenticeship starts across the country since the Apprenticeship Levy came into place, we wanted to explore this further and see what kind of impact this is having on the local area.

We're also aware that, like us, employers are facing issues around apprenticeship recruitment and ensuring that apprentices have the right skills to support their growth plans has proved challenging.

By setting up the Calderdale Skills Forum we are able to do exactly that. We can share knowledge and experiences and work together for the future of the district.

This report outlines the key findings and next steps from the first event on 14th May and provides some commitments that we, as a local provider and also an employer, are going to make to help tackle these challenges.

Many thanks,
**Robin Tuddenham &
John Rees**



Robin Tuddenham
Chief Executive of
Calderdale Council



John Rees
Principal & Chief Executive
at Calderdale College

About Us

The Calderdale Skills Forum was hosted by Calderdale Council and Calderdale College.

Calderdale Council

The council wants Calderdale to be a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest. With unprecedented levels of regeneration and investment in the borough, growing future talent is a key part of Vision 2024 - where we want to be by the time Calderdale reaches its 50th anniversary.

We currently have over 25 apprentices of all ages working in a range of services. Anyone can apply and we have a strong commitment to providing opportunities for children looked after and care leavers.

Calderdale College

Rated Outstanding for Apprenticeships by Ofsted, Calderdale College currently trains over 600 apprentices from more than 300 companies each year.

We are the largest provider of apprenticeships in the borough and offer a wide range of benefits, helping thousands of school and college leavers into the workforce by matching them with apprenticeship vacancies and providing employers with local, young talent.

Over 600 Apprentices are trained
by Calderdale College each year.

BACKGROUND

Calderdale Skills Forum

The Calderdale Skills Forum was set up by Calderdale Council and Calderdale College to give employers the chance to discuss key skills issues and challenges facing local industry, and work together to explore solutions and collaborate.

The launch of the forum followed research into the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy on Calderdale employers since it was introduced. The outcome revealed that awareness and knowledge of the Levy was varied and that there was a need for employers to share insight and experiences.

To support the promise of 3 million new apprentices by 2020, the Government introduced the Apprenticeship Levy, which came into effect on 6th April 2017.

The reform requires employers with an annual pay bill over £3 million to pay a levy through HMRC which goes into a fund for businesses to access for apprenticeship training.

The inaugural Calderdale Skills Forum on 14th May at Covea Insurance brought levy-paying employers together to have their say on the reform and discuss key learnings from the first year. They were also able to hear from two leading organisations, Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust and Covea Insurance, as to how they are using the Levy funds.



IDENTITY CRISIS

Employers discussed the stigma around apprenticeships and the barriers when promoting courses to current and potential employees.

“There is still a need to dispel myths and stigma before we can persuade older workers to become an apprentice.”

Pamela Wood

CALDERDALE & HUDDERSFIELD NHS
FOUNDATION TRUST

Whilst it was agreed that knowledge and awareness of apprenticeships is improving amongst young people, it was suggested that older members of staff still have negative perceptions of being an ‘apprentice’.

“We have mapped out career pathways for employers as a way of selling apprenticeships as a development opportunity.”

Matthew Metcalfe

COVEA INSURANCE

To tackle this stigma Covea Insurance have demonstrated the possible progression routes to their existing workforce. To promote apprenticeships to new recruits, Nestlé produce video case studies which bring their apprentice stories to life.

“I’m surprised the government hasn’t re-branded apprenticeships.”

David Selby

RSA GROUP

The most common misconception discussed was the idea of apprenticeships being for trade roles, rather than something for the wider services sector.

Our Recommendations

Use interactive video content to attract potential apprentices and map out career pathways.

“We want to find out more and receive any support that is available to ensure we are benefiting as a business.”

Estelle Waddington
SHEARD & SON LTD

Sheard & Son said they hadn't yet accessed the Apprenticeship Levy funds and were attending the forum to learn more and receive advice.

“Our response to the Apprenticeship Levy has been largely driven by our head office but it's useful to see how we can support the local workforce in Calderdale.”

David Selby
RSA GROUP

A number of national business confirmed their apprenticeship recruitment and use of the funds is managed centrally by offices in London and York.

“There's no recoup if people leave.”

Paul Rennison
Witt UK Group, Fan Systems Group

Some employers expressed concerns over the 20% rule which requires apprentices to take part in off-the-job training and there were also fears over apprentices leaving upon completion of their courses.

HARD SKILLS VS SOFT SKILLS

The forum discussed the skills and attributes they look for in candidates. Whilst qualifications are still important to some employers, many expressed that personal skills are also valuable.

It was recognised by Lloyds Banking Group representatives that there is a demand for higher level apprenticeships to help employees take the next step in their careers.

When it came to the skills needed to fulfil these roles, it seemed that more emphasis is placed on personal qualities and attributes than qualifications.

“Other qualities are in some cases more important such as passion and interpersonal skills.”

Chris Atkinson
NESTLÉ

Many employers recalled unsuccessful experiences of recruiting apprentices and they claimed this was down to the calibre of applicants.

Covea Insurance’s Director of HR and Learning, Lisa Meigh, discussed their focus on soft skills over qualifications.

“We recruit attitude over the essentials, but can offer support and development through our apprenticeship programmes so that apprentices can achieve the qualifications needed.”

Lisa Meigh
COVEA INSURANCE



Our Recommendations

Remove requirements for English and Maths from vacancies and teach them as part of the course.

Employers shared the different ways they are recruiting apprentices as part of their focus on soft skills.

Employers told the forum about their recruitment open days where they invite potential apprentices to meet their team and get a feel for the working environment.

Paul Rennison, Witt UK Group-Fan Systems Group, discussed the support they have received from a local college.

“We are developing a recruitment plan with an external partner to ensure we recruit the right people with the right skills.”

Paul Rennison
WITT UK GROUP, FAN SYSTEMS GROUP

Alun Watson from A-Safe recently relocated to Calderdale and was keen to attend the forum to hear tips for recruiting apprentices with the right skills.

“It’s useful to connect with other employers to understand the local recruitment market.”

Alun Watson
A-SAFE



SUPPORT FROM SCHOOLS

There was a view from members of the forum that by working with schools, businesses could increase apprenticeship uptake.

Multi-national general insurance company, RSA Group, highlighted an interest to work with local schools to boost recruitment. However, this was met with a mixed response from delegates such as Nestlé who shared their unsuccessful experiences.

One of the biggest challenges for the confectionery manufacturer has been encouraging potential recruits to visit their site in Halifax.

They had hoped that by working with schools they could overcome this barrier. They invited local schools to visit the factory where they could take part in tours and meet current employees. Unfortunately, the initiative resulted in poor attendance.

A representative from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Andrew Potterton, was in attendance and confirmed he can help employers connect with schools and improve relationships.

“When candidates are through the door they are enthusiastic. The real problem is just getting them there.”

Chris Atkinson
NESTLÉ

Our Recommendations

Work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to connect with local schools.

FRAMEWORKS TO STANDARDS

The changeover from frameworks to standards was noted as a key issue affecting the delivery of apprenticeships.

When enrolling existing members of staff into apprenticeships, employers felt that trying to make standards fit job roles was a huge barrier, particularly in sectors such as Health & Social Care and Financial & Insurance services.

“The technical natures of some of the standards do not neatly fit with the nature of some of our roles.”

Matthew Metcalfe
COVEA INSURANCE

In addition, despite the introduction of new apprenticeship standards, employers felt there had been an inconsistency amongst training providers as some were still delivering frameworks.

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Introduced in April 2017, standards are designed by employer groups known as ‘Trailblazers’ as a way of demonstrating the type of skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to have developed by the end of their apprenticeship.
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Our Recommendations

Collaborate with apprenticeship delivery partners such as Calderdale College for guidance around the new standards.

CASE STUDY: NHS

Different models of apprenticeship delivery were widely discussed at the forum and businesses heard from two leading employers on their approach.

Speaker: Pamela Wood
LEAD FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS

Levy Contribution: £999,000
APPROX PA

Key Challenges

- Completing the Individual Learner Record (ILR) as this was completely new to our team.
- Changing paperwork and documentation in order to comply with Ofsted requirements can be time-consuming.
- The switch from frameworks to standards, as changes to duration, content and delivery were required.

Solutions

- Attended Education and Skills Funding events to build network connections with other new employer providers.
- Set diary time to run the ILR.
- Improved review processes to ensure they are more robust and efficient.

Top Tips

1. Consider the cost of being an employer provider VS income generated.
2. Ensure being an employer provider is right for your organisation.
3. Connect with other employer providers in your sector.

The NHS logo, consisting of the letters 'NHS' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark blue background.

CASE STUDY: COVEA INSURANCE

Different models of apprenticeship delivery were widely discussed at the forum and businesses heard from two leading employers on their approach.

Speaker: Matthew Metcalfe
SENIOR MANAGER

Levy Contribution: £250,000
APPROX PA

Key Challenges

- Maintaining a consistent programme across all three UK sites.
- Ensuring the programme is scalable over the coming years.
- Creating a pathway that allows us to grow our own talent.

Solutions

- Implemented project team to cover all three sites and develop a launch plan.
- Established key partnerships to enable a mixture of college-based and online learning.
- Launched scholarship through Calderdale College for entry-level candidates.
- Introduction of Covea Insurance as a serious contender to university education.
- Set up Leadership Academy to support leaders with significant people responsibility.

Top Tips

1. Maximise the funds effectively to drive down the recruitment costs.
2. Consider launching new training programmes and packages.
3. Donate 10% of the funds to charitable partners.

Conclusions

The forum raised a number of significant issues and challenges.

- Apprenticeships are suffering from a perception problem, particularly amongst older audiences.
- There is a need to build relationships with schools but doing this isn't easy.
- Employers need support around new standards to ensure they fit with job roles.
- There is still a lack of awareness of the Levy and employers would welcome more information and guidance.
- Employers should ensure being an employer provider is right for them.
- Personal skills and attributes are often as valuable as qualifications when recruiting apprentices.
- The requirement for English and Maths qualifications has deterred candidates from applying for courses.
- In-house initiatives, such as scholarships can drive interest in apprenticeships and offer apprentices a 'way-in' to a career.

Next Meeting

The forum will meet again on 22nd October 2018 at Lloyds Banking Group to discuss further skills issues in the borough and continue to collaborate to strengthen productivity and the local economy.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps following the first forum meeting as well as commitments that Calderdale College and Calderdale Council will make to support other major local employers.

Skills Partners in Calderdale

Calderdale College will establish a Skills Partner initiative which will offer a broad range of skills support to businesses and give them the opportunity to shape the workforce of the future.

We will work with employers to identify their immediate and longer-term training priorities and give them the opportunity to be involved in curriculum development within their sector.

Apprenticeship Levy & Skills Support

Both the College and Calderdale Council will continue to provide employers with support and guidance around the Apprenticeship Levy and wider apprenticeship recruitment to ensure they are benefiting from the funds available.



Thanks to...

We'd like to thank everyone that attended the event, including hosts, speakers, partners and employers. With your continued support, we can help shape the workforce of the future.

Employers

Kathryn Marshall

Senior Apprenticeships Manager,
Lloyds Banking Group

Matthew Saveall

HR Manager,
Lloyds Banking Group

Matthew Metcalfe

Senior Manager,
Covea Insurance

Pamela Wood

Lead for Apprenticeships
& Essential Skills,
Calderdale & Huddersfield
NHS Foundation Trust

David Selby

People Manager,
RSA Group

Lynette Lee

Work-based Programme
and Quality Manager,
Halifax Opportunities Trust

Estelle Waddington

HR Manager,
Sheard & Son LTD

Alun Watson

Learning and Development Trainer,
A-Safe

Paul Rennison

QHSE Manager,
Witt UK Group, Fan Systems Group

Chris Atkinson

Apprenticeship and
Engagement Manager,
Nestlé

Jackie Addison

Head of HR and Office Development,
Calderdale Council

Deborah Vickers

HR Business Partner,
Calderdale College

Lisa Meigh

Director of HR & Learning,
Covea Insurance

Speakers

Matthew Metcalfe
and Pamela Wood

Partner

West Yorkshire
Combined Authority

Host

Covea Insurance

Media

Halifax Courier

Photography

Bruce Fitzgerald



Work
together for
the future of
the district.

CALDERDALE COLLEGE



INSPIRING LEARNERS TO SUCCEED IN LIFE & IN WORK

Calderdale
Council

To find out more about the
Calderdale Skills Forum, contact:
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