



How to Employ an Apprentice in The Highland Council

Version 2 – 18 Apr 2018

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The Highland Council

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Introduction

The Highland Council operates a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme which oversees the recruitment, employment, training and mentoring of the apprenticeship programme. Working within Corporate Resources, a team is established to offer guidance, advice, training and support to services employing apprentices. A full list of the MA services are available in the Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is available on the Learning & Development (L&D) MA Link. You can contact the MA team at THCMA.Centre@highland.gov.uk or by **phone 01463 644020**

What is a Modern Apprenticeship (MA)?

Modern Apprenticeships are in-work training programmes offered by The Highland Council (THC) in which the apprentice engages in on and off-the-job learning and development activities that will lead to a work-based qualification. There are 80 frameworks for Modern Apprenticeships covering a vast spectrum of occupations.

The term Modern Apprenticeship is a protected term, so we should advertise roles as apprenticeships only if they are linked to approved frameworks.

Most Modern Apprenticeships last between 2-4 years but some may be shorter or take longer to complete, depending on the nature of the qualification.

Although apprenticeships have traditionally been seen as being for young workers 16-24, staff of any age can complete an apprenticeship, regardless of prior experience or qualifications held. The only condition is that the apprenticeship must enable the apprentice to develop a new set of skills. This means that there is scope for THC managers to use apprenticeships to upskill their existing workforce with some funding from SDS. It is worth noting that training subsidies do reduce markedly above certain ages, so this should be taken into consideration. The THC MA team will be able to advise when you meet with them

Selecting an apprenticeship

To access levy funding, an approved framework must be used for the particular job role.

There are currently over 80 Apprenticeship frameworks, so there is a great deal of opportunity to find one that matches the job requirements. That said, availability of training provision for any given framework is not always as easy to access, again the MA team will advise and source the best training options for your post.

When selecting an apprenticeship, it is important to consider the length of the apprenticeship. The more advanced the level, the longer it will take to complete. Therefore, it is important for the Service to ensure that it has the resources to supervise the apprentice for this period and that it recruits an apprentice who is committed to completing the programme.

Currently, THC's own MA centre holds a contract with SDS which supports the following frameworks through in-house training of associated SQA qualifications:

Business Administration

Child Care – Early Years Practitioner

Management

Customer Care

In house training is limited by the contract; managers should contact the MA team for advice to check on availability.

Templates are being created to assist recruiting managers in recruiting to HC supported MA frameworks and will be available from HR/MA Team. As stated there are 80 frameworks and the MA team will always endeavour to source local training provision wherever there is demand for a particular occupational group. Managers are welcome to consult with the MA Team at any time to investigate potential MA opportunities and training provision.

Training

The Highland Council has a contract with SDS and is a recognised Employer – Provider of training for certain occupational groups through our SQA Centre at Dochfour Drive, Inverness. Additionally, the MA Centre works with third-party training providers to deliver some external training.

Depending on your requirement the training provision will be either, sourced through Learning & Development (SQA Centre), or from an external provider or college. A number of options exist :

Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training provision:

1. SVQ Assessment from existing L&D resource – in-service mentoring
2. SVQ Assessment utilising in-service assessor provision – supported by L&D SQA Centre with in-service mentoring
3. SVQ Assessment and mentoring – external training provider.
4. Sub – contracted training provision with in-house mentoring.
5. Day release college and mentoring – external training provider.
6. Block release college and mentoring – external provider

Where training is in house, services may be asked to provide support in the form of assessors and mentors. These in themselves are excellent development opportunities for staff and allow existing colleagues to gain valuable qualifications alongside supporting their MAs. Again the MA Team/SQA centre can advise on these opportunities.

Graduate Level Apprenticeship (GLA) Training Provision:

1. Day release University – Selected Scottish Universities
2. Block release University – Selected Scottish Universities

In discussion with HR and the MA team these options will be referred to as MA Training option 1 – 6 and GLA option 1 or 2

Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation apprenticeships are essentially work placements supplied by The Highland Council to enable year 4 and 5 students to gain work experience during their college sponsored FA course. Managers interested in offering placements are asked to contact the MA team.

Employment:

All apprentices (other than FAs) are employed by THC:

- The apprentice must have a contract of employment that is long enough for him or her to at least complete the apprenticeship successfully; The costs of the wages must be met by the Service.
- The apprentice must have a role that allows him or her to gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours to complete the apprenticeship.
- The apprentice must have Line Manager support, a Mentor and allocated time to complete the off-job training (attending assessor meetings, regular reviews and extra training as required).

Apprentices are normally required to spend a proportion of their time in training and learning, with the remaining time on-the-job, and must work towards achieving an approved “apprenticeship framework”, which sets out the requirements for completing an apprenticeship programme in a particular occupation.

THC Agreements

Services will be required to sign an SLA with The THC MA Team which details roles and responsibilities. Depending on the requirement and selected training option services may be asked to provide in-house assessors and possibly mentors. These options will be discussed with the MA team.

Commencement and Compliance Paperwork

The SDS apprenticeship funding rules require that the apprentice undergoes an **Initial Assessment (IA)** within two weeks of starting. This will normally be administered by the MA team at induction.

Additionally, the training provider and apprentice are required to sign an agreement at the start of the apprenticeship. This is called the **Participant – Provider Declaration**, which must be completed within the first two weeks of employment and signed by the Training Provider and the Modern Apprentice, again normally at induction. Furthermore a **Training Agreement (TA)** is generated and an **Individual Training Plan (ITP)** which must be signed by the provider, apprentice and line manager. Where THC is the training provider this will be carried out at the MA and where applicable SQA inductions held at L&D Dochfour Drive.

Progress Reviews

Progress reviews are an essential element of every apprenticeship and are mandatory. As well as ensuring that the participant is “on-track”, they also allow an opportunity for the apprentice, line manager and training provider to update each other on progress. Furthermore, they are required as milestone reports for funding. Normally, a Mentor will conduct these progress reviews. The MA team can advise further on this requirement

Training providers

Once you and the MA team have identified a suitable apprenticeship framework that matches the JPS, the MA team will select a registered training provider to deliver the training. If when doing any preliminary work you wish to see if the training is provided locally this can be accessed via the SDS website Apprentice.Scot, [Find a Training Provider](#). The MA team will be able to advise on emerging opportunities through their contacts and SDS liaison, so always check with them if in doubt.

When selecting a Training Provider the MA team will be considering some of the following points:

- What is the Providers track record, attainment, completion, success rates?
- What previous experience does the provider have in working with apprentices?
- Is the provider a specialist in the employer’s sector?
- Where does the provider deliver the training: for example can the apprentices get to the venue easily by public transport?
- How does the provider deliver the training: Classroom, on-line, bespoke premises etc
- If the plan is to recruit just one or two apprentices in a given occupational group – opportunities for peer – peer learning and support will be considered.
- How flexible is the provider over the timing of study days and delivery?
Does the provider offer mentoring support?

The cost of training

The costs of delivering the training will be agreed with the training provider. In most cases the training costs will be covered by THC’s Levy contributions, therefore every effort will be made to ensure value for money and offers fall within the funding band for any given framework. Where training is not fully covered by the training subsidy the recruiting manager will have to seek approval to fund the extra costs. This funding must be in place before any agreement is signed by the MA Team on THC’s behalf.

Recruiting a Modern Apprentice

Having identified a suitable post, confirmed the JPS is a fit for the selected framework and identified a training provider – in consultation with the THC MA team, the recruiting manager will use the same recruiting processes as for any post in THC. The MA team and HR will advise on wording for the advert and appropriate pay band. We are also entitled to use Apprenticescot as well as Myjobscotland should a recruiting manager wish to reach a different candidate pool.

Recruiting managers need to be mindful of the age discrimination legislation. THC cannot use the financial advantages associated with recruiting younger workers (ie the increased funding allocated to younger apprentices) as a justification for targeting younger applicants for apprenticeships.

Modern Apprenticeships are open to all ages and offer a fantastic opportunity for upskilling existing employees, managers should discuss the requirement with the THC MA team who will have access to the latest supported frameworks. Good examples are a Management apprenticeship delivered in-house could be a highly cost effective way to provide existing staff with development and upskilling utilising available funding and in-house assessors for the SVQ. Furthermore, fully funded IT SVQ opportunities are regularly made available through external training providers.

Eligibility

Before hiring an apprentice, in order to draw down funding, THC needs to ascertain the apprentice's eligibility. To be eligible for funding, apprentices must:

- Be domiciled in Scotland at his/her start date
Or if not domiciled in Scotland his/her main employment and workplace are located in Scotland
- At the age of commencement have reached the Scottish statutory minimum school leaving age.
- Be an individual age 16-24 who intends to follow an approved MA framework
- Be an individual age 25 or over who intends to follow an approved MA where there is a supported framework.
- The proposed Participant must have a demonstrable need to acquire significant new knowledge and skills to fulfil his/her job role.
- The modern apprenticeship framework selected for the proposed Participant must be the most appropriate learning programme generally available to that individual, providing such knowledge and skills.
- Employment. Each Participant must at all times during the period of his/her MA, be employed by THC; he or she is working as an employee to consolidate the skills acquired during his or her MA framework;
- Participants following a Modern Apprenticeship framework must be subject to the same policies and procedures as other THC employees.
- Each Participant must be informed by rights as an employee, including those relating to the Scottish Living Wage.
- For the avoidance of doubt, a Participant cannot be self-employed.

We aim to ensure everyone has equality of opportunity to access to Modern Apprenticeships no matter what their background. This might mean encouraging the participation of groups that are under-represented in MAs such as disabled, care experienced and ethnic minority people, as well as addressing gender imbalance, for example by encouraging girls and women to consider sectors such as construction and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics sectors

Exclusions

If any of the following apply to an individual at any time, the individual shall not be eligible to commence or continue (as applicable) the MA:-

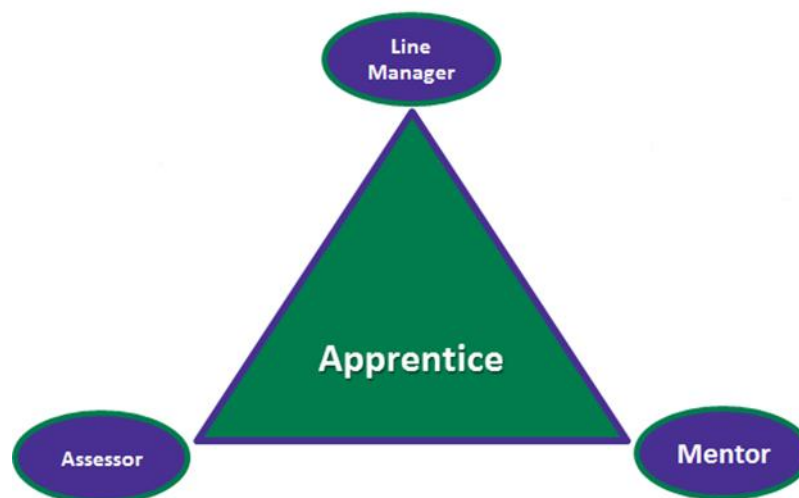
- The individual is not eligible to hold a UK passport and is subject to an employment restriction and/or to a time limit on his/her stay in Great Britain;
- The individual is in custody as a prisoner or on remand in custody.

Additional Criteria

In determining eligible persons for recruitment to the MA Programme, the Provider shall apply such additional and/or alternative eligibility criteria (as applicable) as SDS may advise from time to time.

Supervision and training of apprentices

Although the levy fund covers the cost of all off-the-job training (subject to the funding band maximums), most of an apprentice's time will be spent in on-the-job learning provided by The Highland Council. To that end the MA team through the THC MA Mentor network has overall responsibility for apprentices and will help managers and supervisors ensure that those apprentices are working with experienced and skilled colleagues on work that is relevant to the skills set out in the framework. Supervising an apprentice can be challenging and time consuming, this is where the MA team, strategically placed Mentors, line managers and assessors all work together to achieve the aims of the apprenticeship. Thereby assuring that the apprentice and the Council meet the required standards and ultimately satisfy the business requirements. This 4 way relationship is detailed in the SLA you are asked to sign and is best represented by the following diagram:



Statutory rights

Apprentices have the same statutory rights as other employees, accordingly, they will be entitled to the usual statutory rights in relation to, for example, working time; maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave and pay; discrimination; whistleblowing; and unfair dismissal.

Induction

A tailored induction programme has been created for apprentices joining The Highland Council. This covers several topic areas including: understanding the organisation, terms and conditions, money matters, mental health, substance awareness, learning and development, ERD, equal opportunities and MA paperwork and processes. Additionally, all apprentices will undertake the regular employee induction process with their line managers and be provided with a handbook outlining what is expected of them during their apprenticeship. The MA team, wherever possible, will run inductions as close to apprentice intakes as reasonably achievable. As some paperwork has to be completed within 2 weeks of employment, this may be required to be completed on-site if an induction is not available.

Managing conduct and performance

Managers should generally treat performance and conduct issues relating to apprentices in the same way as for other employees. Apprentices have the same unfair dismissal rights as other employees and therefore have the same rights to have any disciplinary issues dealt with in accordance with a fair procedure. A tribunal might expect an employer to go further in terms of offering support, guidance and time to improve for a younger and less experienced apprentice than for other employees. Again HR advisors and the MA team can provide assistance to managers where there are any concerns over performance.

Future Employment

- Apprentices will be offered fixed term contracts of employment with an end date relevant to the end of their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices will not be guaranteed a job once they have completed their apprenticeship however Services should endeavour through workforce planning to match successful apprentices to vacancies wherever possible.
- The contract will also be subject to a training agreement (which will be referenced in the contract)
- All conditions of service will be as per the Collective Agreement on Terms and Conditions of Employment, 2010 (for Scottish Joint Council employees).
- Discipline, Performance, Attendance, etc. will be managed as per standard HR policies.
- Apprenticeships should be offered on a flexible/part-time/term-time basis depending on the requirements of the job

Example Pay and Conditions and grading policy can be found under the L&D MA Link.

You can contact the MA team at THCMA.Centre@highland.gov.uk or by **phone 01463 703050**

Change History

Version	Date	Change Originator	Action
1	9 Nov 17	Paul Whitham	New Document
2	18 Apr 18	Fiona Emslie	Added THC logo on each page Added Mission statement & Page numbering Added Equalities paragraph in Edibility section Added Change History section