

Shropshire Council

Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Policy and Guidance

2020 – 2021

DRAFT

1. Apprenticeships have changed

The traditional apprenticeship role has changed. With the introduction of new apprenticeship standards there are now many programmes available even up to degree level. The breadth of apprenticeships and qualifications available has also significantly increased and they now cover a wide range of roles and jobs. With 539 apprenticeship standards approved for delivery and another 145 in development, there's plenty to choose from!

All apprenticeship programmes will utilise a mix of on and off the job training, all contributing towards the apprenticeship standard. This will include at least 20 percent of the employees paid hours spent on off the job training, but this is determined by the type of apprenticeship so this proportion can be higher in some cases.

Since the implementation of Apprenticeship Levy in 2017, Shropshire Council have developed a strategic approach to implementing apprenticeships within the Council and Maintained Schools, providing opportunities for new recruits and current staff to develop skills and progress their careers. To see our annual apprenticeship data from the Public Sector Target Reporting, please visit <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/upskill-shropshire/about-upskill-shropshire/>.

2. Transferring apprenticeship levy funds to other employers

The apprenticeship levy is already giving employers like us a real opportunity to invest in high-quality training, helping to grow our business and get the skilled workforce we need to thrive and succeed. Now we can work in partnership with other employers, supporting them to take on new apprentices and to support and develop existing employees.

As a large levy-paying employer we can now transfer up to 25% of our apprenticeship levy funds to other employers, helping to boost the number of high-quality apprenticeships across Shropshire.

More detailed guidance can be found on [transferring unused apprenticeship funds to other employers](#) on the government website.

3. Shropshire Council's Vision

Our Corporate Plan outlines that our key priorities for the county are interlinked and support our Council to ensure that Shropshire is a great place to live, work and visit. As a Local Authority, we strive to ensure that people are cared for and have a suitable place to live; that we sustain a healthy environment with thriving communities; and that we enable our businesses to achieve success; this is not without its' challenges in a rural county. To enable this success, we need to ensure that we have skilled, knowledgeable workers delivering services for our communities. Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan envisages that our county requires strategic approaches and targeted actions to ensure that our economy does not under achieve and we can continue to support people in Shropshire.

To view Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2022 please follow the link:
<http://staff.shropshire.gov.uk/media/708801/corporate-plan-2019-20-to-2021-22.pdf>

Businesses within Shropshire are predominately small to medium enterprises with 90.4% being microbusinesses and the economic challenges that the current pandemic may bring, could be detrimental to these businesses surviving. The take up of Government grants made available to SMEs within Shropshire has been significant and more than ever we need to ensure that we are prepared to support our county's businesses, communities and residents as we recover in the near future.

As a Levy Paying employer in the County, we committed to developing a skilled workforce required to deliver quality services and we are keen to share this opportunity with other businesses within the county to ensure they can grow, succeed and thrive.

4. Who can receive transferred funds?

We can transfer funds to employers for new apprenticeship starts, particularly where the funds will create an apprenticeship that would not have been created without the funds. This can include new apprentices or existing employees undertaking an apprenticeship. We are not able to transfer funds for apprenticeships that have already started.

To express an interest in the transfer of funding you must be:

- A Small to Medium Enterprise/Business
- Another organisation in Shropshire i.e. public sector, health care organisation
- A voluntary, community or social enterprise sector organisation providing services to Shropshire residents
- A Shropshire School who does not pay into our Apprenticeship Levy
- Employers that have opportunities for 16-18 year olds but are unable to access funding via training providers.

5. Shropshire Council's Priorities

We are expecting a high level of demand for support and our transfer funds are limited. Therefore, in developing a process for determining who to support, priority will be given to applications that meet Shropshire Councils' priorities and target sectors detailed below.

1. Creating apprenticeship opportunities particularly in the following sectors:
 - a. *Health and Social Care*
 - b. *Engineering and Manufacturing*
 - c. *Digital and Creative*
 - d. *Construction*
 - e. *Visitor Economy*
 - f. *Education and Childcare*
2. Creating apprenticeship opportunities for higher level skills (Level 3 apprenticeship training and above).
3. Creating apprenticeship opportunities for 16-18 year olds with no access to other funding opportunities.
4. Creating apprenticeship opportunities for those who are unemployed/been affected by Covid-19.
5. Creating apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged groups (*see Shropshire Council Social and Inclusion equality pages for more information on this: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/equality-diversity-and-social-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-social-inclusion/>*).

6. Making an application

6a. Pre-Application

Before completing the application form please ensure that the following checklist applies:

- a. Your business must have a specific presence in Shropshire, either located in the county, employing people from Shropshire or doing a significant amount of business in the county.

- b. You will need to pay for the salaries of apprentices. The transfer of funds can only be used for the apprenticeship training costs.
- c. Funds can only be used for new apprenticeship courses. Your request must be for future apprenticeships. The request cannot be backdated on training that has already commenced.
- d. Funds can only be used to pay for apprenticeship standards. View the [current apprenticeship standards](#).
- e. It is your responsibility to select the training provider of your choice, although our Graduate/Apprenticeship Manager can work with you to advise on suitable types of apprenticeship for your organisation and potential training providers.
- f. If you are already an apprenticeship levy payer, you must have already spent your levy for the year before applying for Shropshire Council's fund.
- g. Your apprentices will normally need to be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week, although in some cases the apprenticeship can accommodate part time workers.
- h. All apprentices will be required to take 20% off the job learning as stated in the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Apprenticeship Levy rules for employers.

6b. Application Form

Employers interested in making a bid for a levy transfer will need to apply. Further information is available on www.shropshire.gov.uk/upskill-shropshire/. Visit the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer section where you can find out more information on the process, when application periods open, download application forms and more. In your application form, you will need to provide the following information:

1. Title and Level of apprenticeship standard/s
2. Details of which priority strategic aims the apprenticeship/s will meet
3. Confirmation that an agreement with a learning provider is not already in place for the apprenticeship
4. An indication of the longer-term plans for your apprentice/s on completion of their apprenticeship
5. Commitment to notify the Council the outcome of the apprenticeship/s.

7. Assessment Process

Applications will be administered by Upskill Shropshire Apprenticeship Levy Project Board which includes representatives from various teams across the Local Authority. Applications will be checked for eligibility and scored against a criteria which will reflect the application form questions and priority areas (highlighted previously in this document).

As levy transfers can only be made against a named apprentice, 'approval in principle' will be granted until the apprentice/s has been recruited and the learning provider identified.

The application during this financial year will be: *** = Application Window 1**

If there are remaining funds following the *** application period, we will open a second window in *****.**

Applicants will be contacted via email with the outcome of their application.

Applications will need to meet a minimum score in order to be considered; any application under this threshold will unfortunately not be considered. If we are oversubscribed with applications, the top scoring applications will be approved within the limits of the available funding.

For monitoring purposes, receiving employers will also need to commit to notifying the Council on the outcome of the apprenticeship. All successful employers will receive a full information pack with useful links.

If you still have some questions, please get in touch with us at apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk or call 01743 258521.