



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Human Resources Committee

# APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 28 January 2022

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide an annual update on apprenticeships within the Service.

**Recommendations:**

That Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles during the review period.

## CONTACT OFFICER

**Name:** Craig Parkin  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

**Tel:** 0115 967 0880

**Email:** craig.parkin@notts-fire.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries Contact:** Corporate Communications Team  
(0115) 9670880 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

## 1. BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 22 January 2021, Members received an update report on the implementation of the apprenticeship levy and introduction of a public-sector apprenticeship target through the enactment of the Enterprise Bill 2016. This report provides an update on developments since this time.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1 Since 2019, the Service has aligned its trainee firefighter development programme to the national Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Standard, which is a level 3 qualification. There are currently 27 apprentice firefighters progressing through the twenty-four-month programme. All operational firefighter apprentices are trained and developed in-house by the Service as an employer provider.
- 2.2 The Service draws down funding from the apprenticeship levy for this training, and this counts toward the public-sector apprenticeship target of 2.3% of the workforce.
- 2.3 The development pathway follows the established internal development programme, with an initial training period at the Service Development Centre (SDC) to develop their core skills, knowledge and behaviours, followed by deployment to a designated watch where they attend operational incidents whilst continuing their development against the firefighter role map.
- 2.4 During this time, they are supported by their line manager and an experienced on-station mentor who will review and guide their development on station and undertake periodic assessment by SDC trainers. As part of the apprenticeship programme, they are also monitored by the Workplace Assessment team who meet with them at six weekly intervals to review their progress. The Service Development Centre training staff also conduct assessment of the apprentices at the 12-month and 19-month points in their development.
- 2.5 At the end of the apprenticeship programme, the apprentices undergo an End-Point Assessment (EPA) by an independent provider, which entails a formal theory examination, practical assessments and professional discussion to confirm that the apprentice has met the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. In early 2021, the Service's first apprenticeship cohort were successful at End Point Assessment with all 10 apprentices passing including one distinction. In Summer 2021, six operational firefighter apprentices from our second cohort were successful in passing their End Point Assessment with two gaining distinctions.
- 2.6 As an employer provider, the Service now receives £14,000 per operational firefighter apprentice over the two-year apprenticeship programme life.
- 2.7 The Service currently has five apprentices in support roles in the following departments:

- ICT Department undertaking a Level 4 Network Engineer Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 3 Digital Support Technician Apprenticeship;
- ICT Department undertaking a Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist Apprenticeship;
- Prevention and Protection Department undertaking a Level 2 Business Administration apprenticeship.
- Corporate Communications team undertaking a Level 3 Digital Junior Content Producer apprenticeship

2.8 The Service draws down training costs from the levy to support the academic courses, however the levy cannot be used to fund salary costs. A breakdown of levy contributions and drawn down is included in the financial implications section 3 of the report.

2.9 Two former apprentices in the Finance Department have taken up substantive roles on successful completion of their apprenticeship, and two others have been appointed to fixed-term roles during the year.

### **PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICESHIP TARGET**

2.10 As previously reported, public-sector employers have been set a target of 2.3% of the workforce as new apprenticeship starters. Based on a workforce of 858, this would require twenty new apprenticeships each year.

2.11 During this period, 14% of all new starters were apprenticeships. Overall, apprentices account for 1.98% of the total headcount.

2.12 It should be noted that whilst On-call employees are counted within the total headcount figures, they are not required to undertake firefighter apprenticeships at the current time. Whilst terms and conditions do not bar On-call from apprenticeships, the practical arrangements need further consideration and is an issue of focus within the National Fire Chiefs Council.

2.13 This figure is impacted by fact that there were no appointments to Firefighter roles during the reporting period (31 March 2020 to 31 March 2021). Whilst Wholetime Firefighter recruitment was undertaken in 2020, twenty-five appointments were made from April 2021 and will therefore appear in the figures for the period 2021-22. Therefore, the Service did not meet the target of 2.3% of start-up apprenticeships during 2020-21.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 In the period December 2020 to December 2021 (inclusive) the Service has drawn down **£181,199** from the Service's apprenticeship levy digital account. This money is used to support training and development of all apprentices.

3.2 During 2021 the Service paid over **£126k** into the apprenticeship levy, based on payroll. The monthly levy contribution to the account paid by the Service is approximately **£9700** depending on payroll numbers in a given month.

- 3.3 During 2021, the Service, as an employer provider for our operational firefighter apprentices, directly drew down **£109,181** from our digital account.
- 3.4 During the same period, **£72k** approx. was paid to external training providers from our digital account for those external provided apprenticeships.
- 3.5 As of the beginning of December 2021, the Service had **£173,982** in its digital apprenticeship account.
- 3.6 Further, an additional funding of **£43000** was received in 2021 from the Government Hire a New Apprentice payment scheme. This money has been reinvested into operational training development in the form of a temporary eLearning Developer to develop operational training eLearning packages

#### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The human resources and learning and development implications are set out within the report.

#### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An initial equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as there has been no change in policy or service delivery.
- 5.2 There are currently six women undertaking apprenticeships and eight from BAME backgrounds (two did not specify their ethnic origin). This represents 18.75% women and 26.67% BAME apprentices.

#### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The apprenticeship levy is a statutory payment under the Enterprise Bill 2016 and is payable by all employers with more than two hundred and fifty employees.
- 7.2 The public-sector apprenticeship target is established under the Public-Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The apprenticeship levy is paid over, irrespective of usage and must be used within twenty-four months or lost as a source of funding. To maximise draw

down from the levy, it is therefore imperative that the Service identifies apprenticeship opportunities, by either creating apprenticeship contracts for new employees linked to registered schemes, or by purchasing training for existing employees from registered providers.

- 8.2 The Public-Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017 require public sector employers to report on progress against the 2.3% apprenticeship target annually. A failure to meet the target will result in the submission of a statement to the Secretary of State explaining why the target has not been met and how this will be addressed. It is not yet clear what sanctions, if any, will result from a failure to meet the target.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles during the review period.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**