



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

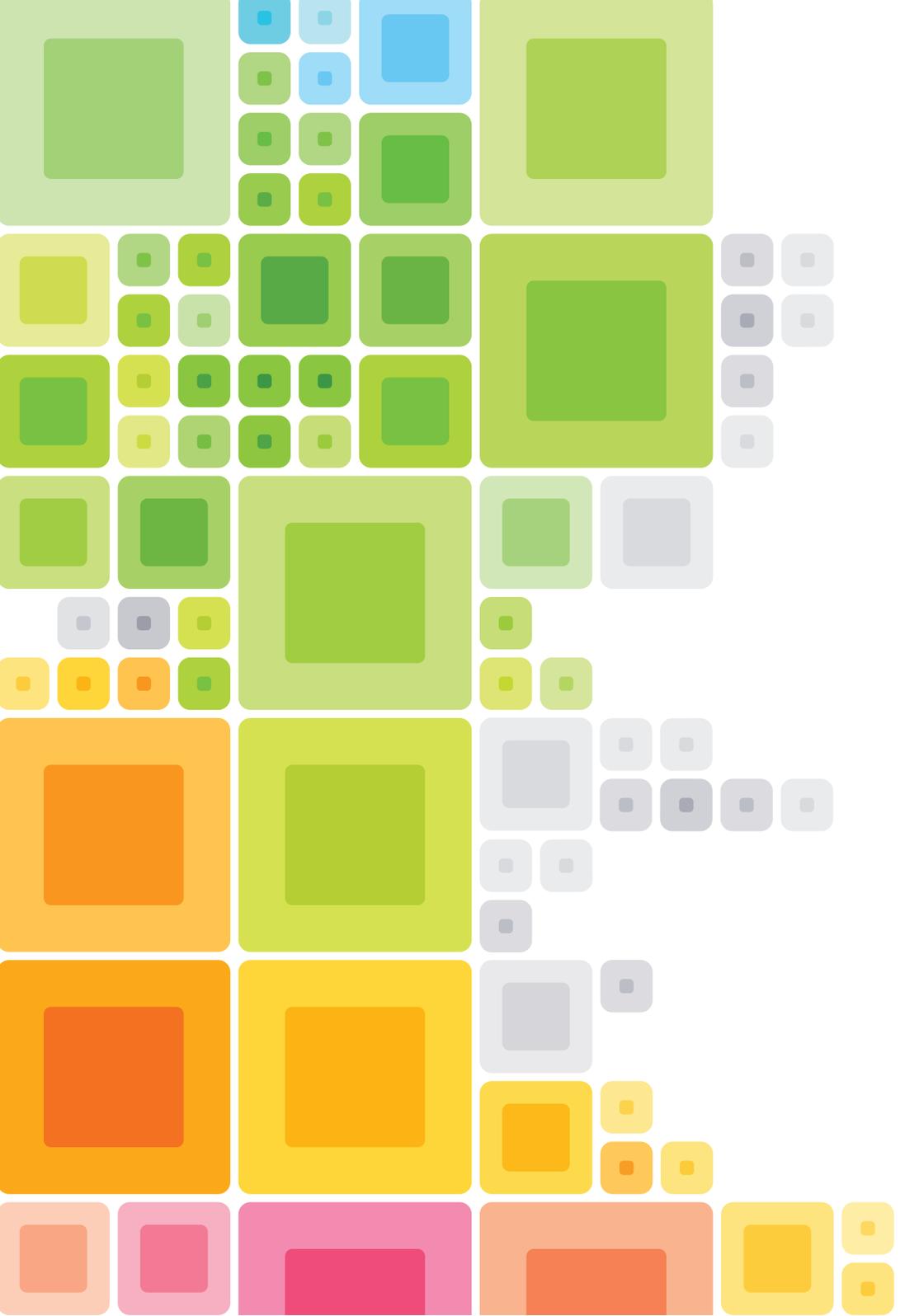
# APPRENTICESHIP HANDBOOK

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FOR MANAGERS



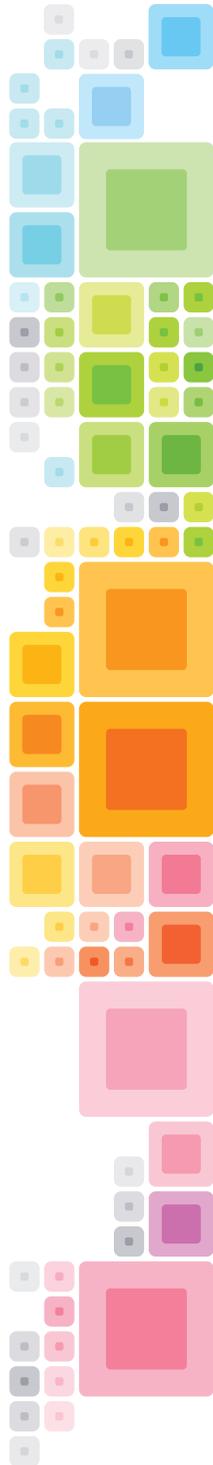
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## WHAT IS AN APPRENTICESHIP?

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An apprenticeship is a combination of employment and training (the apprentice obtains a nationally recognised qualification upon completion) for anyone above the age of 16. Employers train individuals within the context of their organisation, so apprentices contribute to the organisation's productivity while developing their own skills. Some differences in terms of the level of funding provided and training required exist in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but the core features of the apprenticeship model remain the same across the four nations.

All apprenticeships include the following elements:

- An appropriate competency qualification of the Qualifications and Credit Framework for Wales (QCFW)
- Essential Skills Wales qualifications: Literacy; Application of Number and Digital Literacy (the level required will depend on the qualification)
- Other qualifications or requirements as specified by the particular occupation

An apprenticeship provides essential job-specific skills, knowledge and professional qualifications. Apprentices will work towards a work-based qualification which will be at least Level 2 from the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). Apprentices can begin their training at a variety of different levels. These levels determine the content of their qualification and the standard they are required to work to in order to complete the apprenticeship. They are:

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeships (Level 2)
- Advanced Level Apprenticeships (Level 3)
- Higher Level Apprenticeships (Levels 4, 5)
- Degree Apprenticeships (Levels 6, 7)



Apprenticeships have received increased attention in recent times for their value in offering people a direct and affordable route into skilled jobs and careers, as an alternative to a university education. They are also an effective way for employers to develop their own talent, with the current and future skills needs of their organisation. The Government has placed apprenticeships at the centre of their plans both to re-balance the economy and to reform the education system so that it offers more opportunities to young people.

## THE BENEFITS OF AN APPRENTICESHIP

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- A valuable, worthwhile experience: 97% of apprentices said their ability to do their job had improved, whilst 92% said it had bettered their career prospects
- Quality and Productivity: 76% of employers agree that apprentices increase productivity in the workplace, whilst 75% agree that apprenticeships improve the quality of their product or service



## APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING: LEVEL AND DELIVERY

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The kind of training that we will need to provide depends on the level and nature of the work undertaken by the apprentice. The training will be delivered by various colleges and training providers. Depending on the course, some apprentices will be permitted day release to a selected college, whilst others will be assessed in their workplace. Apprentices must be given reasonable time whilst in work to work towards completing their qualification. Any release days required for college or training towards qualifications are to be credited as working time.

The level of apprenticeships can extend from entry-level positions aligned with foundation level qualifications, to degree apprenticeships; where apprentices will have the opportunity to work towards completing a nationally recognised degree or equivalent through their work. A Welsh Government Report, 'Aligning the Apprenticeship Model to the Needs of the Welsh Economy' (2017), highlights an increase in higher apprenticeships across Wales. The proportion of those in employment who are qualified at Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) levels 4-6 is expected to almost double from 22 percent in 2004 to 40 percent in 2024. The Employment, Education and Training Team are available to advise service areas on the levels of apprenticeships they can accommodate.

Apprentices will have a full induction and receive an in-depth training plan with set timeframes. Managers will receive copies of the training plan and be involved in the learning process to ensure it meets the needs of the business. The Apprentice Coordinator will act as a point of contact for the training and liaise with the manager to ensure the provision is of the highest standard.



## HOW DO I BEST SUPPORT MY APPRENTICE?

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Remember, an apprentice is with you because they want to be – they have made an active choice to learn on the job and a commitment to a specific career, so not only is it imperative to build on this commitment and give them the appropriate levels of responsibility, but also the support they will need to succeed.

In order to do that, Managers must:

- Ensure apprentices are working closely alongside experienced members of staff at all times to aid their learning and development
- Give apprentices a clear outline of expectations and a safe, supportive environment to learn and develop
- Encourage them from the start to own and drive their programme targets and to seek regular feedback to self-assess their performance
- Up-skill and develop line managers so they can coach their apprentice and act as a role model
- Put a workplace-learning mentor in place to further enhance the experience and create a proactive environment that builds on their eagerness, motivation and commitment

If an apprentice is new to the workplace environment, has specific learning needs or any disabilities, this should be factored into the programme and reasonable adjustments, such as one-to-one coaching or adapted learning materials, must be provided.



## SUPPORTING APPRENTICES TO COMPLETE THEIR QUALIFICATION

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The Manager should be involved in the apprentice's training process from the start in order to help them to fulfil the qualification criteria efficiently. It is recommended that the manager liaise regularly with the apprentice's assessor to discuss their qualification to ensure relevant experience in work is provided to fulfil the qualification criteria. The Manager is also able to examine their apprentice's progress at college through contacting the Apprenticeship Coordinator.

## AN APPRENTICE'S LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY

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The level of responsibility you give to your apprentice must align with the responsibilities outlined in the apprentice's job description. Their level of responsibility will also depend on their capability and workload capacity. As with other members of staff, it is the manager's responsibility to properly gauge the capability and capacity of the apprentice and afford them responsibilities which reflect this.

Apprentices should not feel overwhelmed or unchallenged by the level of responsibility afforded to them. An apprentice's progress and workload should be reviewed regularly in 1-1 meetings.



## HOW CLOSELY DO APPRENTICES NEED TO BE MANAGED?

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Most apprentices will be relatively new to the world of work, so the way that they are managed is crucial. Just like your other employees, good management and supervision will help the person to develop more quickly, but this is also about providing support to the individual, in terms of building up their confidence and demonstrating that they can play a positive role in the world of work and become a trained professional.

The apprentice's manager should set clear work plans, provide informal coaching, ongoing feedback and evaluate tasks undertaken to aid the apprentice's development. This will need to be completed regularly to begin with and tapered as confidence improves and understanding of the role develops.

## THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER: GETTING THE BEST OUT OF APPRENTICES

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The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's research into employee engagement and line management highlights the following behaviours as key to getting the best out of staff:

- Reviewing and guiding
- Providing feedback, praise and recognition
- Providing appropriate levels of autonomy and empowerment
- Taking an interest in the individual
- Being available to talk if an employee has a question or a problem
- Having a personal and approachable manner

It is likely that these behaviours are especially important in the management and development of apprentices, who in many cases are having their first experience of the workplace.



## ASSIGNING A MENTOR

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Aside from the manager, each apprentice must be assigned a workplace mentor to assist and guide the apprentice throughout their day-to-day work. A mentor can provide the apprentice with advice and further objective feedback, outside the more formal relationship with their manager. The Manager must assign an employee as a mentor who is naturally helpful, good with people and has the desire to help a person in their working life.

## WORKING HOURS

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An apprentice's working hours will be outlined in their contract. The working hours of younger apprentices – those under the age of 18 – will be bound by the Working Time Regulations for Young People. The Manager must not allow young apprentices to work over 8 hours a day, or 40 hours a week. Young apprentices are also entitled to 48 hours of rest per week and a daily rest break of 12 consecutive hours (the break between finishing work one day and starting work the next).

If apprentices are allocated overtime outside of their contracted apprenticeship hours, they must be paid the correct overtime or casual rate. For example, if an apprentice were to carry out work in the capacity of a casual worker, they must be paid a casual rate.

## STUDY LEAVE

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As described in the Training, Learning and Development Policy, all employees, including apprentices, are eligible for study leave for the purpose of pre-examination study, preparation of theses, dissertations or preparation for other recognised formal qualifications. The Manager must use their discretion in awarding study leave, and further advice can be gained from each group's learning and development officer. Agreement on study leave should be reached prior to the commencement of the learning activity.



## ANNUAL LEAVE AND TRAVELLING EXPENSES

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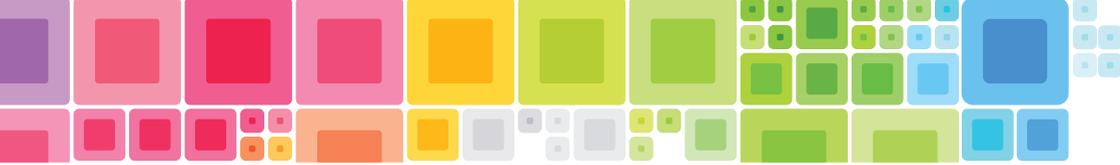
As with all Council policies, apprentices, as members of staff at Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, are still subject to the Annual Leave, Statutory Holidays and Time off in Lieu Policy and the Scheme for Payment of Travelling Expenses, Subsistence Allowances and Redeployment Expenses, all of which can be found on RCT Source.

All apprentices have the same annual leave entitlement as all other Council employees with a service of less than five years and are entitled to the same rate of mileage payments when travelling on Council business. Apprentices will be informed of leave and expenses allowances during their induction. The Manager should review an apprentice's annual leave and expenses claims regularly through 1-1 meetings to ensure the apprentice understands the Council's policies, is using their annual leave allowance and are claiming expenses accordingly.

## PASTORAL CARE AND SUPPORT

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It is important that apprentices are supported in making the sometimes challenging transition into a new organisation. Managers and mentors are responsible for providing the required degree of pastoral care to properly facilitate this transition. Pastoral care consists of any help afforded in respect of personal needs and problems, and could consist of an informal conversation about an apprentice's overall state of wellbeing. The degree of pastoral care required will depend upon the needs of the apprentice. Good managers and mentors with effective people management skills can fulfil this responsibility by picking up on any issues which may affect the apprentice's wellbeing or performance at work, and discussing this at the earliest possible instance.



## INDUCTION

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The Manager will cover any specific rules and/or policies that relate to the workplace during the apprentice's local induction and track the completion of the induction checklist. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is committed to ensuring that all new employees with the Council receive a comprehensive induction. A downloadable copy of the Induction Checklist is available on the RCT Source.

## SUPPORT FOR MANAGERS

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As with any new employee it is vital that a thorough induction is undertaken and that the apprentice's progress and performance are monitored on a regular basis. The Apprenticeship Coordinator will be on hand to provide assistance and advice and will liaise with training providers and answer any relevant queries you may have. Each apprenticeship cohort will also receive a Council induction programme and will attend learning events aimed at enhancing their understanding of the Council and to develop generic skills.

For more information contact:

### **Employment, Education and Training Team**

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Mae croeso i chi cyfathrebu gyda ni yn y Gymraeg /  
You are welcome to communicate with us in Welsh.