

Apprenticeship Report

Reporting period
April 2020 – March 2021



Diverse
Academies

Executive Summary

In May 2017 the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced by the Department for Education. All employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million pay 0.5% of their monthly payroll into the levy. This equates to around £12,800 per month for Diverse Academies Trust.

Public sector bodies with 250 or more staff in England have a target to employ at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. This has proved a stretching target for all and would represent thirty new apprentices starting across the Trust within one year.

The Government considers the duty to 'have regard' to the target to mean that, in making workforce planning decisions, public bodies should actively consider apprenticeships, either for new recruits or as part of career development for existing staff. Apprentices are only considered as 'new apprentices' who will count towards the target, in the year in which they begin their apprenticeship.

Public bodies are required to complete the Apprenticeship Report on an annual basis to explain how they have had regard to the target, and include actions taken to increase apprenticeship usage.

The effects of Covid-19 and the closure of academies has shown a drop in the number of apprentices recruited, as well as the number of current employees undertaking apprenticeships.

Between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, the number of new apprentices – including both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship – was 68. The figure for the 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 which is shown in this report is 17.

The percentage of apprenticeship starts as a proportion of employment starts has more than halved since the last reporting period, and the percentage of apprenticeship starts as a proportion of total headcount has dropped from 6.21% in 2019-20 to 1.34% in 2020-21.

Longer term we need to ensure we have a clear strategy for how we attract new start apprentices where roles are built into workforce plans for both academy and business function teams.

Apprenticeship for current staff will be signed off in line with new Personal Development Planning process to support the development of our staff.

The Apprenticeship Report below is for the reporting period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 and will be submitted by September 2021 following Trustee approval.

Reporting period	1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021
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Organisation

Organisation Name	DIVERSE ACADEMIES TRUST
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Number of employees who work in England

Number of employees who were working in England on 31 March 2020	1,265
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Number of employees who were working in England on 31 March 2021	1,285
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Number of new employees who started working for you in England between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	119
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Number of apprentices who work in England

Number of apprentices who were working in England on 31 March 2020	1
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Number of apprentices who were working in England on 31 March 2021	2
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Number of new apprentices in England between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (includes both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship)	17
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Reporting percentages

We have computed the percentages that will be reported from the figures you have given.

Percentage of apprenticeship starts (both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship) as a proportion of employment starts between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021	14.29%
Percentage of total headcount that were apprentices on 31 March 2021	0.16%
Percentage of apprenticeship starts (both new hires and existing employees who started an apprenticeship) between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 as a proportion of total headcount on 31 March 2020	1.34%

Factors that impacted your ability to meet the target

What actions have you taken this year to meet the target? How do these compare to the actions taken in the previous year?

We have successfully worked with training providers, utilising their links and advertising opportunities to increase our application rate and successful apprenticeship recruitment. We continue to discuss before advertising any role if recruiting an apprentice would be an appropriate route to take. Apprenticeships form the starting point of our career pathways and are visible as a route into many future careers across the Trust.

What challenges have you faced this year in your efforts to meet the target? How do these compare to the challenges experienced in the previous year?

Covid-19 and the closure of academies has meant a huge challenge for us in meeting the target. It has created an unprecedented lack of opportunity to recruit, and a socially-distanced environment where closely mentoring and training an apprenticeship has not been possible. Now that pupils and students have returned to academies discussions around potential opportunities for apprentices have begun, and we anticipate an increase in apprenticeship recruitment in 2021-22.

How are you planning to meet the target in future? What will you continue to do or do differently?

We will continue to consider apprentices as an option at every recruitment opportunity and will utilise the relationships we hold with training providers more extensively. We will continue to work closely with our Skills Development Manager to grow our apprenticeship aspirations while promoting the importance of high-quality progression. Alongside the development and promotion of Diverse Academies career pathways, strategic discussions around personal development will ensure that apprentices and apprenticeship opportunities will remain part of the future success of the Trust.
