

How employers are making the most of apprenticeship incentives



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As part of the government's 'Plan for Jobs', there are a range of government programmes available for employers, including are jobs which combine practical on-the-job skills training with sustained off-the-job learning, available from entry level to master's degree-equivalent. Your employee will get training in the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are relevant to their job and you will need to pay them a salary.

Find out more about apprenticeships.

Lookers PLC

Manchester based Lookers PLC, who offer new and used cars from leading manufacturers, are accessing the incentive payments for apprentices to support their apprentice intake this year.

The business has 6,700 employees, and apprentices make up 7% of the workforce. Lookers have 185 apprentice vacancies to fill across the Group, with 135 vacancies in England, and in scope for the incentive payment for apprentices.

Lookers see the incentive payment for apprentices as a driver to financially secure their apprenticeship program moving forward, and are modelling to bring in considerable funds as a result of the intake before 31st January 2021. These funds will secure future apprenticeships for years to come, under the 95% Government contributed co-investment model.

Matt Clay, Group Qualifications Manager at Lookers said:

We're continuing our investment into apprenticeships, attracting bright young talent into the business. The current

climate has the potential to leave a damaging impact on the future of young people, and we're delighted to offer 185 Apprenticeship roles across the Group during this time, enabling opportunities for these young people to build their confidence, skills and experience.

Our continued investment into apprenticeships is a result of the recognised value they generate for the business; for every £1 invested we realise a return of £20. The current Government support package will build upon the commercial impact of our apprentices, enabling us to secure the financial future of the Program, having moved into the Government co-investment model.

Walsall Council

Walsall Council have a workforce of over 7400, with apprentices representing 5.26% per cent of their head count. The Council has recently accessed the incentive payments for apprenticeships, with payment totalling £31,000 so far.

The incentive payments accessed by Walsall Council will support with the recruitment of 19 Teaching Assistants and the associated wage costs in schools, where budgets are tight, and in the recruitment of 2 Level 7 Degree apprentices, to work in finance and business support. The council have plans to recruit apprentices in Motor Vehicle, Customer Service, alongside a Learning Mentor Apprentice, over the next few months.

The Council were involved in the development of the Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice and consultations with employers, before they became live on 1 September.

Helena Baxter, apprenticeship lead, Walsall Council said:

Apprenticeships are good for business, as apprentices can be moulded and shaped in their area of expertise, to deliver the exact skills your business needs.

Apprentices are the future decision makers, managers and leaders of Walsall Council and continuing to bring apprentices into the business, even in such difficult times, is important to

protect our future, whilst ensuring we continue to deliver the vital services our communities depend upon.

I would urge all employers to continue to recruit, and to benefit from government incentives to ease financial burden, whilst offering exciting and rewarding careers opportunities to apprentices.

Softcat

IT infrastructure and services provider Softcat employ over 1500 staff, with 51 apprentices; representing just over 3 per cent percent of the organisational headcount.

Through their training provider network, Softcat were made aware of the government incentives for employers and applied for the incentive payment for hiring new apprentices.

This additional funding, totalling £90,000, will help support the recruitment of 45 new apprentices, along with many other things. Other than the financial benefit this payment will provide, Softcat will direct this funding to additional training and better experiences for their apprentices - especially in the current climate when they are working from home.

Lois Simon, Learning and Development Lead said:

Accessing the incentive payment for hiring new apprentices means that Softcat can better support the cohort of new apprentices joining the team. This significant funding will see apprentices benefit from more support as they start their apprenticeship, whilst helping to fund the apprentice journey - including incentives for apprentices themselves, extra-curricular activities and graduation ceremonies, when apprentices complete their learning.

The benefits of apprenticeships to business are significant and I would urge employers to continue to recruit during this time, and to access the support that's been made available to support all employers through the process.

Vianet

Digital technologies company Vianet, based in the North East, worked closely with the Tees Valley Combined Authority - and immediately knew the advantages of accessing the incentive payment for apprentices. With a head count of 153 and 4 current apprentices, Vianet has applied for approximately £25,000 in incentives, to support their increasing workforce through apprenticeships.

Their 'grow within' ethos means Vianet provides apprenticeship opportunities to existing staff. Apprenticeships work for Vianet, as they allow employees to expand their knowledge, whilst having a structured learning programme that embeds back into the projects they are working on; making a real impact on the organisation.

The incentive payment for new apprentices, with apprenticeship levy and some additional external funding, will allow Vianet to employ and recruit during this difficult time, something they would not have normally been able to do.

Vianet also currently have three interns and are considering if the business could also support a trainee.

Maret Ward, Learning and Development adviser said:

Apprenticeships are great as they allow individuals of all ages to have a strong post -16 alternative to the academic route. Organisations benefit from reduced recruitment and training costs, or salary costs in some cases with apprenticeships; whilst the apprentice brings improved productivity into the workplace.

It is important that an organisation has a robust commitment to the programme when they recruit. Apprentices become high calibre employees who can demonstrate industry skills, backed with the academic learning that apprenticeships offer.

I am delighted that our own apprentice had an alternative route to a great career and is progressing to degree level. In return, we benefit from the high levels skills and intelligence he brings to our business.

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