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**Employer Evaluation Summary July 2023**

**Aim**

Skills for Work undertook a review with apprenticeship employers. To review the impact of delivery and to identify improvements to the service offered to employers.

**Process**

The employer questionnaire was developed and issued to all apprenticeship employers on 13th March. Responses were monitored on a regular basis to monitor and maximise response rates. From 24th April all employers that had not responded were contacted by phone to encourage completion to support our service improvement arrangements.

Deadline for completion 2nd May 2022.

An example of the questionnaire can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOoh-_U9Cq5Y1N37Ox0sTT6TU74MKbAtzB3takjD02Jb2nMw/viewform?usp=sf_link) or copy the link to your browser <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOoh-_U9Cq5Y1N37Ox0sTT6TU74MKbAtzB3takjD02Jb2nMw/viewform?usp=sf_link>

The survey was sent to 66 (-24 unique employers 21-22) employers supporting 90 apprentices, the response rate was good, representing 75.6% of apprentices completing the survey. This was achieved by the administration team contacting employers that had not responded by phone to discuss responses in the last 2 weeks of the survey.

66 employers were asked to participate in this survey with 46 returns received resulting in a 70% response rate for individual employers. At the time of the survey, 90 apprentices were on the programme. Some employers have more than one apprentice within their organisation.

82.6% (-9.9% 21-22 survey) Employer satisfaction rate

17.4% 8 Employers were dissatisfied with the service they received from Skills for Work.

Wk 1 Responses received 3

Wk 2 Responses received 11

Wk 3 Responses received 41

Wk 4 Responses received 46/66 70%

Examples of employer responses received

Skills for Work provides apprenticeship support for many departments across the Bradford District Council, NHS services, including hospitals and GP surgeries, schools and employers across the Bradford district.

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| * BMDC Britannia House, Hall Ings * BMDC Waste Collection Services, Harris Street Depot, Harris Street * BMDC Bradford Youth Service * BMDC Britannia House, Hall Ings * BMDC Children’s Social Care, 6th Floor Margaret McMillan Tower * BMDC City Hall * BMDC Directors Office, 1st Floor, Margaret McMillan Tower * BMDC Environmental Delivery Team, Trade Waste Services, Harris Street * BMDC Facilities Management, City Hall * BMDC Fleet Services, Shearbridge Depot, * BMDC Sedbergh Sports and Leisure Centre * BMDC Shearbridge Depot, Great Horton Road * BMDC The Register Office, City Hall * BMDC Toller Youth Cafe, 2 Duckworth Lane * BMDC Youth Justice Service * BMDC Ilkley LIdo, Denton Road * BMDC Skills for Work * BMDC Skills House, Margaret McMillan Tower, Princes Way * Clarendon Medical Centre * Cullingworth Village Primary School * Department for Education * Dixons Allerton Academy * Fairfield Primary School * Horton Bank Top Surgery * Kirklees Council Civic Centre, 3 High Street * Kirklees Council Riverbank Court, Wakefield Road * Midland Road Nursery School * NHS Bradford Royal Infirmary * NHS Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust * NHS St Luke’s Hospital * Premcrest * Sleek Beauty * Whyteghyll Ltd |

**Summary**

The overall summary of responses from employers indicates that the vast majority agree or strongly agree at 82.6%, they are happy with the service they receive from SFW. A higher proportion of employers are answering neither agree or disagree, which identifies an inconsistent approach to the overall service delivery for communication, links to on and off the job training, progress reviews and delivery of training relevant to industry standards.

Following an external audit in May. Themes for immediate development have been integrated into the quality improvement plan, including a full review of communication and 3-way progress reviews, completed during June incorporating shared planning with employers to meet their business needs.

* 95.6% of employers agree that apprentices are developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours that support employment.
* 70% agree good communication links are established with employers for on the job training and off the job training.
* 78% of employers agree that learners progress is planned well and reviews completed to develop apprenticeship individual needs.
* 89 % agree resources are good and meet employer industry standards which are relevant, valid and reliable.
* 96% would recommend Skills for Work to other employers.

**Themes for development**

* Learner communication is good but inconsistent with employers. Some employers are not involved with apprenticeship reviews (triage reviews). Many get an update email but are excluded from participation in the review and feedback.
* Managers/supervisors are not supportive of the 20% off the job training, especially when functional skills support is required – lack of understanding of the programme requirements and expectations. Employer support for apprentices to be re-enforced for some employers.
* Staff retention – change of tutor Customer Service. More sessions are delivered face-to-face in the employer premises and this situation has improved since a new tutor was recruited.
* To improve communication and information regarding next steps at the end of the apprenticeship. E.g. employability support.
* To review the service, offer and consider apprenticeships in different sectors. Many employers are requesting Teaching Assistant level 3 qualifications.

Consultation and training needs analysis with employers is required.

43.5% of employers have requested additional information on how SFW can further support employer workforce development needs.

The 8 employers providing elements of negative feedback around communication and progress reviews require further investigation to identify if improvements completed have resolved the dissatisfaction. (Awaiting feedback from Mark email sent 18.7.23)

**Areas of good practice**

* Apprentices are informed well and know what is required to achieve their qualification
* Effective planned learning gives learners the knowledge, skills and behaviour to progress and achieve enhanced career development opportunities.
* Good learner support
* Excellent recruitment and selection of apprenticeships, job matching well to vacancies
* High standard of delivery results in good teaching and learning and progression for apprentices.
* Relevant and effective resources and delivery to meet industry standards and relevant to work situations.

**Evaluation Feedback**

Effective planned learning gives learners the knowledge, skills and behaviour to progress and achieve and enhance career development.

Employers give many examples where the apprentice complete their qualifications and progresses into sustained employment, in some cases, career progression and promotion to managerial positions.

Employers said that their apprentice’s knowledge and skills are constantly improving on-the-job and progressing well. Apprentices gain confidence in their role. Course work for apprentices is organised well.

Employers provide some good examples of communication but this is inconsistent across the apprenticeship provision. Satisfactions has dropped from 85% to 70%.

Some managers/supervisors are not supportive of the 20% off the job training, especially when functional skills support is required – lack of understanding of the programme requirements and expectations need to be explored.

All managers/supervisors new to post require the knowledge to support existing apprentices on programme.

Contractual requirements were re-enforced with employers due to slippage of recording and completion of 6 hours weekly off the job training, this has caused some level of dissatisfaction.

Learner communication is good but inconsistent with employers. Some employers are not involved with apprenticeship reviews (triage reviews). Many get an update email but are excluded from participation in the review and feedback. An audit was completed in May and process review completed in June.

Some employers said that the recruitment and selection process and pre-contact support for apprentices is excellent.

Very good learner support enables learners to progress. Tutors give additional support to apprentices where barriers have been identified that impact on learning. An employer stated that tutors go above and beyond to support their apprentice. Another, explained that their apprentice was struggling and had some additional needs identified during their program, which was swiftly supported and now the apprentice is back on track with their learning and feeling much more confident.

Employers said that apprentices are regularly kept informed of progress but that employers are not consistently involved in the process.

Some managers/supervisors with responsibility for the apprentice do not understand apprenticeship expectations and lack apprenticeship support for 20% off the job training, including participation in reviews.

A full audit of the review process was completed in May. Contractual requirements, re-enforced with some employers to increase employer participation at reviews. Frequency of triage reviews has increased to every 6 weeks and documentation amended to include employer feedback on the apprentice knowledge, skills and behaviours. Reviews are effectively planned and the frequency of reviews is included in weekly performance management.

Tutors have high standard of delivery that result in good teaching and learning and progression for apprentices.

Employers say that relevant, effective resources and quality delivery to meet industry standards which are relevant to work responsibilities.

One employer said that the tutors, work well with apprentices and deliver relevant training effectively

**Examples of employer feedback:** -

**What we could do to improve**:

* I suppose after speaking with some previous and engaged apprentices that some classroom work within groups could benefit moving forward.
* Face to face delivery
* Recently 4 apprentices started and there is a new trainer who visits does the training in an afternoon but trainees would prefer in the morning as this gives them the afternoon to complete the work that the trainer has given them for the next session.

Action completed: Session is now delivered on Tuesday mornings

* More face-to-face study but this has been discussed
* Since Covid, no face-to-face communication with the apprentices even though studying in collages and schools have gone back to working in schools and no longer online. I feel from managing apprentices previously they learn and absorb more when it is a face-to-face meeting.
* Support to managers
* Do additional support need our apprentice was struggling, and the communication with the tutor at the time was difficult and we had to chase for any updates. But a new tutor has since taken over and this seems to have improved.
* Took a very long time to complete this course for my employee. Through no fault of her own.
* Clearer guidance on timeline for end of apprenticeship
* Better communication
* Unable to answer as have had little direct engagement with Skills for Work
* Better communication
* Communicate with me more.
* Communication
* Unable to answer as have had little direct engagement with Skills for Work
* Apprentice had a change of line management and team during the apprenticeship. Support with a handover of the apprenticeship process with the new line manager would have been helpful.
* Better communication when classes have been cancelled or changed. e.g., maths tutor left mid-way. Josh was not advised until class attended and no tutor.
* More updates of apprentice’s progress from skills for work
* Following up with what apprentices about what needs to be done next.
* A play off between what the tutor tells apprentice to do and what the apprentice expects to do - as an employer we feel in the middle of this. Over the years we have had really good apprentices, but we feel we have been unfortunate with these apprentices. No reflection on Skills for Work as we employed the apprentices, but it has made me reconsider if I would ever take 2 apprentices on at once again.
* Perhaps an opportunity to ensure greater links with the apprenticeship qualification and the work placement. Not all of it fits as well as it could do.
* Require more contact, visits and information from the tutors.
* Maths and English support not available at some point, and apprentices taking time out not good for Manager in terms of time and workload. Would like some on-site support in training for apprentices.
* Proof reading required which tutors used to do but informed by tutor their roles as changed. This is something she feels current apprentices are missing out on.
* Varied skills set. Could widen roles for apprentices as we have had to go to Birmingham to cover bespoke roles for our other apprentices.
* Skills for Work should look to deliver apprenticeships in different sectors as well.
* Try to stick to one tutor throughout the course as our apprentice has had a couple of changes to tutors, and she has found this difficult.
* Add more resources to the team. I have witnessed the department and learners struggle due to the lack of resources such as tutors in the past 2 to 3 years.
* Better communication/information regarding next steps at the end of the apprenticeship. e.g the option for redeployment and further employment.

**What we do well:**

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| * Management oversight to service needs * Course work for the apprentice's is well organised. * Support in employee’s confidence, knowledge & skills set * Keep in contact with the apprentices really well, provide them with their work * Explain about apprentices needs and what we - Skills for Work are all about * You found the right person for our job (recruitment process is good). You do what you do well. * Brilliant training for the apprentices and great support for them * Assessor, Joanne Bowen, is excellent. She communicates clearly and sets clear expectations for the learners. * Recruitment and induction support is also excellent * support to apprentices * Communication * Support the students well and inform managers of any short fallings * Supporting Apprentices who may struggle * Communication, Support for both apprentice and employer * Regular staff updates provided * Regular contact * The apprentice is well informed * Excellent support for apprentice, helps with any issues arising and if information is not known will follow up once obtained * Communicate really well with both employer and apprentices * Patient with trainees and go above and beyond to support them * Always keep us up to date and communicate well * Support for apprentices is good * Regular communication between apprenticeship team and employer. * My apprentice feels very well supported * Our apprentice is in need of more personalised support due to some additional needs which meant he was struggling on the course initially. This has now been implemented and he is feeling much more confident now he is receiving the personalised assistance. * Interact regular with apprentices and we also receive regular updates * Timely and effective communication * Keeping employer involved in communication with apprentices * Apprentices give positive feedback on their experience * Keeps employer updated with progress on apprenticeship * Support trainees well, have a good relationship and always kept in the loop regarding trainees. * Supporting & keeping apprentices on track * Communication of information - updates on progress, line management aware of process at all times, management of individuals. * Relevant content for what we needed * Work well with apprentices and deliver relevant training effectively * Coursework and assessment and assignments are relevant to work situation |
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