Return on investment in adult social care Apprenticeships – case studies
Final report

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This work was researched and compiled by Jamie Buttrick and Andy Parkinson of Consilium Research &
Consultancy
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1. Introduction

1.1 In October 2013 Consilium Research and Consultancy (Consilium) was appointed by Skills for Care to develop five case studies in order to profile the return on investment / value for money associated with Apprenticeships in the adult social care sector and specifically the adult social care pathway of the Health and Social Care Apprenticeship framework.

Methodology

1.2 The development of the case studies was based upon:

- The planning for and facilitation of a detailed inception meeting with Skills for Care;
- Work to develop a detailed research plan;
- Design of research tools (semi-structured discussion guide) to inform the production of the final case studies (Appendix 1);
- Face to face interviews with three employers;
- Telephone interviews with two employers;
- The production of five qualitative case studies and cross-cutting analysis/findings.

1.3 The interviews were conducted between 2nd and 21st October. The study team would like to thank the employers for time and openness in supporting the development of the case studies.

Comparative Analysis

Workforce Development

- Each of the five employers has a history of providing statutory training though very different experiences of utilising Apprenticeships as part of their workforce development offer.

- There remains within the case studies a variation in the use of Apprenticeships with one employer using the Apprenticeship, in the main, to upskill existing staff. However, the majority of the employers consulted have used Apprenticeships to recruit new staff and have reported the greatest Return on Investment (ROI) as a result.

Rationale for Apprenticeships

- There is a large degree of consistency across the employers in terms of their rationale for employing apprentices including:
  - to help shape the development of functional and client-specific skills
  - embedding a working ethos and social care values
meeting the needs of younger care recipients with appropriate skills, knowledge, and interests to support the care process

- in reaction to skills shortages/gaps in the social care workforce
- in response to the ageing workforce in social care
- providing young people in particular with an opportunity for a career

Costs of Apprenticeships

- The major source of direct costs are the wages of the apprentices with most training, assessment and mentoring supported by funding from the Skills Funding Agency or organised through learning providers

Benefits of Apprenticeships

- A great way to develop the apprentices’ personal, vocational and educational skills
- Rejuvenating the learning ethos of more experienced staff
- Providing senior staff with the opportunity to support and mentor apprentices
- Reduced recruitment and induction costs
- Bringing enthusiasm and life to roles, companies and colleagues
- Older apprentices bringing crucial life and work skills to different employers
- Adding value and adherence to organisational policies and procedures

Overall Conclusions / Lessons

1.4 The case studies presented in this report highlight a range of benefits that employers have reported and attributed to the employment of apprentices. Within the analysis, there are a number of lessons that can be drawn that will influence the return on investment, whether expressed quantitatively or qualitatively. These include:

- The importance of finding the right learning provider to meet the needs of the business and the people in receipt of care. Key issues consistently raised in the cases studies are flexibility in meeting the needs of specific employers (e.g. night time assessments) as well a combination of academic, practical and ‘life’ support and mentoring.
- The case studies highlight the added value of Apprenticeships in supporting the development of particularly young people of all abilities and backgrounds. The key to achieving positive outcomes and therefore a greater return on investment from apprenticeships is consistently outlined as finding the ‘right person’ (e.g. those seeing social care as a career or vocation rather than a job and/or those exhibiting social care values such as empathy and communication) for what is a tough and challenging career.
- Some of the best results / greatest return on investment outlined by employers have emerged where employers have treated apprentices in the same way as other employees (e.g. equivalent wages and benefits). These employers will speak of a ‘family’ or ‘team’ benefiting from and providing a personalised service.

- Investment in quality workforce development activities including Apprenticeships has been recognised in a number of case studies in the form of awards and positive publicity. Crucially, this is also recognised by those in receipt of care and their families / carers with investment in apprenticeships linked to quality care provision. There are clear implications for business strategies where investment in the workforce can be recognised on the balance sheet as well as in the primary objective of many social care businesses – providing quality care.
## 2. Case studies

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United Response

Company overview

United Response is a national charity supporting adults and young people with a wide range of disabilities and mental health needs to take control of their lives. Built up over the last 40 years, United Response currently employs approximately 3,500 people, the majority of which are over 25 years of age. The not for profit organisation provides a range of care services in settings including supported living and independent living in over 300 locations across England and Wales.

Workforce development activities

United Response employs 371 apprentices, including 169 at Intermediate level and 180 at Advanced level in Health & Social Care. A further 22 apprentices are employed across a range of other frameworks including Business and Administration and Team Leading. The frameworks that were chosen have very much been around meeting business needs and the needs of those in receipt of care.

Diplomas and NVQs have always been offered within United Response as a required qualification for frontline staff, with Apprenticeships introduced as the preferred qualification route in 2011. Staff are also offered frontline mandatory and specialist training via e-learning and traditional face to face courses to support them in their roles. There is also an internal Learning and Development Programme made available to staff to support them in their development throughout their career. Investment in skills through statutory and non-statutory training and apprenticeships is recognised as an additional way in which United Response can support and reward staff over and above their salary and work-related benefits.

The rationale for Apprenticeships

United Response sees the recruitment of apprentices as one way of encouraging a more diverse workforce. It is also seen as a way to shape the development of functional skills (e.g. literacy and numeracy) which are potentially lacking in the organisation whilst embedding the working ethos and values of the sector. Apprenticeships are seen as part of offering a career rather than just a job, with the people involved made aware that they can progress within the organisation.

The value of functional skills development and assessment through Apprenticeships is clear. Numeracy skills are very important for a range of care tasks (e.g. distributing medication to clients), and there are business benefits in having a workforce that is
more confident in this area. Literacy is also important, especially where hand written care plans need to make sense and be legible. Functional skills boost the understanding of employees’ roles and can facilitate greater exposure to organisational policies and procedures. **Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to support people in workplace environments and help them develop the skills needed for their chosen careers.**

The rationale for up skilling the existing workforce was to ultimately encourage a base level of professional knowledge and functional skills. Up skilling the existing workforce has been welcomed by employees who feel valued and invested in. **If staff have the skills needed for their role, they will be more productive and make fewer errors, which will ultimately be advantageous to the organisation’s growth and stability.**

A key advantage of employing apprentices is the ability to profile staff recruitment more closely to that of clients in order to maximise commonalities (e.g. building relationships between carer and client through common tastes explored in the care process such as shopping, leisure activities or enhanced ability to use technology or IT).

The introduction of Apprenticeships is thought to have helped generate a learning ethos within the organisation. It is recognised that people learn in different ways and for some, their appreciation of the value of learning will only emerge once they leave school. Apprentices clearly understand the importance of learning from the outset of their career even if they underperformed at school.

Staff working towards their Apprenticeship tend to feel valued individually. They recognise the investment of their employer (even if they don’t know about the cost of the training) by being supported to learn or meet with their assessor in work time. United Response also highlight the regard in which successful learning outcomes are held by the organisation through a ‘Roll of Honour’ in the quarterly in-house magazine, highlighting the names of those completing their Apprenticeship and a congratulatory letter from the Chief Executive – something which they didn’t do with other qualifications.

**The costs of Apprenticeships**

The main costs are the wages of the apprentices. United Response pay newly recruited apprentices the national minimum wage with existing employees completing an Apprenticeship earning between £14,063 - £17,849. The direct costs of supporting a Level 3 Apprenticeship are estimated by the employer as approximately £3,000 although they are investigating the option of a range of incentives and financial support to support the investment. Indirect costs including supervision, time out of work for
study and mentoring are not currently measured although the value for money from the investment in staff time support apprentices and offering increments over and above National Minimum Wage linked to retention in particular are recognised.

“It’s a lot of work but it’s worth it!” (employer)

The benefits of Apprenticeships

Learning providers support the Apprenticeship process by bringing their own expertise and specialist knowledge base. Having an effective relationship between the employer and learning provider has been key to the success of Apprenticeships in the organisation, with the ability to choose the most effective model of training delivery and assessment crucial. Working with learning providers that can meet both employer and employee needs through flexible learning arrangements is a key factor which can be guaranteed through an annual tender process and knowledge of the ethos of the organisations. This prevents poor relationships and ensures quality, consistency and the opportunity to obtain best value.

Focusing the organisation’s workforce development activity on Apprenticeships has “rejuvenated the learning ethos amongst older employees in particular, it gives them the bug to develop themselves – it’s a good way to get them started.” One manager successfully encouraged a collaborative learning experience amongst its employees, with a block learning arrangement maximising the benefit of peer support/peer learning.

“The value of on the job training is that we can fit skills development around working patterns, the needs of the service and the experiential learning experience which is key to learners’ development.”

“We have a measurable skilled workforce who feel invested in. They are engaged, motivated and valued. Apprenticeship evaluations demonstrate what learners actually feel about their qualifications.”

Return on investment

The recruitment, employment and training of apprentices created some challenging situations as the organisation put the structures in place to embed a work ethos/culture. However, these challenges have highlighted how having committed young people qualified in the sector can support the achievement of quality outcomes for both the organisation and clients.

The return on investment generated from Apprenticeships is summarised as follows:
• The employment of ambitious people willing to learn and deliver quality care services.
• The development of broader skillsets, greater commitment and higher motivation amongst the workforce.
• Generating recognition of investment in staff development through positive PR.
• The positive relationship between workforce development activities including Apprenticeships and successful tendering process when trying to win contracts.
• The link between workforce development and quality of care made by clients, carers and relatives - Apprenticeships are stated to have brought additional transparency in this respect by providing a visible and recognised example of investment by the organisation in training and development.
• Managers with staff completing Apprenticeships report they are more engaged, more focused, more receptive to new ideas linked to their learning ethos and less likely to be involved in employment related issues.

“If we are able to successfully support employees through their qualification, we will have employees identifying career progression and an appropriately paid job.”

“We see increased levels of confidence at the end of an Apprenticeship. Apprentices react better to being exposed to new areas, will examine their roles and responsibilities more closely and exhibit more of a person-centred approach.”

“We believe that Apprenticeships have impacted positively on the priorities of staff and their approach to care, producing fewer errors in compliance and greater quality from understanding their role and purpose.”

“We estimate that apprentices contribute to savings in recruitment costs and CPD for each post when appointing and promoting staff internally.”

“We now have a more skilled workforce and baseline from which we can measure the skill level of our staff. Apprenticeships provide clear career pathways that can support those wishing to develop further, (i.e. to Level 5 rather than just to Level 2 to meet statutory requirements).”

The future

United Response will continue to offer a minimum Intermediate Apprenticeship for all staff for those who haven’t already achieved any prior qualifications and to embark on a
larger project of recruiting young apprentices. Recruiting apprentices will support the overall aim of encouraging a younger workforce presence.

“Apprenticeships are what we do. They are a massive part of our workforce development. It’s where we want learning to go and needs to be at the forefront of what we do.”

“It’s important that staff are happy as this impacts on the client base through the person centred approach engendered by Apprenticeships.”
Hendra Healthcare

Company overview

Hendra Healthcare (Ludlow) Limited provides residential care for the elderly on a single site. Privately owned and operating under the current owner since 2002, Hendra Healthcare employs 28 full and part time staff between the ages of 18 and 71.

Workforce development activities

Apprenticeships play a key part in a workforce development strategy which is geared towards providing a better service for those in receipt of care. This includes the provision of training for non-care staff including cleaners as they are recognised as important parts of the care package. Hendra Healthcare currently employs seven Health and Social Care apprentices including four at Intermediate Level 2, two at Advanced Level 3 and one Higher Apprentice Level 5. Apprentices are aged between 18 and 62.

In addition to Apprenticeships, the company provides all required statutory training and a range of specialist extended skills support incorporating training in defibrillator use, end of life care, dementia care, pressure ulcer care and stroke prevention.

The rationale for Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were identified as the key element of replacing staff who were moving on or retiring from an ageing workforce whilst also improving overall skills levels. There was an identified lack of good quality carers locally - a definite skills gap in the labour market - which informed a policy of developing staff, through Apprenticeships, in alignment with the ethos of quality care demanded by the company.

Since 2002, Hendra Healthcare has supported 30 apprentices with 17 of the current 25 adult employees either current or former apprentices. The company now has a waiting list for staff (apprentices) which is thought to relate directly to the reputation of the company in developing and supporting staff.

“We look to cascade an ethos of care with everyone buying into it. You can buy a person’s hands but you can’t buy their heart. The heart is where enthusiasm and loyalty is.”

The relationship between apprentice, employer and learning provider is seen as critical with the employer knowing the standards required and the learning providers knowing
the trainee. Effective communication between all parties has been shown to produce the best results.

**The costs of Apprenticeships**

The main costs associated with employing an apprentice are wages. Dependent on the role and responsibilities, the current wage range is between £6.68 and £8.67 per hour. Hendra Healthcare has benefited from a clear policy of everyone being treated equally with apprentices and long standing employees paid the same rate of pay. The average direct wage costs of employing a range of apprentices between Level 2 and 5 are broadly estimated at slightly above £9,200.

There are also indirect costs linked to the supervision of apprentices in addition to time out of work for study and mentoring which are estimated to equate to approximately £1,500 per apprentice.

*“Paying apprentices the equivalent rate to existing staff provides commitment from day one.”*

**The benefits of Apprenticeships**

*“You get a better quality from an apprentice. You get a feel for their heart and whether they will buy into the approach. You can set standards for the rest of their life.”*

The company has benefited from building a relationship with the same learning provider since 2004. They now know the standards the company expect and are flexible in their approach (e.g. undertaking assessments at night for night staff).

*“We have an excellent assessor who is both a mentor and a friend to the apprentices.”*

Apprenticeships are seen as a great way to develop people both in terms of a catalyst for further learning and personally with an example offered of a very shy young apprentice blossoming into a senior position in the organisation.

Great value is stored in the fact that Apprenticeships reward practical competencies supported by the underpinning knowledge achieved through questioning, shadowing experienced members of staff who themselves are former apprentices and the submission of pieces of research by the apprentices. The apprentices learn to understand the residents with the input and support of colleagues and the learning provider.
The success of the approach is highlighted by five apprentices having won individual learning awards and Hendra House being voted the top rated care home in both Shropshire and the West Midlands in a recent Care Home Evaluation with an average score of 9.9. **The employer sees Apprenticeships as an integral part of providing a good cost effective service which is reflected in the Care Home Evaluation.**

The investment in Apprenticeships, and the value obtained as a result is further also highlighted in its 100% completion and retention rate on Apprenticeship programmes. Coupled with a waiting list of potential employees, Apprenticeships have helped to minimise skills shortages in the organisation and greatly reduced the costs associated with recruitment and selection.

“We have not placed a recruitment ad in the newspaper for 8 years. Word of mouth is enough which is great when the cost of recruitment can be £1,500-£2,000 for each position.”

Retention is stated to be only influenced by maternity leave with a pattern of staff not returning until after their second child although the two-way commitment between the organisation and apprentices (both current and former) is reflected in the agreement of flexible working arrangements to meet the needs of all parties. The home is also proud to have given the opportunity to 8 former apprentices to access nursing degrees.

The esteem in which Apprenticeships and apprentices are held by the organisation is further recognised by the sharing of awards, with the organisation taking staff members to award ceremonies and paying for travel and accommodation as a thank you for their contribution to the achievement.

“Within a small, independent provider the apprentice is more of an individual.”

**Return on investment**

**“Apprentices are the future of our business. 75% of our Senior Management Team are current or former apprentices.”**

Apprenticeships are seen as fundamental component of the success of an organisation with the return on investment reflected in:

- the organisation **meeting and exceeding all of its business plan objectives** since 2004
- **operating at full capacity** – the residents are the best sales team
75% of senior management team being former apprentices who have moved up from Intermediate to Advanced level to Team Leader and senior staff

increased profitability which is linked to delivering a quality service

reducing waste by employing staff that know and understand how to carry out their job effectively in alignment with agreed policies and procedures

going beyond the minimum standards demanded by the Care Quality Commission

reduced recruitment and selection costs

minimal absence records

the development of better employees and people

the reputation of the home being enhanced as a result of the publicity for winning national and regional awards including the 2012 Care Accolades, 2009 National Apprenticeships Service, and national finalists in 2011 and 2012, Shropshire Care Business of the Year in 2009, 2011 and 2012 as well as an apprentice winning a bronze medal at the World Skills Competitions in 2011. In addition the company has been voted in the Top 100 Apprentice Employers in the country in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

The integration of apprentices within the workforce and organisation as a whole is thought to be instrumental in achieving a raft of positive outcomes for the employer, employees and the residents in the care home.

“Apprentices are treated as part of the team from day one. They therefore feel part of a team which is committed to delivering person centred care to each of our residents.”

The return on investment offered by Apprenticeships is summarised as:

“Quite simply managing a business successful in all aspects of its operation, delivered by a highly motivated, committed and loyal workforce who bring about significant changes and enhancements to the lives of those, who in many cases, are unable to make the changes themselves….a priceless commodity.”

The future

Apprenticeships will remain an integral part of the workforce and workforce development within Hendra Healthcare for the foreseeable future with a desire to extend investment in older apprentices subject to changes in the funding available.

“You’ve got to keep working at it. (You’ve) got to keep investing in your workforce.”
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Company overview

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) provides the full range of social care services for its local community.

Workforce development activities

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets currently employs apprentices in two ways. It currently employs one health and social care apprentice at Advanced Level 3 in accordance with a traditional model and a further 12 at Intermediate Level 2 as part of a partnership model with three other local authorities (City of London, Hackney and Newham). This collaborative health and social care Apprenticeship programme involves the local authorities pooling their resources and expertise. This partnership approach provides the infrastructure through which social care employers in the area can employ an apprentice for the first time.

19 apprentices were originally recruited by 7 employers in March 2013 with 12 remaining on the course as of October 2013.

The rationale for Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are widely recognised as a method to counter the lack of health and social care workers in London with skills gaps and shortages identified in both frontline and entry level positions.

There is recognised value in developing longer standing two-way learning between apprentices and more experienced staff. The objective of the collaborative project between the four local authorities in London was to bring young people in particular closer to the labour market and real employment opportunities. The project aimed to remove the age and experience barriers encountered by many younger people when job searching, whilst looking to build the longer term capacity of the social care employers involved by helping them to develop their future managers.

The apprentices involved in the project have also provided added value to their social care employers in the shorter term, offering wider skill sets for example in administration alongside health and social care which have been beneficial in streamlining processes.
The costs of Apprenticeships

The main costs in employing the apprentices employed by LBTH is the cost of the wages with the Advanced Level Apprentices paid the London Living wage of £8.61 per hour for 30 hours a week. The social care employers participating in the pilot pay the wages of the Intermediate Level apprentices currently employed. All training, mentoring and assessing etc. is undertaken by LBTH in its role as learning provider.

Funding for training (c. £3,500 for 16-18 year olds) is drawn down by LBTH as the learning provider. This emphasises the value provided to the employer in terms of the learning provider input to the Apprenticeship process which is considerable once training, assessments, observations and verification have been factored in.

The benefits of Apprenticeships

The project has helped to highlight the benefits that Apprenticeships can play for a range of organisations irrespective of their history of workforce development. The benefits of involvement in an Apprenticeship Programme are stated to become clear relatively quickly as the apprentices gain in confidence, professionalism and improve in terms of their communication skills and behaviour as they mature through the programme. Even the ‘rawest’ of recruits are found to be able to quickly talk about health and social care based on the knowledge they pick up on the job.

The social care organisations providing support and employment to apprentices benefit from training provision which is tailored to the needs of their business which incorporates mentoring and supervisory support. They also benefit from the wide-ranging skills, experience and cultural backgrounds of a diverse range of apprentices which can support not only the caring objectives of host organisations (e.g. by relating better to profile of care recipients) but also improve core functions by adding to their existing skills base.

Return on investment

The return on investment derived from the employment and support of apprentices is summarised by:

- apprentices bringing enthusiasm and energy to organisations which may have gone a little stale and therefore improving the service for those in receipt of care
- changing organisational outlooks, professionalising their approach
- the apprentice becoming a dedicated member of staff
• establishing core values
• providing a benchmark for how the organisation should invest in all its staff
• adding value to HR and induction processes in particular
• the image of the business has improved as training and qualifications are linked to quality of care by carers and families

“One apprentice has streamlined the admin processes of his employer, generated greater interest in risk assessments and person-centred planning to an extent that the management team now rely upon him.”

“I’m shocked at how good these people have turned out to be – it’s worked. The best organisations have a strong training workforce and training ethic – Apprenticeships bring all this into organisations as long term staff.”

“Organisations now realise that young people do work, do turn up, are useful and stretch organisations.”

The benefits of Apprenticeships can be maximised where the process is seen as an investment in the future by all parties. The value of the training is enhanced and recognised by both employers and apprentices where the skills learnt in the classroom are practiced in the setting and supported by good communication with the learning provider. The quality of the training process is further validated by nominations for rewards which provide both recognition and further incentive to invest for all parties.

The future

LBTH are set to start planning and recruiting for the second year of the collaborative project.
Company overview

Hertfordshire County Council (the Council) provides a range of adult social care services.

Workforce development activities

The Council began training apprentices in 2005 with a group of 10 young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) supported through Apprenticeships involving placements in day care and supported living. The Council currently employs 12 Intermediate Level 2 and 4 Advanced Level 3 Health and Social Care apprentices alongside 1 in Digital Media, 10 Business Admin and 1 in Outdoor Pursuits.

The rationale for Apprenticeships

The main rationale for investing in Apprenticeships is the Council’s ageing social care workforce. Figures from 2005 revealed that less than one per cent of staff were younger than 24 compared to around one third aged 55 or over.

The financial cost of recruiting qualified staff also underpins the Council’s Apprenticeship Programme, with estimated costs of around £3,500 to recruit a frontline social care worker and between £10-15,000 to recruit a manager representing a significant investment.

The opportunity to invest directly in the personal and vocational development of young apprentices is also believed to reap benefits in terms of ensuring staff have the highest quality of training in line with the Council’s own policies and procedures. In addition, having progressed through a multi-stage recruitment process which incorporates input from those in receipt of care services, staff and college representatives, the employer is provided with a raft of evidence and assurance of the quality of its recruitment decision.

Retention of staff and specifically apprentices benefiting from a variety of skills development training in order provide a consistency of provision for those in receipt of care represents a key influencing factor in the decision to employ apprentices. To illustrate the benefits, 8 out of the 10 apprentices completing their Apprenticeship in 2005 are still employed. Of the two no longer employed by the Council, one moved to the private sector and the other is likely to return after becoming a mother.
Employing apprentices also supports the existing workforce in a number of ways including providing the opportunity for experienced staff not in managerial roles to mentor or supervise another staff member. This role is supported by training and is used to support the development of the apprentice through regular progress updates.

Employing apprentices aged 16-18 also offers a range of benefits to younger clients in receipt of care by enabling them to interact and benefit from the views, skills and knowledge of someone of similar age. Young apprentices have been found to offer new ideas including opening up social media and wider IT-based opportunities and being more open minded to undertaking different activities such as taking service users swimming.

They are known to bring an enthusiasm to the role which opens up access to new activities and locations for clients that older staff would not think of or would be less comfortable engaging in. The growth of an apprentice within young peoples’ services in particular also facilitates consistent levels of care with clients able to develop a relationship with the apprentice throughout their training period and beyond.

“In 10 years I thought I’d seen it, done it, bought the T-shirt, but I saw an apprentice bring her own life experiences to the fore to enable better communication with a service user suffering from a stroke.”

“Young people coming home are said by their families and carers to have a ‘buzz’ about them.”

The costs of Apprenticeships

The costs of employing and supporting apprentices are summarised as being ‘predominantly just the wages’ with the training being sourced for free and recruitment arranged via the National Apprenticeship Service. The minimal cost of acquiring Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks is one of very few direct costs identified.

Apprentices are paid £13,589 per annum which is well above the national minimum wage. The rate per hour of £7.24 for an apprentice compares well to the £8.23 per hour paid to permanent staff and the £18 per hour (plus fees) paid for agency staff.

The relatively high entry wage for apprentices is reflected in loyalty and retention and in line with apprentices being treated like any other employee.

The benefits of Apprenticeships
The benefits of the Apprenticeship model to employers include the training and induction of apprentices which reduces costs and the opportunity for the employer to shape the course to their specific requirements. Hertfordshire County Council utilises a tendering process in order to identify a learning provider that can provide exactly what it required. Typically this will include the ability to deliver training on site in line with Council services and protocols on a day designated by the Council to minimise disruption to services. The Council also benefits from assessing the tutors’ work experience, seeking their DBS checks, gaining guarantees as to the consistency of tutors used and securing their involvement in the induction process.

Gaining recognition for the quality of the investment in its staff also brings a degree of kudos which is known to be both recognised and valued by those in receipt of care and their families. The Council gained the Skills for Care Accolade in 2010 and made the final again in 2013 with a combination of staff, apprentices and clients attending the awards ceremony.

Moreover, the standing in which the Council holds the achievements of apprentices is highlighted by holding an awards ceremony for those completing their qualification which is attended by families which helps to build more confidence in employees and generates a wealth of wider added value.

The value of the investment in the Apprenticeship programme delivered by the Council is clear when compared to the scale of the recruitment needs for front line social care staff. The Council typically has to fill between 15-20 vacancies a month and with the average cost of recruitment estimated at around £3,500 per vacancy. The advantages of apprentices filling at least some of these positions are clear.

“If we recruit through the Apprenticeship programme, there is no release or induction required, the DBS requirements are covered, the apprentice knows the service and there’s no backfill with agency staff. The vast savings from this factor can go a long way to covering costs of the overall Apprenticeship programme.”

Return on investment

The return on investment generated from the investment in Apprenticeships is outlined below:

- The benefits stemming from the enthusiasm, respect and a willingness to listen exhibited by apprentices.
- The value of investing in the local community to provide employment and training opportunities.
• Providing benefits for young service users in terms of being cared for by people of a similar age.
• Supporting better quality care and efficiencies as a result of reduced recruitment costs and daily assessments.
• Generating competition for promotion with older staff who are now considering CPD for the first time in a while.
• Providing older staff with a sense of encouragement and fulfillment as a result of additional mentoring and supervisory responsibilities.

The rewards emanating from the Apprenticeship programme are strongly influenced by both pay with the financial rewards relatively high compared to skills levels, but also the receipt of certificates and celebrations of achievement at each stage of the qualification.

“Employers have to realise that they all started somewhere once. Someone gave them a chance. This is their chance to give something back.”

“In the longer term, today’s apprentices are tomorrow’s potential managers in the service.”

The future

The Council will continue to invest in its Apprenticeship Programme for the foreseeable future in response to the challenges facing the sector.

“You have to ask where the future workforce will come from.”

It is believed that there has never been a better time to recruit apprentices based on the reaction to university tuition fees and the competition for jobs in general.

“75% of the current apprentices could have gone to university in previous years.”
Affinity Trust

Company overview

The Affinity Trust is a supported living provider with 225 staff including 55 in the West Midlands, with sites in Leicester, Sandwell and Tamworth.

Workforce development activities

The company has historically provided the full range of statutory training to its staff including health and safety, control and restraint, first aid etc. as well as service specific training linked to working with clients with specific needs including autism, epilepsy as well as diet and nutrition.

Early in 2013, the company decided to employ 27 apprentices on the health and social care framework with another undertaking business administration. The company had previously supported staff on an ad hoc basis to undertake Diplomas but was persuaded by Leicester College and an offer of funding to engage in a more comprehensive programme of Apprenticeship training.

The rationale for Apprenticeships

The introduction of Apprenticeship training into the organisation complemented a separate investment in leadership and management training with the same learning provider. It also enabled staff to be trained against a common standard which incorporated assessments of functional skills.

Apprenticeships also provided a response to some of the recruitment issues being faced by the company. The ability to tailor the training to specific people and roles linked to specific learning disabilities including autism and epilepsy for example is seen as a big plus. In addition, the skills development in report writing, positive risk management and mobilisation were recognised as important to the on-going delivery of quality care services.

“Apprenticeships provided us with the chance to mould the recruits against our own essential criteria in order to produce an individual with the experience and knowledge that can be applied in practice.”
The costs of Apprenticeships

The costs of recruiting a frontline social care worker are estimated at around £3,500 based on 6.5 days of mandatory training and supervision and the cost of advertising the role.

Although taking several months to start becoming more productive members of staff, the direct costs of employing an apprentice primarily relate to wages which currently stand at £7.11 rising to £7.41 in line with non-apprentice staff.

The benefits of Apprenticeships

The relationship with a trusted, quality learning provider is seen as crucial to maximising the benefits of an Apprenticeship Programme, with Leicester College providing a good mix of distance learning and flexibility to complement the core learning elements including the teaching of functional skills. In particular, the buddy system between an apprentice and a tutor up to a maximum of four students is thought to be very beneficial in supporting retention and quality amongst apprentices.

The selection process utilised for the recruitment of apprentices by Affinity Trust supported the process of finding people with a natural interest in the role. An employment day was used to assess report writing as well as candidates’ ability to interact with the people they were going to potentially support.

Apprenticeships are judged to facilitate an ability to learn and represent the beginning of a path to promotion which channels youthful enthusiasm with the development of life skills. To date, the company has enjoyed a 100% retention rate with its apprentices, compared to 10% turnover amongst its other staff. This is thought, in part, to be a reflection of the company’s support in helping people to climb the employment ladder.

“The apprentices are just eager to learn – very interested in the role.”

“They are beginning to think laterally, thinking for themselves.”

Return on investment

The return on investment derived from employing and supporting apprentices is described in terms of the following outcome and expectations:

- the benefits of supporting staff to succeed
- providing cost savings by improving retention rates
• developing a training ethos
• providing the support and environment where more people are learning and wanting to provide a better service
• giving people ownership of their career and the care they provide
• improving peoples’ lives by offering them a learning opportunity and something to work towards
• since taking on the apprentices, the company has accommodated an additional 10 clients – 25%
• helping to meet client objectives more effectively.

“We interviewed someone with dyslexia who thought that they’d never learn. It was obvious that they were willing and able to learn so we invested in extra support for them. They subsequently overcame their own doubts and are progressing well.”

Apprenticeships are viewed to be a route to creating highly skilled and motivated members of staff which reflects well on the company in terms of its willingness to invest in its staff. Family members of those in receipt of care are known to see ratings and awards for staff development and are interested in the staff development activities provided by the company when informing decisions of which provider to choose.

Staff are stated to be “going that extra yard because they have the skills base and knowledge to do it.”

“Staff are more motivated, educated, qualified and able to think laterally to provide self and job satisfaction.”

The future

All members of staff either have or are currently completing a Level 2 qualification. Based on the outcomes observed from recent investment in Apprenticeships and wider training the company will continue to support its workforce either through Apprenticeships or other social care qualifications.
Appendix 1 – Research tool

Employer Discussion Guide

- Provided to employers in advance to support preparation
- Each question to generate combination of quantitative evidence and qualitative rationale, explanation, impact to inform case study content

Company background

1. Can you give me an overview of the company?
   History, activities, (sub) sector, ownership, size/sites, age profile of staff, performance in last 5 years

Recruitment

2. What training has historically been provided for employees?
   Excluding Apprenticeships, impact and effectiveness

3. What is the company’s recent history in terms of employing apprentices?
   How many per year, over what period of time, what frameworks and levels, ages of apprentices

4. What was the (overall) rationale for employing apprentices?
   (Open question to be followed up by more targeted one)

5. To what degree were the following key influencing factors in your decision to employ (more) apprentices? Expand in each case to include degree to which rationale has been proved.
   - Recruitment method (skills shortages in sector, skills gaps in business, lower cost, support of SfC/learning provider)
   - Chance to mould an employee (relevance of Diploma to business / bespoke training / learning on the job, subsidised training)
   - Increasing staff retention (minimise staff turnover, providing supervisory opportunities)
   - Increase productivity (new skills, energy, overall staff morale, more efficient allocation of staff time and resources)

Costs / Pay

6. Are you able to quantify the costs of employing an apprentice?
   Discussion of direct (e.g. wages, additional training) and indirect (supervision, support, mentoring) costs

7. How much do you pay apprentices?
VFM, rationale and additionality of paying more (increments) than NMW linked to retention

Dealings with the Learning Provider

8. What is the added value of the learning provider – employer relationship?
   Efficiency, flexibility of off-the-job training arrangements, value of a mentor, work to plan the training, assessing progress and deal with any issues that may arise

9. Thoughts on value of the off the job training undertaken by apprentices?
   Benefits to employer, day vs. block release, communications, relevance/rating of Diploma, relevance/rating of technical qualification/certificate and transferable skills

10. Value / ROI from planning and coordination of on the job training for apprentices?
    Passing on skills of existing staff

Retention

11. What are the benefits of supporting an apprentice to complete their Apprenticeship?

ROI

12. In general, how would you rate the performance of your apprentices? What do they add to the business? What does success look like?

13. What have been the benefits of taking on an apprentice in both the short and long term?
    Opportunity to train staff to employer’s standards and range/depth of skills required, financial support for training, recruitment process for young workers; helps to retain young workers

14. Can you estimate the degree to which employing apprentices has generated higher overall productivity for the business? Please quantify and offer examples.
    Explore rationale for scale and attribution to apprenticeships

15. Can you estimate the degree to which employing apprentices has made you more competitive in your sub-sector of social care? Please quantify and offer examples.
    Explore rationale for scale and attribution to apprenticeships

16. Can you estimate the degree to which employing apprentices has improved staff motivation and/or job satisfaction? Please quantify and offer examples.
    Explore rationale for scale and attribution to apprenticeships
17. To what degree are apprentices more loyal than other employees (permanent / temps)?
   Explore re retention rates, experiences, cost benefits of better retention etc.

18. What are the key factors which increase the ROI derived from employing an apprentice?
   For example: use of mentors, employing older apprentices to reflect the skillsets, life experience and maturity required in many social care roles

19. Sum up the difference that Apprenticeships have made to the business
   Bottom line, staff, service users/clients

The future

20. What are your future plans in terms of apprentices?
   How are apprentices going to support the business going forward?

21. Any further thoughts?