Apprenticeship Scheme

1 Introduction
The Council is committed to working proactively towards increasing the recruitment of apprentices within its workforce.

The term apprentice can mean different things to different people. For the purposes of this scheme an apprenticeship is a fixed term contract for a period of 2 – 3 years that provides 16-24 year olds an opportunity to develop skills and competences in business administration, supported by government funded training – usually involving day release.

This learning and development opportunity supports the Council’s Community Strategy which aims to raise the aspirations of young people in the Borough and the Council’s workforce plan.

2 Objectives
• To provide a framework to facilitate the use and development of apprentices within Burnley Borough Council.
• To assist in workforce and succession planning in relation to addressing any skill shortages.
• To raise the aspirations of young people in the Borough.
• To add value and build the skill levels of the wider community.

3. Basic Principles
All service units should aim to employ an apprentice. Vacant positions which fall into the grade 1-5 pay ranges must be considered for recruitment on the basis of an apprenticeship. Where this cannot be achieved managers will be encouraged to restructure their services to add an apprentice or trainee post to their structure.

Apprentices will be recruited in line with the current recruitment and selection procedures, assisted by partners such as Burnley College, Connexions or other training providers and the People and Development Team. The apprenticeship will be a 2-year contract as a minimum and in the first year all apprentices will be paid at the national minimum wage for 16-17 year olds (rather than the minimum wage for apprentices) and thereafter at the appropriate NMW for their age. From 1st October 2008 the hourly rate is:

- £3.53 for 16-17 year olds and all first year apprentices (£128.00/week - £6,674 / annum plus NI)
- £4.77 for 18-21 year olds in their second year of apprenticeship (£173 - £9,020 / annum plus NI)
- £5.73 for those 22 and over and not in their first year of apprenticeship (£208 - £10,845/ annum plus NI)
(NB. Some services may pay apprentices at the lower rate of £100 per week if there is a significant amount of additional in house training, for example in Leisure services). However all apprentices who have reached the aged of 19 and completed one year of service must be paid at the minimum wage.

The apprentice will be employed by Burnley Borough Council, and will normally be required to attend college, usually one day per week in term-time. Apprentices may also access other learning and development opportunities within the Council.

Following recruitment a waiting list will be maintained for candidates who have met the required standard but insufficient placements are available. Candidates who do not meet the required standard will be referred back to Connexions for further help and advice.

Where possible the Council will aim to use local training providers. The apprentice can either carry out a Standard (NVQ Level 2) or an Advanced (NVQ Level 3) apprenticeship. The apprenticeship normally leads to an NVQ qualification but can be linked to other qualifications.

Apprentices who have completed a NVQ Level 2 must be allowed to progress onto NVQ Level 3 if the service can accommodated this.

4. **Funding**

The minimum age for undertaking an apprentice is 16 and the maximum is 24. Apprentices need to have signed up before their 25th birthday to gain full funding for the NVQ training for NVQ Level 2 or NVQ Level 3. All NVQ training which is undertaken as part of the apprenticeship will be fully funded by the Learning Skills Council (or their equivalent) up to Level 3.

All salaries will be paid by Burnley Borough Council and must be accounted for from within the authorised establishment of the service.

5. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Managers are responsible for:
- ensuring the appropriate young person’s risk assessment is completed;
- complying with the health and safety regulations in relation to young people;
- planning and implementing a work programme that is appropriate and supports the development of the apprentice’s skills and competence;
- ensuring appropriate mentoring/support mechanisms are in place;
- allowing reasonable time off to support the apprentice’s learning and development;
- providing an assessment of the suitability of the apprentice against agreed criteria and in consultation with the training provider for the Prior Consideration Scheme.
6. **Continued employment**

Employment is not guaranteed once the apprenticeship is completed. However, the apprentice will be encouraged to seek permanent employment via the normal recruitment and selection process. For those apprentices who have not secured a permanent position after 21 months a “Prior Consideration” Scheme (in other words ringfencing) will be enacted. This positive action is possible as the Council is under represented in this age group within its workforce.

7. **The Prior Consideration Scheme**

Due to the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act the Council is not able to offer a job guarantee at the start of an apprenticeship. However, as the apprentices are in competition with internal and external candidates, there is a risk that the Council would not retain a percentage of its own apprentices each year.

It is therefore proposed that a process of prior consideration for apprentices is established once the apprentice has over 21 months continuous service for apprenticeships of two year duration and of 33 months continuous service for apprenticeships of three year duration. This prior consideration would be in relation to posts up to and including grade 5 which are not required for other redeployment/alternative employment or “at risk” employees.

The prior consideration process will require a full selection process in line with the Council’s Recruitment and Selection procedure on the following basis.

**Level 1**

The Head of Service who has employed an apprentice for over 21 months could request a prior consideration interview for that one apprentice if a permanent or long term temporary post became available in the team/service where the apprentice is employed. If there is more than one apprentice in the service than all apprentices in the team with over 21 months service could be considered. A Head of Service would not be obliged to request a Level 1 approach if it is not considered appropriate to do so (e.g. this doesn’t fit with the workforce plans).

**Level 2**

When a post at Grade 5 or below becomes vacant in a service that does not currently host an apprentice then all eligible apprentices with the required length of service would be invited to apply on a ring fenced basis provided the post is not required for redeployment or associated processes.
In order to be eligible for the prior consideration for either Level 1 or level 2 apprentices will need to demonstrate:

- the required level of continuous service;
- the completion or intention to complete the required NVQ/equivalent qualification to the required level (if due to circumstances beyond the control of the apprentice the required NVQ or equivalent qualification has not been completed).

In addition to demonstrating the required experience, skills and knowledge requirements for the post the following factors will be considered as part of the interview process:

- a satisfactory attendance record;
- appropriate conduct in line with the Council's competences and Code of Conduct.

**Further Information**

Please contact the People and Development Team on extensions 2162/2164/2166

**Other useful contacts**

[www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk](http://www.employersforapprentices.gov.uk)
[www.connexions.co.uk](http://www.connexions.co.uk)
[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)
[www.burnley.ac.uk](http://www.burnley.ac.uk)

**Other relevant Council policies**

Health and Safety - Working with Young People Procedure
Health and Safety – Working Time Directive
Workforce Plan