

Employee Development

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1. Introduction

The paper will identify current legislation related to apprenticeship in United Kingdom as a one of the countries of European Union. The meaning of the apprenticeship will be explained. The paper will critically evaluate the legislation using the SWOT analysis, however the SWOT will only focus on the strengths and weaknesses of an apprenticeships from the apprentice point of view. The paper will provide a detailed explanation of what are the current legislations regarding the apprenticeships in UK. The paper has also included details on the apprenticeship levy and it illustrates how this legislation applies to the employers who are the levy-payers and non-payers. In addition, the change to the apprenticeship levy which was made on the 1 April 2019 is also included.

“Apprenticeships are paid jobs which incorporate on and off the job training. Apprentices have the same rights as other employees and are entitled to be paid at least the apprentice rate of the national minimum wage. A successful apprentice may receive a nationally recognised qualification on the completion on their contract” (Powell, 2019). The apprenticeship is just like a normal job and apprentice will by all means be employed from the day one. The only difference between a normal job and an apprenticeship is that apprenticeship includes *“practical training in a job with study”* (Apprenticeship, 2019).

According to the Human Resource dictionary the definition of an apprenticeship is a *“ process of teaching a trade to young practitioners. It compromises mostly of on-the-job training accompanied by some amount of the conventional reading and class room study. Ideal duration of the training is 3-6 years”*(MBA Skool-Study.Learn.Share, 2019).

The framework and standards are the two types of apprenticeships. So, the employee can choose from two different training providers. The training providers are as mentioned previously:

- *“apprenticeship standards- each standard covers a specific occupation and sets out the core skills, knowledge and behaviors an apprentice will need; they are developed by the groups known as ‘trailblazers’*
- *Apprenticeship frameworks- a series of work-related vocational and professional qualifications, with workplace- and classroom-based training”*
(Gov.uk, 2019)

Between 2016 and 2017 around 900,000 apprentices took part in a funded apprenticeship. The Government have set its target for the new apprenticeships to reach 3 million by the year 2020. However, the Government will only partially cover the costs that are below the upper limit of the funding band” (Powell, 2019). All apprenticeship combine elements of on and off job training, which typically lead to a person to gain standards or qualifications that are recognised by the organization. Moreover, some apprenticeships have a requirement of an assessment at the end of the apprenticeship in order to assess if the apprentice have gained the competence and ability in their job (Apprenticeship, 2019).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, apprenticeships are paid jobs with a difference that during an apprenticeship an apprentice is able to comfortably work and learn at the same time, this is in fact known by a term ‘on and off work training’ (Apprenticeship, 2019).

Apprenticeships take around 1 up to 4 years to complete and are available in more than 170 industries in 1,500 occupations.

Apprenticeship Levy

Apprenticeship levy came to effect on the 6th of April 2017 as a change and an addition to already existing apprenticeship. On the same date the apprenticeship service also was introduced and that allows the employers to pay and register more easily. Moreover, all UK employers with a pay bill of over 3 million each year must pay the apprenticeship levy (Gov.uk, 2019). It is easy to register and pay the levy to HRMC through the PAYE process. Apprenticeships are a devolved policy, therefore each nation's authority in the UK must manage the apprenticeship programmes and the spending plans on their own funding (Gov.uk, 2019). The funds collected for the apprenticeship levy are used to pay for the training and assessment of the apprentices that work for the employers who contribute to the levy. Nevertheless, the employers who don't contribute to the levy will be having to pay 10% towards the costs of training while the government will still cover the remaining 90% of costs (Apprenticeship, 2019). Additionally, from May 2017 there has been a change to the funding put in place, regarding the equality in funding for both apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship standards and framework. Moreover, the funding will be granted according to the funding band where the funding by the government will only cover the “costs that are below the upper limit of the funding band” (Apprenticeship, 2019).

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE passes at grade A*– C or 9 – 4
Advanced	3	2 A level passes/Level 3 Diploma/ International Baccalaureate
Higher	4, 5, 6 and 7	Foundation degree and above
Degree	6 and 7	Bachelor's or master's degree

Figure 1. Apprenticeship qualification levels. Source (Apprenticeship, 2019).

The employers who don't pay the levy (the non-levy employers) will have to go to a co-investment if the employer would wish to use the apprenticeship levy. Such employer will be sharing the cost of the apprenticeships with the government. For this reason the employer will have to contribute a 5 per cent of the share of the apprenticeship training cost, while the government will contribute the rest, 95 per cent of those costs. However, all apprenticeships that have started before the changes to this legislation were made, which was before the 1 April 2019, will pay the previously agreed co-investments of 10 per cent share of costs (Gov.uk, 2019). The apprenticeship levy can be calculated as follows. If a business isn't connected to another business or charity, the yearly Apprenticeship Levy allowance is £15,000. The £15,000 allowance is equal to 0.5 per cent according to the organization's annual pay bill (Hellicar, 2019).

2. STUDY CASE

Grater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH) is a an organization who employs approximately 4,750 staff members and provides its services to more than 130 locations. As a result *“in 12 month period, the trust supports around 53,000 service users, and provides inpatient and community-based health care for people living in and around Manchester”* (Nhsemployers.org, 2018). Moreover, the GMMH provides a variety of specialist mental health and substance misuse services in areas of Greater Manchester, the north west and elsewhere (Nhsemployers.org, 2018).

Prior to when the Government introduced the apprenticeship levy the GMMH organization have already delivered over 60 apprenticeships. Since than the organization have stayed determined to keep delivering apprenticeships. Because the GMMH has the ability to deliver level 2 up to level 7 apprenticeships internally and externally, it became an employer provider. Between 2017-18 the GMMH has delivered 108 apprenticeships (Nhsemployers.org, 2018). However, in 2018-2019 the organization is aspiring to deliver approximately 200 apprenticeships. The apprenticeships are required to do a minimum 20 per cent off-the-job training, that’s why the apprenticeship team has worked together with the line managers to ensure that this can be accommodated. In order to ensure that the apprenticeships could be delivered the team had to understand:

- *“what off-the-job training means*
- *What can be counted towards off-the-job training*
- *How the apprenticeship team and managers can work together to support and access off-the-job-training.”*

(Nhsemployers.org, 2018).

Generally, the GMMH has seen the benefits and positive outcomes of the apprenticeships and because of them it has adopted them into its workforce strategy. Furthermore, through the apprenticeship levy budgets, the GMMH is able to provide attracting jobs for the locals and while doing that is able to help the people to develop skills and improve retention. The managers have admitted that they see a great value in giving time for dedicated learning for all stakeholders. In fact the managers have given some sort of evidence to say that the CQUINs(Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) could not been achieved if not the input from the apprentices side. The management have also decided to work together with the apprenticeship team to plan ahead and produce the rotas. Unquestionably, earlier preparations and planning will make accommodating such dedicated learning time much easier for the management and other services areas (Nhsemployers.org, 2018).

STRENGTHS OF AN APPRENTICESHIP:

1. *“Any learning that is undertaken outside of the normal day to day working environment can be counted towards dedicated learning time”* (Nhsemployers.org, 2018). Therefore, mentoring, improvements projects, dedicated time for coaching and undertaking other roles could be counted as an Off-the-job training (Nhsemployers.org, 2018). For example, one of the apprentice who has been studying at level 3, has “

identified derelict piece of land onsite and pitched to the trust's dragons' den scheme to turn the area into a dementia garden for patients" (Nhsemployers.org, 2018). First, the bid was successful. Second, the bid was counted as a dedicated learning time and thirdly, the apprentice has improved the care and services delivered to the patients which has also lead to gainig a legacy which was left after this apprenticeship.

2. The apprenticeships team does a weekly reports to see if the each apprentice has achieved their scheduled 20 per cent dedicated learning time. In the meantime, the apprenticeship team are aware that some the some of the project undertaken by the apprentice take some time to be completed, therefore the team is not fixated on the numbers (Nhsemployers.org, 2018).
3. The apprenticeships are structured training programs, that give the person an opportunity to work in order to gain a specific qualification. The apprenticeships give a person a chance to develop and gain certain skills a person needs to become successful in the industry they aspire to work for (Ltd, 2019)
4. Basically, an apprentice can take a great advantage of being able to gain experience in working environment, where she or he, the apprentice can show the employers how well they can do at work. Similarly, hands-on training provides an opportunity to show the ability to use the skills and put them into practice in a real working environment. Surely, the employer values the apprenticeship programs because the apprentice brings benefit to the organization while gaining the industry knowledge and other essentials (Ltd, 2019).
5. Alongside of getting an experience while on the apprenticeship, one can also gain confidence which is needed in the working environment (Ltd, 2019).
6. An apprenticeship is a fantastic opportunity for a people who wants to develop them self and upgrade their life style without going through the university. Such apprenticeships give a person a chance to be able to earn and learn at the same time. The employer pays the salary plus most of the cost for apprenticeships is covered by the government. Additionally, when undertaking such apprenticeship one can learn and gain qualifications without having to pay for the tuition fees and unnecessary debts.
7. The wide range of available apprenticeships provides people with choice. People can choose what kind of apprenticeships they would like to undertake, thereupon whether the persons looking to be employed in sport, marketing, logistics or business there plenty to choose from (Ltd, 2019).
8. A person who choose to do apprenticeship isn't expected to study all the time, in fact an apprentice spends most of the time working. This gives the apprentice a flexibility and learning throughout practice (Ltd, 2019).
9. While undertaking an apprenticeship one can gain many experience, but it is also possible to gain higher qualifications like HNCs, HNDs, foundations degrees or even honours degree (Ltd, 2019).
10. For some of the apprenticeships are counted as just as good as the one a person can get at a full time university. For instance, Nick Boles, a former Skills minister, has argued that the apprenticeship can be a an alternative to university. Nick said " I would like to get to a place where there's a choice between two routes, both of which could take you as far as you want to go- one of which is a full-time university degree, the other is an apprenticeship" (Aat.org.uk, 2019). The AAT Advanced or Professional Apprenticeship

in Accounting shows the example that the apprentices can gain competency to do many accountancy, taxation and financial tasks, and can also progress to chartered status in the same way the university graduates do (Aat.org.uk, 2019).

11. The Research by the Centre for Economics and Business(CEBR), illustrates that people “who progress on to study a Professional/Higher apprenticeship will increase earnings by an estimated £150,000 over a life time-with the bonus of no university debt” (Aat.org.uk, 2019). Additionally, some apprentices can earn while they learn the job. Illustrated by the National Apprenticeship /Service, the average weekly pay rate is £170 while other research shows that the average starting salary for the university graduate is £14,734, in contrast the starting salary for those who complete an apprenticeship is £18,463 (Aat.org.uk, 2019).
12. The big bonus of being on the apprenticeship is that the apprentice gets their hands on the real time experience. Particularly, when it comes to accounting work. No doubt, that knowing the theory of accountancy is simply not enough, rather the knowledge of how to apply it when it comes to a real life situation and dealing with customers. This is why, a person who completes their apprenticeships have gained several years of experience and also acquired knowledge. For all those reason such person who has completed apprenticeship is a step ahead of people who have only studied accounting from books. In fact, “92% of apprentices feel their apprenticeships has positively improved their career perspective” (Aat.org.uk, 2019). Undertaking the apprenticeship will not only give experience and key skills, but it will also give the person the opportunity to show how dedicated and hardworking they are. Even though, having a degree as a qualification is a great, now a days, many employers prioritize and are looking for potential employees who have previous experience (Hughes, 2019).

WEAKNESSES OF AN APPRENTICESHIPS

1. As mention previously some apprenticeships can be very beneficial in terms of salary and the salary can be higher after completing an apprenticeship than after graduation from the university. However, the bottom rock minimum wage for the apprentice starts from £3.90 an hour. This means that the starting salary for an individual who graduated from university is much higher that the starting salary for the apprentice (Ltd, 2019) Moreover, a lot of apprentices are paid more than the minimum.
2. The apprentices won't have the access to certain careers. For example, careers such as medicine or science are only available to people who gained an undergraduate degree. For instance, a degree to become a doctor is essential to get access to such jobs (Ltd, 2019).
3. Obtaining a higher qualification through an apprenticeship will certainly take a longer to complete. In addition, the courses available to the apprentices will be in a much narrow range then if applied with an A-levels (Ltd, 2019).

4. Studying at a full time education definitely brings more benefits and the depth of learning is much greater than the one that apprenticeship offers (LTD, 2019).

3. CONCLUSION.

An apprenticeship allows the people to have their first-hand experience, through which the apprentices are able to observe the inputs and outputs of everything that happens inside the organizations. Even though, the apprentice doesn't go to the university yet can still develop skills and have to opportunity for getting an excellent job. The dedicated leaning development give an apprentices an ability to learn through real time working environment. An apprenticeship plays a big role in the UK.

In conclusion, the apprenticeships has changed the way many people can gain valuable qualifications and get attractive job offers without having a degree. The off-the-job training allows people to learn as they work. The paper has identified what are the apprenticeships and that they divide into apprenticeship standards and apprenticeship frameworks. An Apprenticeship Levy came to effect in spring 2017 which instructs the businesses to pay the levy. The businesses can benefit from the funding for training and assessment of the apprenticeships. The apprenticeship funding depends the funding band. The non-levy payers may also benefit from the funding, however they will have to contribute a 5 per cent more than the levy payers towards the costs. The study case of GMMH organization has showed what necessary knowledge the working team needs to possess in order to ensure it can deliver such training. The study case have also highlighted that the value which come from an apprenticeship make the managers has adopted them as a workforce strategy. Hence is why the SWOT analysis have found more strengths than weaknesses of an apprenticeship.

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