

## ISLINGTON COUNCIL

### **The organisation**

Islington Council has run a highly successful apprenticeship scheme since 2012 with 222 apprentices completing their apprenticeship. Of these 99 are still in post, and 45 have continued working for the council. Apprenticeships are promoted in schools and at job fairs by the Youth Offending Service, the Youth Employment Network and the iWork Youth Employment, Progression and Care Leavers teams.

### **The approach**

The whole administration - from the leader of the council to the Chief Executive's Office and senior management - is completely committed to apprenticeships and diversity. Apprenticeships at Islington respond to genuine business needs, which not only provides benefits for the Council but also means the apprentice feels valued. As well as employing new apprentices, the Council offers existing staff the opportunity to upskill through an apprenticeship.

Apprentices are given a range of support including mentoring and pastoral care. Line managers also receive support and a series of ongoing training events are being developed to share learning from their experiences.

Believing that the Council should reflect its residents, there is a huge commitment to ensure the workforce is more diverse, and apprenticeships are seen as a key way to achieve this. For those young people who are not yet ready for an apprenticeship; traineeships are also offered.

With the new levy, the public sector target and their own business needs to consider, Islington plan to further embed apprenticeships into the organisation by developing a more flexible approach of workforce development opportunities, alongside new starts. Each directorate has been informed of the potential levy credit they have and, in collaboration with the apprenticeship team, are planning how most effectively, this can be used.

### **The challenges**

There is a perception that apprenticeships are only for younger adults, starting their first job. In addition, many staff don't understand what's involved in an effective apprenticeship. To address this, the Apprenticeship Team has developed internal communications and ensured apprenticeships are embedded into the organisation in a way that will demonstrate to others the potential benefits of the programme.

The Levy has also presented some operational challenges but a strategic direction through procurement has been developed by the Apprenticeship Coordinator.

## **The benefits**

The programme has resulted in increased loyalty, retention and available skills across the workforce. Apprentices understand the expectations and values of the Council while being supported to thrive in their careers. They have qualifications and a clear pathway they hadn't previously considered, but which they now consider invaluable.