

BLUE SKY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Spring 2019

NEWSLETTER

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Update

The Apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017 to enable the government to meet its very ambitious target of 3million new apprentices by 2020, but according to the National Audit Office (Mar 19) this target is highly unlikely to be met. Apprenticeships starts have, in fact, fallen by 26% comparing last year with the year before the levy was introduced.

So that's the gloomy news. The good news is, that although we are just about to come to the end of the 2 year window in which to spend the levy, this is really only the beginning for these new Trailblazer Apprenticeships. To start with the standards were slow to come on line and this has gathered pace with new standards still being introduced. Employers, apprentices and training providers also needed time to get involved and make a commitment.

The HR Apprenticeships were two such standards that were approved in September 2017. According to FE Data (Gov.UK, 2019) nationwide in their first year there were no Level 5 starters and only 30 level 3. HR training has not had any direct government funding before, with qualifications written for the sector by the sector, so we imagine these numbers will go from strength to strength. We are very pleased to report that our partnership with Colchester Institute has started 22 level 5 and 13 level 3 HR Apprentices since we began in September 2018.

Blue Sky is now turning its attention to Leadership and Management Apprenticeships, which are already very popular and one of the first standards to gain approval.



Apprenticeships

Statistics

Apprenticeship numbers **are** starting to increase-

9.7% up on last year.

(Aug18—Dec18)

49.5% of commitments to start are apprentices aged **25 and over**.

42% were advanced (L3) apprenticeships.

(DfE Feb 2019)



Colchester Student Graduation

Congratulations to our Colchester CIPD level 5 Intermediate students who will be celebrating their success at our student graduation in Colchester next month. They will be joined by other students and HR professionals to hear **Michelle Gant**, founder of The Engaging People Company to talk about Employee Engagement. Having previously been Director of Engagement for a not-for-profit housing provider, she is truly committed to making companies people satisfaction-centred, as this has a direct correlation to business success. All are welcome to come along and listen to Michelle on Thursday 11 April, 4-6pm at Colchester Institute. Book through Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/engaging-employees-in-your-workplace-and-our-colchester-student-graduation-tickets-57090263515>

New Networking Group

In recognition of the fact that a lot of networking is aimed at Managers and Directors, Martine Twigge from PX Success has approached Blue Sky to start a new networking group aimed at HR administrators/support, and those who have taken on HR as part of another role. Martine wanted this group to be more practical and less strategic than other groups.

We hope that a group of like minded professionals discussing practical topics that matter to them with some expertise on hand will be welcomed. If you would be interested in joining and maybe have some ideas of topics please join us on Meet Up.

<https://meetup.com/HR-Support-Network>

Expert talks...



We were very lucky to have Tom Oxley as our last Expert Speaker in Norwich sharing his experiences and knowledge of Mental Health at Work. It went so well we are planning another collaboration with Tom who is bringing with him 2 other speakers.

More than Mental Health

17 July 2019

Tom Oxley

From Bamboo Mental Health, Tom will speak about HR modern approaches to mental health in the workplace.

Milee Brambleby

Founder of Common Sense Services, her session will look at how workplace conflict arises and grows and how we can manage it.

Laura Biggart

Senior Lecturer in Psychology at UEA. Laura will look at 2 models employers can use to increase confidence to tackle emotional resilience.

Eventbrite bookings will be available soon.

Networking



Most of you reading this article are in full time (plus) employment, studying for a qualification (often in your own time) and have a busy family/social life, so no doubt you will have asked yourself 'is it worth spending time networking?' The answer most definitely is YES!!

According to Guy Pink, HR Director at the charity Addaction and former secretary of the London HR Connection group, "Networking is one of the forgotten skills of being a HR professional. A skilled networker is recognised as a more 'rounded' employee; someone who can tap into their network for specialist knowledge, pursue new business leads, gather market intelligence, source new strategic alliances and raise the profile of their organisation." (2010)

Most of our students are studying via blended learning, which means that the majority of the learning is completed in their own time, only coming together with other students for a workshop session for 1 day a month. Consequently, as well as the workshop content being crucial to them, it is also an extremely important time for students to be able to informally network with each other. Over the years I have heard many students say that the workshop time (including coffee and lunch breaks) gives them a valuable opportunity to share good practice with each other as well as their experience of mistakes.

This network often extends beyond the actual workshop with many students keeping in contact with each other, meeting for coffee or messaging via What's App, etc, to discuss the latest assignment brief or issues at work. It

can also reach beyond the duration of the course. Many students continue to keep in touch with each other, including two who decided to share a flat together when they both started new jobs in London!!

In addition to networking with other students, further networking within and outside the HR community can also be of great value. There is the obvious possibility of making new contacts, which could lead to future business, but it could also help identify a new business opportunity, additional sources of information/services or help find your next HR position! Networking is also important to ensure you are visible within the sector so you and your organisation's profile is reinforced within the business community. This can be done by either attending face to face meetings and events or via online communities such as LinkedIn , etc.

More formal networking (ie CIPD branch events) also gives you a chance to keep your professional knowledge updated and current as well as providing an opportunity to be continually inspired and motivated. Also, if you work for a SME (which could mean you are the only HR practitioner employed by your organisation) or if you are self employed, this can be quite isolating. Networking can help you feel more in touch with the outside 'HR world' and give you more confidence in your own HR knowledge and expertise.

All in all networking is of great value to all professionals, whether it's carried out within your student group, HR sector, professional institute or business community, and that's why we think it's worth it. With that in mind...we look forward to seeing you at our next networking event!

Kate Woods

<https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-business-networking-and-what-are-the-benefits-2947183> (accessed 7/3/2019)

Programme Portfolio

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Foundation Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Human Resource Practice

Foundation Level 3 Award and Certificate in Learning and Development

Intermediate Level 5 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Human Resource Management

Advanced Level 7 Award, Certificate and Diploma Human Resource Management

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management

Level 4 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management

Level 5 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management

HR Apprenticeships

Level 3 HR Support

Level 5 HR Consultant/Partner

Bespoke Training

We design and deliver bespoke training packages for HR and Managers that can also be linked to nationally recognized qualifications on subjects such as

- Leadership
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Recruitment
- Developing staff

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