

THE NEW HOUSING APPRENTICESHIPS EXPLAINED



HOUSING APPRENTICESHIPS - WHAT ARE THEY ALL ABOUT?

The government's new apprenticeship standards bring with them some great news for housing. In the past, the range of apprenticeship standards on offer has covered generic sectors and topics, but with this change they become much more tailored, specific and relevant.

The new-look apprenticeships come in three levels, targeted at specific job roles at varying levels. For the first time, the same apprenticeship can be applied to housing management in social housing and property management in the private rented sector:

- Housing/property management assistant
- Housing/property management officer
- Senior housing/property officer

With these specific apprenticeships, an organisation can now offer much more relevant programmes designed to upskill the apprentice and support their progression into a career in housing or property management.

What else has changed?

There is now also more of a focus on learning within the workplace, rather than being assessed in the workplace. This requires a level of support and buy-in from the employer as a learning programme must be put in place before the apprentice starts.

It is expected that a qualification will still be a cornerstone of the apprenticeship, to deliver the underpinning knowledge. However, there are no mandatory qualifications, which means the employer can identify the qualification that most suits the job role. It's worth noting that any qualification completed as part of an apprenticeship cannot be delivered entirely online, however a 'blended learning' approach – a mix of online and face-to-face learning – is possible.

From a more technical standpoint, employers must work with a lead training provider to develop a programme to support the apprentice and they must be approved by the Skills Funding Agency to receive government funding. The government are in the process of developing a Digital Apprenticeship Service that will allow employers to identify approved training providers.

Successful completion of the apprenticeship will be determined by an independent end-point assessment.

So what does the end-point assessment look like?

Think of the new apprenticeship like learning to drive, with the end-point assessment as the final practical examination and a qualification acting as the theory test.

Essentially, the standard is a job description outlining the knowledge, skills and behaviours the apprentice will have gained by the end of the apprenticeship. The apprentice will complete most of their learning on the job and through the completion of a qualification. The end-point assessment is to complete a project or case study that allows the apprentice to demonstrate that they can combine knowledge, skills and behaviours to complete a real world task. The apprentice will then attend an interview with a panel made up of the employer, training provider and independent housing professional appointed by the assessment body, to discuss the project/case study. This will allow the panel to ensure that the work is the apprentice's own and fill any gaps that weren't fully covered within the submission. The project task will vary depending on the individual's role and the needs of the employer. The project brief will be signed off as fit for purpose by the assessment body before the apprentice begins work on it.

And what's this I've heard about a levy for organisations?

Essentially, the levy will take money from employers that they can only get back if they spend it on apprenticeships. The levy will be collected monthly by HMRC and is based on 0.5% of the wage bill. All employers will have an allowance of £15,000, which means that no levy is paid on the first £3m of the wage bill. You should also note that the money must be spent within 18 months or it will be lost.

Also, the government plans to introduce a quota, which means that 2.5% of staff in all public sector organisations must be apprentices – so local authorities will certainly need to begin preparing for this.

HOW CAN CIH HELP?

At CIH we can support your apprenticeship programme in a number of ways. If you are looking to source a lead training provider for your apprenticeship programme, we can put you in touch with a CIH approved centre that can support you.

Additionally, our CIH Level 2 Certificate in Housing Practice, Level 3 Certificate in Housing Practice, and Level 4 Certificate in Housing are recommended qualifications. These qualifications can be delivered by CIH Housing Academy through blended learning, or as an in-house programme, should you have enough candidates. Alternatively, CIH Awarding Organisation can put you in touch with other centres that are approved to deliver the qualifications

And finally, CIH is an approved end-point assessor for all three apprenticeships, so we can conduct the final assessment for your programme.

Get in touch to discuss what this means for your organisation:

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