

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES		
DATE:	JULY 29TH 2021	REPORT NO:	CFO/044/21
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHOR:	NICK MERNOCK
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	LYNN HUGHES ASHLEY ROBERTS JOHN PRICE		
TITLE OF REPORT:	OFSTED INSPECTION OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	OFSTED REPORT
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Purpose of Report

1. To advise members of the outstanding assessment results and the highly positive report received following the Ofsted inspection of our Firefighter Apprenticeship process

Recommendation

2. That Members note the content of the report

Introduction and Background

3. Members have previously agreed that the People and Organisational Development Team should progress with an application to attain the categorisation of Employer Provider to support the introduction of its Apprenticeship scheme for recruit Firefighters, and subsequently all Apprenticeships within the Authority.
4. The advantage of doing the scheme in this way is that the Authority self manages its Apprenticeship schemes which effectively maximises the Apprenticeship Levy as it does not have to employ and pay external providers.
5. The Authority attained that Employer provide status, and has been successfully utilising the Apprenticeship scheme for all firefighter recruitment. One of the implications of attaining employer provider status are that the Authority is subject to very short notice Ofsted Inspection.
6. On this occasion the Authority was given two days' notice of its inspection by Ofsted.

7. However due to the quality of work that had been undertaken by the Apprenticeship team, Training & Development Academy and the Station Managers and Watch Mangers with responsibility for management of apprentices on station the department was confident that it had everything in place to secure a positive inspection outcome.
8. The Ofsted report is attached as Appendix A and members can see that confidence was well founded based on the exceptional comments received.
9. The Ofsted inspectors were looking at 3 specific areas as part of their inspection, these were:
 - (1) *How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of a successful apprenticeship scheme?*
 - (2) *What progress have leaders made in ensuring the apprentices benefit from high quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?*
 - (3) *How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?*
10. Ofsted have 3 levels of rating from Inadequate through to the highest rating of Significant Improvement, the Authority received an assessment of Significant Improvement in all three areas
11. This is an exceptional result, and demonstrates the fantastic work undertaken by all members of the Team.
12. Before the inspection began the Authority were told not to expect 3 top ratings as that seldom happens so to attain such an outcome is outstanding.
13. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is the only Fire Authority to attain these results, and are one of a very small number across the entire public sector.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. The Recruits that fill the Apprenticeship vacancies are recruited using the Authority's agreed policies and procedures, and the selection methods all have the appropriate Equality impact assessment completed.

Staff Implications

15. The Apprenticeship course for the recruit firefighter has been specifically constructed to ensure the delivery of a highly qualified firefighter, demonstrating the culture and values of the organisation. All station feedback on the new recruits remains highly positive.

Legal Implications

16. The Authority's Apprenticeship scheme complies with all appropriate legislation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

17. The Authority has received a separate report explaining and detailing both the level of income brought into the Authority from the Apprenticeship levy, and how that is collected.
18. It has been extremely beneficial to the Authority to utilise the employer provider status and manage its own Apprenticeship process.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

19. The apprenticeship based recruit firefighters complete all levels of training that were delivered prior to it becoming an Apprenticeship scheme and so are in full receipt of all the relevant training and environmental awareness.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK. One team, putting its communities first.*

20. As mentioned previously utilising the Apprenticeship scheme has been beneficial from a financial basis to the organisation, and has delivered a high standard of community firefighter.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
