



CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



**TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH**



**BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN**

Career Development Programme

It is essential that our future workforce includes the right people with the right values and skills, in the right jobs, at the right time.

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Introduction

Torfaen County Borough Council is a significant employer with a workforce of around 4000 employees. The Council recognises that its **employees are key** in delivering excellent services to the citizens and local communities of Torfaen and is therefore committed to developing a skilled and adaptable workforce. The Council also acknowledges the need to identify potential skills gaps and to **prioritise the development of knowledge and skills** in these areas to ensure it continues to deliver excellent services in the future.

The Council recently published its Workforce Strategy for 2023-2028 which recognises that 43% of its workforce is over 50 years old.

View the [Council's Workforce Strategy](#)

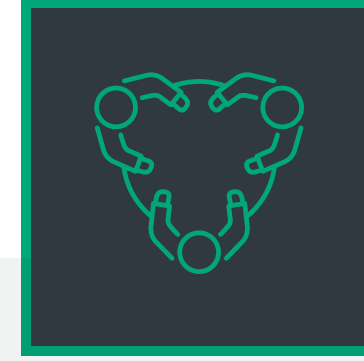
It sets out our plans to ensure that we have a workforce that will deliver on our ambitions in the County Plan and our key drivers, including the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

One of the Workforce Development themes is the introduction of a Career Development Programme which has the following delivery objectives:

- We will design and deliver a Programme that will build on the Apprentice Scheme in place;
- We will introduce Trainee opportunities for people to start their career in the Council by changing established roles to Trainee opportunities with career pathways to encourage and enable people to develop and have a career in the Council;
- We will work with schools, Colleges and looked after children's teams to support and encourage young people to join the council as part of the Career Development Programme;
- We will utilise the Apprentice Framework training for existing employees to enable them to develop and meet their career aspirations.

What is the Career Development Programme?

The Career Development Programme will support the Council as part of the six Workforce Strategy themes providing a framework for delivery:



Wellbeing Framework

- Health
- Work
- Values
- Engaged
- Personal Growth
- Good Lifestyle Choices
- Financial Wellbeing



Training

- Core Training
- Mandatory Training
- Core Competencies
- Delivery Programme
- E-Learning Platform



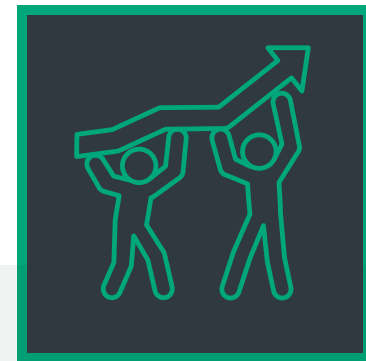
Apprentices/Trainees

- Apprenticeships
- School Leavers
- Career Pathways
- Internships
- Upskilling



Recruitment

- Online applications
- Onboarding Portal
- Website Branding
- Targeted Recruitment
- Social Media Campaigns
- Manager Training



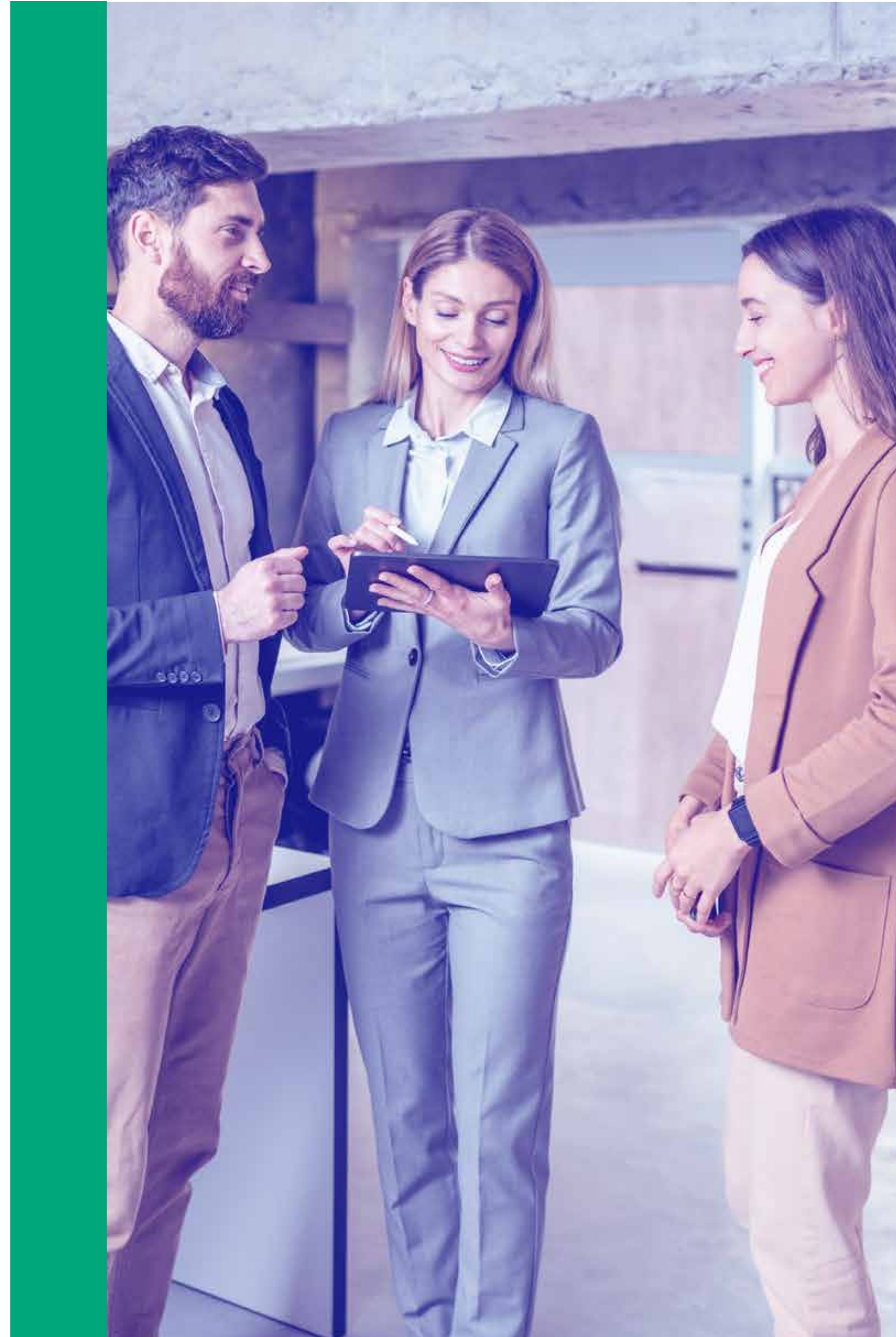
Succession Planning

- Identification
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Talent Management
- Career Pathways



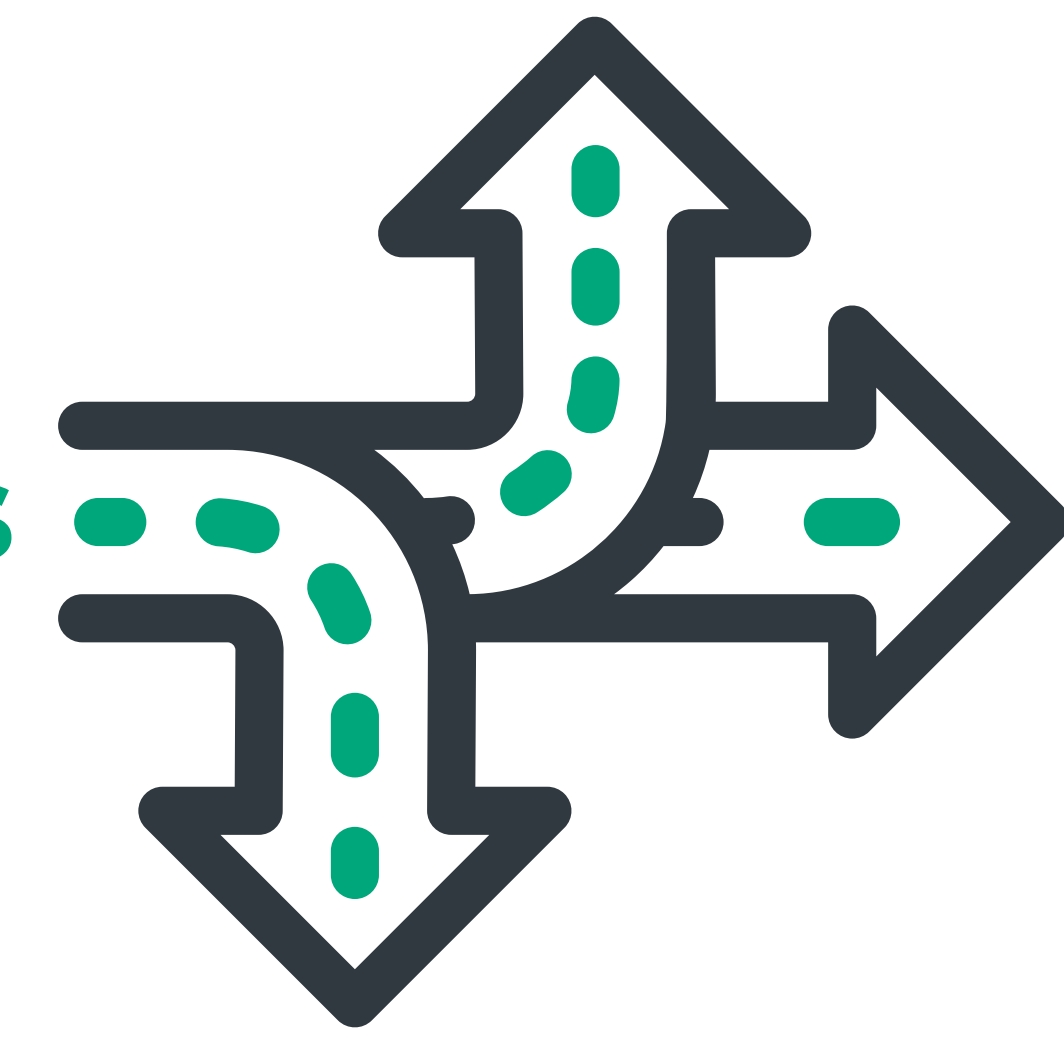
Leadership & Management

- Culture and Behaviours
- Core Competencies
- Performance Appraisal
- Development Plans



The Programme offers Three Different Routes

The Career Development Programme allows for staff to have a targeted training Programme which can be accessed through the Welsh Government's Apprenticeship Framework which is fully funded. It will be delivered by approved external Training Providers.



Apprentice



Employed for at least 30 hours per week

Paid at Apprenticeship rates

Temporary 12 to 24 months

Apprenticeship Framework Training

Opportunity to apply for permanent jobs

Trainee



Permanent development roles in specialist or hard to recruit areas

Can be paid at Apprentice rate or on a career grade depending on requirements

Apprenticeship or sourced training

Upskilling



Existing employees

Apprenticeship Framework Training

Bespoke Training

As part of this Programme the Council will introduce new training opportunities, where possible. Vacant posts, at Grade 5 and below will become Trainee opportunities with career pathways.

Apprentices, Trainees and Upskilling

Apprentices and Trainees are employees that are provided with training and support to enable them to develop into a role by undertaking on the job training. There is training available through Apprenticeship Programmes which are fully funded by Welsh Government to support employers wishing to invest in the skills of their workforce and take advantage of the many benefits to be gained from developing existing employees.

Apprentices

These are traditional Apprentices, employed with the intention that they come into the Council for a 24 month period, depending on the qualification they undertake. They are paid at the Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage rate according to their age at the start of their Apprenticeship. There is no guarantee of a permanent job at the end of the Apprenticeship.

By law, they must be employed for a minimum of **30 hours** per week and for a minimum of **12 months**. They must also be allocated **20%** of their working week to allow time towards study and complete on-the-job training.



If you have any queries, please contact:
kerry.agate@torfaen.gov.uk

Trainees

Trainees are new employees who will come into the Council and be trained and developed to fulfil the duties of a specific role. Any post can be converted to a Trainee post and there will be a range of solutions available depending on the role and the needs of the service.

The key to employing a Trainee is that the role can be designed as an initial Apprentice role, so suitable for someone with little experience, where pay will be at the Apprentice National Minimum Wage rate, or, it can be designed to attract more experienced and qualified people, where they will be appointed on a career pathway. In this case, the job description will be designed with expectations and competencies clearly defining what skills need to be met to allow progression through the career grade. These roles will be suitable for existing employees as well as new employees and graduates.

If you are looking to appoint someone with experience to the role and are considering taking on a Graduate, there is a separate [Venture Guidance](#) document available to support you through this process.

Upskilling

Supporting and upskilling our existing employees is fundamental in retaining and developing our workforce to meet future needs.

Existing employees can investigate the possibility of entering onto a Level 2-4 Foundation Apprenticeship qualification or a Higher Level 5 Apprenticeship qualification.

Employees can undertake a qualification whilst working in their existing role. Managers should consider this type of request as part of the employee's continued professional development.

Managers can also utilise the Apprenticeship Framework to access training for employees to assist with succession planning.

Existing employees will continue to be paid their current salary whilst undertaking an Apprenticeship qualification.

An [Expression of Interest Form](#) will need to be completed for consideration and approved by the Manager prior to the employee being enrolled on to the qualification on the Apprenticeship Framework:





What are Apprenticeships?

An Apprenticeship is an integrated Programme of vocational Learning designed to provide an opportunity to work and achieve competency-based qualifications and knowledge qualifications while being in employment.

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to:

- Achieve a vocational, work-based qualification;
- Develop valuable work experience;
- Develop new skills & knowledge;
- Achieve an industry accredited qualification whilst working;
- Learn real life skills.

Apprenticeship Programs are fully funded by Welsh Government to support employers wishing to invest in the skills of their workforce and take advantage of the many benefits to be gained from developing existing employees.

If a qualification is listed on the Welsh Government's Apprenticeship Framework, the training will be fully funded. The only cost to the Council is wages and on-costs.

A list of the fully funded qualifications is available:

[Frameworks Library](#)

Apprenticeships can only be delivered through an Apprenticeship Learning Agreement made between the employer, the Apprentice/Trainee and the Training Provider. A Learning Agreement will be signed by all parties at the start of the Apprenticeship training.

The Training Provider will be responsible for managing the training and assessment Programme until the qualification is completed.

Who is Eligible?

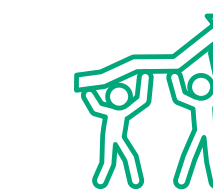
Anyone aged 16 or over can complete an Apprenticeship qualification. There is no maximum age limit. 16-year-olds will need to have completed their final GCSE year at school before starting an Apprenticeship. Both new and existing employees can apply for new Apprenticeship positions or undertake new qualifications as part of their continued professional development.

What are the benefits to the Council?

There are several key benefits for employers who invest in Apprenticeships.

The introduction of Apprenticeship Programmes has been proven to:

Improve Productivity



Apprenticeships equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to do their job more effectively. Highly competent employees with a broad range of abilities will make a real difference to your business through increased flexibility, efficiency improvements and effective working.

Increase Motivation



Apprenticeships are proven to motivate employees and give them confidence within their roles. Apprenticeships can be a route to developing rising stars or talent within your Organisation into more senior or management positions and could also act as an incentive during a recruitment process.

Provide Highly Relevant Training



Apprenticeships have been specifically designed by the industry to be flexible enough to meet the needs of the wide range of Organisations working within each sector. Therefore, training is always relevant and tailored to the Organisation and its clients/customers.

Help Avoid Skills Shortages



Apprenticeships can enable Organisational leaders to manage knowledge and skills retention through effective succession planning and ensure that the required levels of specialist skills and experience are maintained.

What are the benefits to the Apprentice/Trainee?

- They work alongside experienced employees to gain job specific skills;
- They have the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification;
- They gain employee status and benefits, e.g., paid sick leave and holidays;
- Improved job prospects;
- Opportunities for career progression.

How long does an Apprenticeship/ Traineeship last?

This depends on the length of time required to complete the qualification or training being undertaken.

Apprenticeship qualifications can take between one and four years to complete but **must** last for at least one year. The duration of a Traineeship will depend on how long the employee takes to progress through the Career pathway attached to the job role.

Levels of Apprenticeships

Foundation Apprenticeships (Level 2)

Foundation Apprentices study towards qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs or Diploma Level 2 and often go on to complete Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships (Level 3)

Apprentices gain valuable on the job skills, whilst studying towards a nationally recognised qualification equivalent to 5 GCSEs, 2 A-Levels or Diploma level 3.

Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 and 5)

On a Higher Apprenticeship, individuals will work towards a qualification equivalent to a HND / HNC, foundation or Honours Degree. Higher Apprenticeships are available across a range of sectors.

Degree Apprenticeships (Level 6 and 7)

A Degree Apprenticeship enables you to gain a full undergraduate Master's or Bachelor's Degree while you work. Degree Apprenticeships take 3-6 years to complete, depending on the course Level.

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Foundation Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 2	5 good GCSE passes
Apprenticeship	NVQ Level 3	2 A-level passes
Higher Apprenticeship	NVQ level 4 or above	HNC, HND or foundation Degree level and above
Degree Apprenticeship	NVQ level 6-7	You will combine work with studying at a University/ College gaining a full Bachelor's Degree

What Training is Available?

There are many Apprenticeship qualifications available, each designed to meet the specific needs of the business within the Council. A Framework is followed to develop a high level of skill and help gain a nationally recognised qualification. These Frameworks include as a minimum:

- Vocational competency – providing practical skills in specific occupational areas from Level 2 up to 5;
- Technical knowledge – to underpin the practical skills;
- Essential Skills – on-line skills assessment that calculates the level of ability and understanding in communication, application of number and digital literacy (WEST - Wales Essential Skills Toolkit) assessment.

Find out more about [Essential Skills Wales](#)



What does the Career Development Programme offer?



Hands on, practical work experience to develop specific job-related skills and knowledge.



Work based, accredited learning opportunity reflecting the skills and knowledge required for the current job role.



Induction Programme and access to work related training courses.



A Personal Development Plan (PDP) and regular Apprenticeship Progress reviews.



A team-based Apprenticeship "Buddy" and Mentor to provide pastoral support.

Qualification Routes

There are many qualifications available.

Some qualifications have strict eligibility criteria attached in order to receive full funding*. The OD Team Contact will be able to advise accordingly: kerry.agate@torfaen.gov.uk.

If the qualification being undertaken is sourced from the Apprenticeship Framework then the training is fully funded, and they are classified as accessing the Apprenticeship Programme regardless of the rate of pay. Where qualifications/training is not accessed through the Apprenticeship Framework and is sourced direct through a Training Provider, College or University, the employing Service Area will pick up any training costs and the terms set out in the Training Agreement will apply to the employee.



Pay and Conditions

Apprentices and Trainees are employees and must be treated as such. They have the same rights and privileges as other employees.

By law, all Apprentices must be employed for at least **30** hours per week for at least one year to be able to access Apprenticeship funded training but normal hours are 37 hours per week. They must be paid at least the Apprentice National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate based on their age at the time of starting the Programme, and for the duration of their Apprenticeship. The Council will cover the cost of wages. They must also be allocated 20% of their working week to allow time towards study and complete on-the-job training. This **20%** includes attendance at workshops/Assessor meetings but may also include training courses attended or observations/shadowing, as well as time spent completing assignments.

Apprentices will be issued with a fixed term Contract of Employment which will end once the qualification has been achieved. They can apply for permanent jobs within the Council whilst completing their Apprenticeship qualification. If they are successful in obtaining a permanent role the qualification will transfer with them and they can continue until completed.

Trainees can be paid at either the Apprentice National Minimum Wage rate according to their age or they can be appointed on a career pathway, this will be agreed at the time of appointment. The Council will cover the cost of wages (plus on costs).

Where there is a career pathway in place, any progression will be agreed with the Head of Human Resources and the Head of Service once the competencies within each grade range have been met.

Trainees will be issued with a permanent Contract of Employment and their post title will change accordingly once the training has been completed.

National Minimum Wage Rates (NMW) (April 2023/24)

Set out in the table are the current wage rates for Apprentices.

For further information visit www.gov.uk

Where an Apprentice has a birthday during their Apprenticeship and their age moves into the next age bracket they will be entitled to an increase in their hourly pay rate.

Managers will notify payroll of this change automatically.

If you have any queries please contact: kerry.agate@torfaen.gov.uk

Age	Hourly Rate
Apprentice/Under 18	£6.40
18-20	£8.60
21+	£11.44

Conditional Offer

Apprentices/Trainees will be employed under a Contract of Employment and are subject to completing a satisfactory probationary period.

Managers must ensure that the Apprentice/Trainee is made aware that the offer of employment will be a Conditional Offer, and that they are contractually required to complete all pre-employment checks. They must also be made aware that they must undertake a qualification as part of their employment and that they will also be required to complete and return a Training Agreement and Sharing of Information Form, where applicable, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

Requirement for Information Sharing

The employee will also sign an Information Sharing Form agreeing for the Council to obtain/share information, for the purpose of monitoring their attendance at College/University, course work and exam results.

These Agreements form part of the employee's Conditional Offer of employment and must be completed and returned as soon as possible to the OD Team before they start in their role. These will be sent to the employee by the OD Team – odteam@torfaen.gov.uk.

Training Agreement for Council-Funded Training

Where the Council has provided financial assistance towards the payment of tuition fees, or any other costs associated with training, the employee will be required to sign a Training Agreement, with the expectation that they will stay in the Council's employment for a minimum of 2 years after completing the qualification. However, this timescale may increase depending on the level of the qualification and the cost, for example an employee would be expected to stay in the Council's employment for 5 years if studying an MBA qualification. These terms will be agreed before the employee enrolls on to the training.

Where the employee leaves the Council's employment within the agreed period, for any other reason other than ill-health, the Council will require full reimbursement of the cost of the training, as set out in Paragraph 1 of the Training Agreement.

Who will be Involved?

There are several people who have key roles to play, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. The roles vary slightly between Apprenticeships, Traineeships, and Upskilling.

The Employee

The employee will carry out a full range of tasks and functions in their Job Description and in line with the standards and behaviours set out in the Council's Values and Behaviours Framework. In addition, the employee will commit to completing a relevant work-based qualification as part of the Apprenticeship. The employee will be supported by the Manager, Buddy, Mentor and the Assessor throughout the training experience.

The Manager

The Manager will support the employee. They will offer relevant supervision and guidance in relation to workplace competence. They will be the official point of contact and will also liaise regularly with the Training Provider to ensure that personal development opportunities are provided to ensure that progress against milestones can be achieved.

The Buddy

The Buddy will be a peer within the team who can help the employee settle in and feel welcome both in the team and the Council. They will provide support with the team-based induction tasks and act as the go-to person for day to day queries.

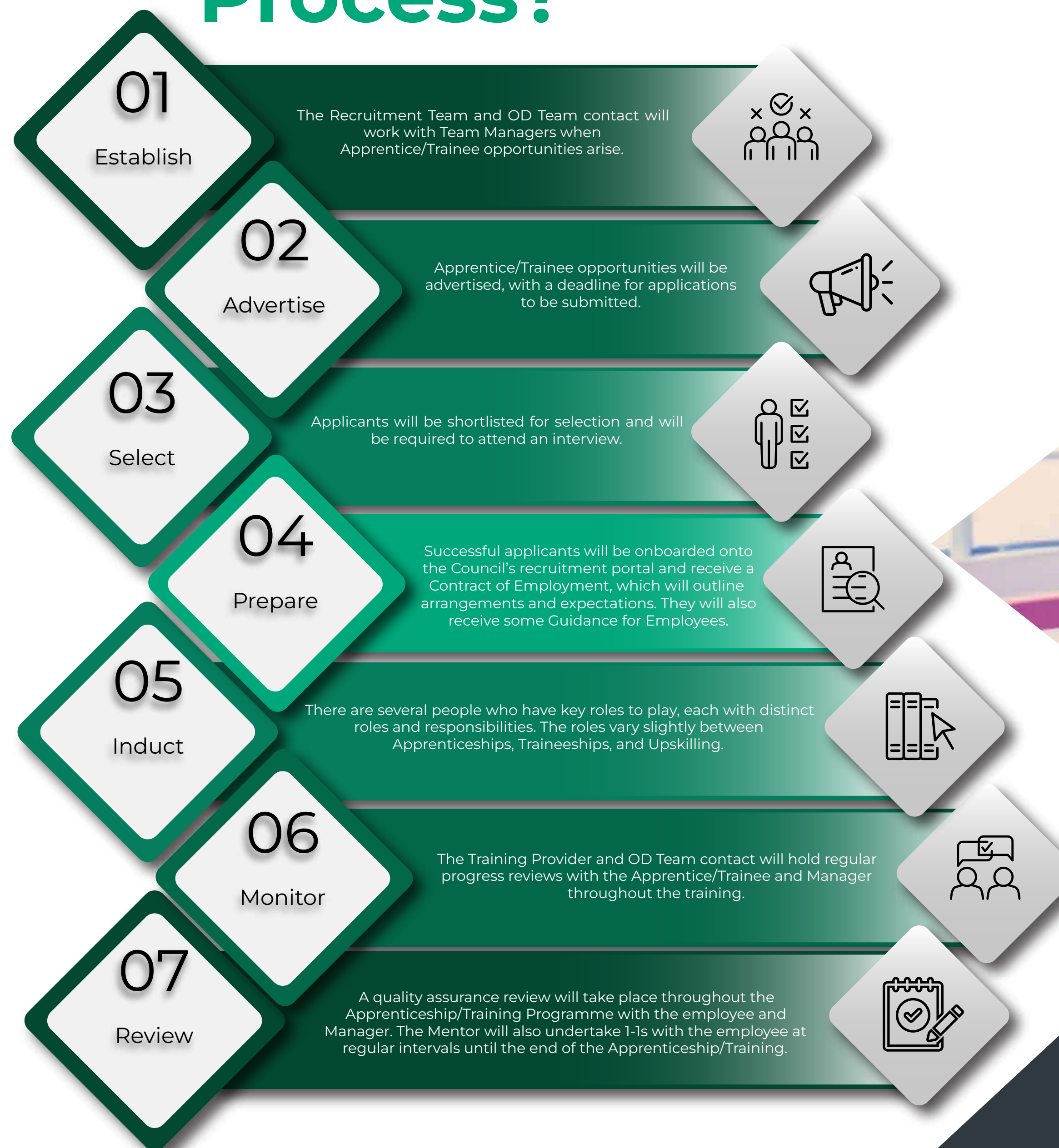
The Mentor

The Mentor will be a peer from the Organisational Development Team. They will meet regularly with the employee to provide additional pastoral support, offering advice and guidance on any issues which may arise. They will also assist with any further training and development requirements and any other workplace issues that may arise.

The Assessor

The Assessor is employed by the Training Provider appointed to deliver the training qualification. They will meet regularly with the employee to ensure progress can be made through Qualification Framework. The Assessor will also liaise with the Manager on a regular basis to feedback and address any problems or challenges in relation to the Qualification Framework.

What is the Process?



The Council's Values

The Way We Work identifies mutual expectations and behaviours which are intended to assist in the development of a more consistent workplace culture, more effective working relationships, and improved work performance.

Fair

We will be honest and transparent in what we can do and what we can't. Equality will be at the heart of the Organisation and our workplace culture will be inclusive.

We will allow people to feel able to be themselves and as such we will have a zero tolerance approach towards all forms of inequality, including harassment, discrimination and bullying.

Effective

We will demonstrate how we can make things better, not be afraid of making tough decisions if we have the evidence to do so and will be clear about our priorities.

Innovative

We expect our employees to be ambitious and innovative. We expect this to be the case whether services are delivered directly by the Council through regional networks or provided by an external Organisation.

Being innovative means we are not afraid to try new things, we are a learning Organisation, and we constantly question our approach. It means that we lead the way across the region and in Wales more widely and others look to us for best practice.

Supportive

As an Organisation we are always helpful and constructive, supporting and enabling residents to do more for themselves.

We will help people achieve their potential and raise ambition but manage their expectations.



How to Apply?

Apprentice/Trainee opportunities will be advertised through the following web pages and on Council media sites. The Council will also consider applications from individuals placed on Adult Employability Programmes or work experience placements within the Council.



[Torfaen County Borough Council's website](#)



Apprenticeships will also be advertised on the [Welsh Government Apprenticeship Vacancy Service](#): The Recruitment Team will upload the details on to the portal.

Contact Information

For further advice and support on Apprenticeships/Traineeships/Upskilling please contact:



kerry.agate@torfaen.gov.uk



01495 742572

For further advice and support on general training requirements please contact:



jane.lolin@torfaen.gov.uk