

## Growth & Skills Levy – Guidance for Schools/Providers

This guidance explains how schools can access Growth & Skills Levy funding, which schools can use it, and the process they must follow.

Shropshire Council manages access to the Growth & Skills Levy (formally the Apprenticeship Levy) funding for schools. This ensures all apprenticeship activity is **compliant with funding rules and Local Authority procurement requirements, and audit processes.**

Apprenticeships provide a valuable opportunity to support:

- Staff development – role specific skills and knowledge, increased confidence and technical abilities.
- Recruitment into key roles – filling skills gaps, developing talent pipelines and entry points into careers.
- Long-term workforce planning – supporting career progression, resolving workforce issues and retention in roles.

For more information, please visit the [Shropshire Learning Gateway](#).

### Accessing Levy Funding

All schools are required to follow Shropshire Council's process when accessing apprenticeship funding.

**Schools must not commit to or enter any training arrangements directly with a training provider.**

All enquiries must be submitted via the Upskill Shropshire Apprenticeship Levy inbox: [Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk)

This is necessary to ensure:

- Appropriate provider selection and contractual arrangements
- Compliance with funding and procurement requirements
- Quality of training
- Approval through the correct governance process
- Fulfilment of audit requirements

All apprenticeship activity must be **reviewed and approved via Upskill before any commitment is made.**

# School Types & Access to Levy Funding – Clarification

## Community & Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools

- Shropshire Council is the employer.
- The Council holds the levy funding, and these schools pay into it through their staffing numbers.
- Community and VC schools can currently use the levy fund without a set limit.

## Voluntary Aided (VA) and Foundation Schools

- In most cases, the Governing Body is the employer. Staff are paid by Shropshire Council through the same payroll system as Community and VC schools. This is called pooled PAYE.
- A change in government and HMRC rules in 2022 meant schools in pooled PAYE could access levy funding in this way.
- Because some of the levy fund was not being fully used, it was agreed in 2022 that VA and Foundation schools could also access the Council's levy fund.

### **For Voluntary Controlled, Community, Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools accessing Growth and Skills Levy through Shropshire Council:**

- You must still contact the Upskill Apprenticeship Levy inbox in the first instance. This makes sure the right checks are completed and the correct process is followed.

## The Upskill Process

All apprenticeship requests are managed through the following process:

1. Initial enquiry submitted to Upskill - [Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk)
2. Discussion to identify suitable apprenticeship options with HR Adviser or HR/OD Admin Assistant.
3. Completion of required documentation (required for each learner):
  - a. Application Form for those who are employed and seeking professional development through an apprenticeship.
  - b. Business Case - Professional development for existing staff/new recruit for recruitment opportunities.
4. Review of eligibility, funding availability, and suitability undertaken by HR/OD Admin Assistant.
5. Approval via HR School Adviser
6. Coordination with approved training provider and details will be shared with the school and learner (where relevant).

This process ensures that:

- Apprenticeship is appropriate for the role
- Funding is available and approved
- All activity is compliant with local government procurement rules and supported by the organisation and training provider.

## Key Requirements

- A Business Case must be completed for each apprentice
- Eligibility checks will be carried out by Upskill
- Funding is subject to availability and approval
- Line manager and organisational support must be confirmed

## Support Available

The Upskill team can provide:

- Advice on suitable apprenticeship routes
- Guidance on workforce development
- Support with identifying appropriate providers
- Information on levy transfer where applicable (schools in trusts that don't have access to levy or have spent their levy).

## Next Steps

- If you are considering an apprenticeship (for recruitment or staff development), please contact: [Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Apprenticeshiplevy@shropshire.gov.uk).  
An initial discussion can then be arranged to explore options and next steps.
- Further information on available courses is available via the Growth and Skills Levy-funded courses database, which can be found on the [Shropshire Learning Gateway](#) and the Teams Shropshire HR Education channel.