

St George's Academy
Public Sector Apprenticeship Target

The public-sector apprenticeships target was introduced by the Government in April 2017. This set a target for any public-sector employer in England with at least 250 employees to employ an average of 2.3% of their staff headcount as new apprentice starts between 1 April 2017 and March 2021. St George's Academy came into scope of the regulations with effect from 1 March 2018. In March 2021, public-sector employers were set a new target to employ a further 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts over the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Academy must 'have regard' to the target, which includes both newly employed apprentices and any existing employees that have begun an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are only considered as 'new apprenticeships' towards the target in the year in which they begin their apprenticeship.

The calculations and narrative below provide information on our progress against this Public Sector Apprenticeship target over the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Target for St Georges Academy

6 new apprentice starts over the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Previous apprentice starts were as follows:

	Headcount	FTE
Number of new apprentices between 1/4/18 to 31/3/19	2	2
Number of new apprentices between 1/4/19 to 31/3/20	5	4.74
Number of new apprentices between 1/4/20 to 31/3/21	2	2

Reporting Period - 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Fig	Data description	Headcount	FTE
A	No. of employees whose employment began between 1/4/21 and 31/3/22	41	34.6
B	No. of apprentices that started over this period	8	6.44
C	No. of employees as at 31/3/22	282	238.31
D	No. of apprentices as at 31/3/22	8	6.44
E	figure B expressed as a % of A	19.51%	18.61%
F	figure D expressed as a % of C	2.84%	2.70%
G	No. of apprentices as at 31/3/21	6	5.74
H	headcount on 31/3/21	281	237.83
I	figure B expressed as a % of H	2.85%	2.71%

How has the target featured in our recruitment and skills training planning and what were the results?

The appointment of new apprentice roles formed an active part of the Academy's workforce planning over the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. As indicated by the figures above, we exceeded the target (2.3%), with a total of eight new apprentices compared to the target figure of six. In particular this included new appointments to the role of Apprentice Learning Support Assistant, with a total of six new recruits appointed into this role. The apprentice LSA now remains our main source of recruitment within our SEN Department. The position supports an extended career path within the Academy, with options for staff members to pursue a career as a Higher Level Learning Support Assistant and/or to consider progression to the Academy's shared SCITT programme and route into qualified teaching.

We continue to actively consider new apprenticeships when making all workforce-planning decisions and skills training planning. This includes both new recruits and opportunities for career development for existing staff. Of the eight apprenticeship agreements which began over the reporting period, one included an existing staff member who has been supported to further progress their qualifications.

What are we going to do to make sure we meet the target in the future?

A review of all support staff roles has and continues to support appointments across a number of our central support functions. This has included Estates, ICT, Finance and Central Administration.

Whilst the appointment of new apprentice roles, will remain an active part of our recruitment activity, it is however noted that attracting applicants has become an increasingly challenging process. This is largely the result of the following key factors:

- The impact of the National cost of living crisis. It is evident that the lower wages associated with apprentice roles has become an increasingly prohibitive factor over the last few months. It is expected that this trend will continue.
- The challenges advertising apprentice roles in areas not routinely associated with education. This has particularly been the case in respect of our ICT and Business Administration roles, where competition from other employers/sectors is high and often includes longer-term career progression opportunities.

Work will continue to take place to explore opportunities to upskill our existing workforce with a focus on some of the higher-level apprentice routes. In considering the career development opportunities for staff as a tool to aide retention, it is envisaged this work will include opportunities to support staff in developing new skills in customer service, finance, business administration and leadership and management.