



More for your Money

Apprenticeships

Background

With the advent of the Learning Academy model established in 2011, SARH embarked on creating a number of apprenticeships initially in traditional trades within the Repairs First Service. The first programme established five apprenticeship places in the following trades:

- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Carpentry
- Bricklaying

Since that time it has been possible to expand and diversify apprenticeship opportunities into other sectors of the business successfully such as:

- Governance
- Customer Services and
- Organisational Development

Since October 2011 there have been 13 apprenticeship opportunities with the company which have proved very successful with five people gaining permanent employment, four directly with SARH. As at September 2014 there are five active apprenticeships within the company with contract dates due to expire later this year and into 2015.

What is an apprenticeship?

In simple terms an apprenticeship is a way for young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a qualification and preparing for the future. Recruiting apprentices helps businesses to grow by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Apprenticeships are designed by organisations such as the Sector Skills Councils working with business representatives from industry sectors to develop the course content called an apprentice framework. More recently the Government has adopted a system called trailblazer apprenticeship standards which are linked to specific core occupations. One of the new core apprenticeship schemes being developed is a corporate Housing Management Apprenticeship scheme which is felt can be adopted at a national level. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) have worked closely



with Housing Associations and Government agencies to work in partnership to develop the national framework standard.

A typical apprentice framework includes:

- A nationally recognised vocational qualification.
- Functional skills such as working in teams, problem solving, literacy and numeracy, communication and working with new technology.
- A technical certificate such as BTEC or City and Guilds (relevant to the specific apprenticeship).
- Personal learning and thinking skills.
- Employer rights and responsibilities.

The duration of the apprenticeship will depend on the ability of the individual apprentice, the framework being followed and the needs of the company.

- The minimum duration of the apprenticeship for apprentices aged 16-18 is 12 months
- For those apprentices aged 19 or over the apprenticeship should last at least 12 months, unless relevant prior learning can be evidenced. Where this is the case the apprenticeship will not be less than six months.

The above are designed to be minimum durations and they can take considerably longer with some apprenticeships lasting 3-4 years if they are at higher level or in certain trade sectors or engineering.

Expansion of Apprenticeship Programme

SARH is keen to expand the number of placements it offers, and in line with the developments around a national standard for Housing Apprenticeships, intends to create three Housing Level 2 Apprenticeships. To progress this and to develop further the partnership with Stafford College, a letter of intent dated 30 July 2014 has been sent to them to develop this proposal further.

As a member of the CIH for many years SARH wishes to incorporate some of the knowledge of the sector into an apprenticeship programme. To date SARH's Organisational Development Team has developed an internal training programme to support the competencies of the Level 2 Housing Framework and are looking to Stafford College to support and deliver this qualification in partnership with SARH.

In recruiting three apprentices in the coming months the expectation is that they will complete a rota of work experience in various departments including Housing Management, Customer Service and Organisational Development. Each apprentice will be assigned a mentor to help, guide and support them through a 12 month work experience. Monthly reviews and training sessions in SARH's Learning Academy will underpin knowledge of the housing sector and encourage individual personal growth.



During their 12 month contact Housing Apprentices will have the opportunity and be encouraged to apply for internal job vacancies. This could lead to higher career prospects which could include learning and development opportunities for further vocational and professional qualifications.

At this juncture it is understood that Stafford College are still seeking accreditation to run the Level 2 Housing Qualification. If accreditation is not forthcoming then an alternative accredited training provider will be sought.

Apprentices' rates of pay are set as a proportion of the national minimum wage set by the Government and if SARH recruits three young people between the ages of 16-19 the hourly rate of pay is £2.73 per hour with effect from 1 October 2014 (£5,266 pa). All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age which at 21 and over which at the 1 October will be £6.50 per hour.

Social Value

The organisation Housing Associations' Charitable Trust has calculated the social value monetary equivalent of an apprenticeship at £1747 per apprentice. For those that go on to secure employment the social value is calculated at £12,083 per person.

