



Lancashire Apprenticeship
Ambassador Network

Newsletter

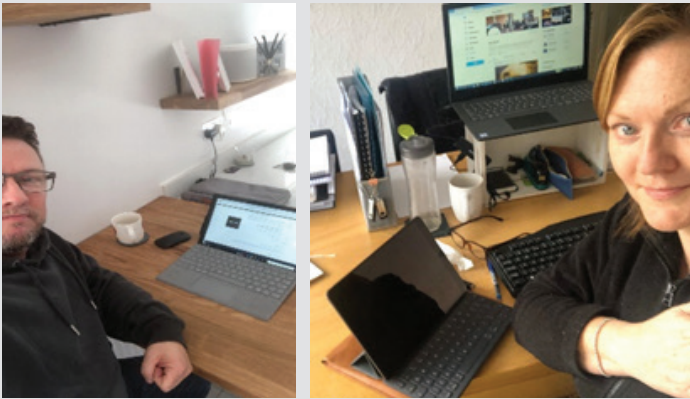
Issue 19 | Summer 2021

Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

Many of you, like us at Lancs Forum, will still be working from home and maintaining daily contact using the wonderful technology we have at our disposal



Team Lancs Forum #WFH Selfie



Some of our Ambassador colleagues work in the NHS, the Police and Lancashire Fire and Rescue, the teaching and the health and social care professions, and are continuing to go to work. I am sure that you would like to join us in applauding them for their hard work at this challenging time. Thank you to you and all your colleagues!!

#NHSThankYou



Association of
Apprentices

Association of Apprentices

Upcoming useful webinars:

Date TBC - Organising your
Time to Balance Study and
Work

For further information and
updates [CLICK HERE](#)

Date TBC - Mental Health
For further information and
updates [CLICK HERE](#)



Lancashire Apprenticeship
Ambassador Network



Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network's relationship with the North West Network continues to flourish. Many of our Employer Ambassadors who have signed up to the North West network have attended the weekly North West Network ZOOM calls throughout the past few months affording them a view of and an environment in which to share the challenges faced by employers throughout the region as a new normal emerges.

The relationship with Laura Kedward and Craig Watson of the North West Network and North West Board is strengthening with Tim being a member of the Board.

Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network

Meet the Ambassador:

Clare Joynson, Head of Facilities Management – Lancashire County Council

“Lancashire County Council is fully committed to apprenticeships and to providing employment and learning opportunities, both for young school and college leavers, but also for more mature candidates, including existing members of staff who are looking to advance their knowledge to enhance their career opportunities, which benefits the organisation as well as the individual apprentice and supports succession planning.

The Council has recruited a good number of apprentices who have gained permanent employment upon completion of their apprenticeship and within the Service I manage, Facilities Management, we have a number of staff who joined as school leavers and have grown with the Service and are now established in higher graded roles, and in some cases are continuing their learning with more advanced level study. One example that has been the most successful apprentice joined the Council 12 years ago has moved up the career ladder and been promoted to one of our senior managers, and is showing potential to advance further in future years.

This example has provided significant benefit for the individual and for the organisation alike as all of our investment has led to a great return.

There are other examples where staff apprentices have gained permanent employment with LCC and are making an equally significant contribution in their specialist field of experience within the team and some have moved into other departments, and their learning continues both formally and informally. The apprenticeship programme and breadth of study opportunities has led to a commitment from our staff to the organisation and so undoubtedly has helped with staff retention and enables us to attract new talent.

What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

Commit fully to the apprenticeship opportunity and work hard, with the knowledge that you will have great support from those you are working with, exposure to work based learning to bring any theory you may learn at college to life with real examples of working practices, an opportunity to develop academically as well as emotionally through the

building of work and personal relationships, opens doors for future employment opportunities and further development and training. Your apprenticeship may be for a fixed period, but if you demonstrate your commitment to the business you are working in, there may be opportunities for you to be retained longer term in a permanent role, and if not, then this will be the catalyst for greater career opportunities and provide you with a very healthy CV with a resume demonstrating a strong range of knowledge and experience which will make you competitive in the job market, compared to a person who has not had the work experience alongside study.



What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

The best advice I could give would be to ensure you have a full commitment from the team you are placing apprentices into, and that a fulfilling set of tasks and responsibilities are designed for the apprentice to undertake which brings a real benefit to your business. That that managers with responsibility for supporting and mentoring the apprentice are appropriately experienced to do so. To consider the apprentice as having the potential to contribute to your business objectives and don't take a short term view of their contribution, as before long you will find, with the right level of commitment from yourselves, that you have come to rely on the apprentice for certain areas of work they are delivering and this can often lead to you wanting to retain these people beyond the completion of their apprenticeship and can see them developing into new roles within your employment. Think of these people of the future of your business and invest sufficient time into their learning and development and you could reap significant benefits for your business, sometimes quite unexpectedly.

Laura McDowell - Lighting Technician, Lancashire County Council Project Manager Level 6

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I found out about the apprenticeships on offer via the LCC website. I had previously done a Business Administration apprenticeship when I left school and followed this up with a HNC in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Further education past HNC level was not funded by LCC prior to the apprenticeship levy so I wanted to take the opportunity whilst it was available.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

Being an apprentice is no different to study as an employee, other than the fact it is funded and 20% off the job training is required. I enjoy the style of learning and study, there is plenty of support available if required. Communications between the college and students could be improved.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about it?

Be willing to give up a considerable amount of time for study and assignments. Be prepared to juggle family life, social life, work and study. Some weeks might be quiet and two assignments may be due within two weeks of each other. It is hard but well worth it in the end.

Ross Williams – Digital Marketing Officer, +24 Marketing Digital Marketer Level 3

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I became an apprentice after finishing university, I had some of the skills in Marketing and Design, but I didn't have the experience of working in an environment like the one I am in today.

I felt an apprenticeship was a good pathway into learning the ropes and further develop my own abilities and skills as well as being able to learn from industry leaders.

When I started my confidence was a bit shaky in my own abilities but since then I've worked with some fantastic leaders and mentors who've helped develop my skills and my confidence.

It really made a difference to how I viewed the role that I wanted and what I could do to achieve that. It has opened the door to so many exciting opportunities.

I wanted to do an apprenticeship because I didn't feel ready to take on those challenges by myself, I am glad I chose this route which allowed me to learn, earn and receive a full qualification.

The support and the guidance that the apprenticeship has given me has really pushed me to achieve my full potential, work on newer projects, step outside my comfort zone and be engaged with the media landscape around me.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

No two days are the same and I get to work with a whole host of clients on exciting projects and now I'm leading the way and liaising with clients, my ideas are being selected, and I'm taking the lead on bigger and bigger projects.

The more I put in, the more I get out. Taking risks, trying new things doesn't always pay off but sometimes that lesson in failure can open a conversation which can lead to a new idea or project being built off the back of it.

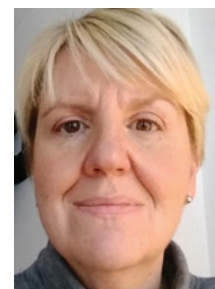
When you finally get to launch your own project and it's out there in the world it's so exciting to have that ownership over it and be like 'I did this, all by myself' to see people engaging with something that you designed, or a piece of content that you created is a really rewarding and exciting feeling.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

Apprenticeships are what you make them. They're tough, they're hard. but they're so rewarding. The lessons you'll learn, the friends you'll make, the experience that you'll gain is second to none. It can be scary to take that step especially when people around you are taking other paths in life.

But if you have a genuine interest and passion and you want to succeed in what you do. I believe that an apprenticeship can be a stepping stone to your dream future!

Louise Price – Learning & Development Officer, Lancashire County Council



“ Lancashire County Council recruits to apprenticeship vacancies and also develops existing staff through apprenticeship programmes from Levels 2 to 7. Both routes offer our staff the opportunity to 'earn as they learn', develop new skills and to progress within the Authority.

Apprenticeships are also helping Lancashire County Council with workforce planning, particularly in specialised areas of the organisation. We have just recruited a further cohort of apprentice Social Workers, upskilling current staff to become qualified Social Workers. We also have staff enrolled on a new Rehabilitation Work (Visual Impairment) Foundation Degree apprenticeship so that they become specialists in enabling people who are blind or partially sighted to be as independent as possible in their day to day lives.

What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

Do it! An apprenticeship is a great way to gain employment, training and a recognised qualification in a structured way, while earning a salary at the same time. It will also help you gain the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in your chosen career and boost your employability. Working for a large organisation like Lancashire County Council offers lots of opportunities to progress your career, and with an apprenticeship you can work your way up by accessing qualifications that employers want.

You will also earn while you learn in a supportive environment and you will have the chance to put the skills you learn in to practice every day.

What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

First of all I would say don't think that an apprentice has to be a young person, apprenticeships are for all ages and skill levels.

Hiring an apprentice is not only a great way of improving skills in your organisation, but they can also help with recruitment. Apprenticeships are a great option, especially if you are looking to fill or enhance specific job roles. By hiring an apprentice you can not only fill skills gaps by 'growing your own' talent, but you can also use apprenticeships to diversify and future-proof your workforce.

Apprenticeships work best when they are embedded into an organisation's recruitment, workforce and retention strategies. It is also important to also remember that apprenticeships are a not only a commitment for the apprentice, but for their manager and wider team too. To ensure success, apprentice and manager commitment and engagement is key.

Ashley Benton – Senior Project Officer, Lancashire County Council Project Manager Level 6

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

Found out via the LCC intranet pages. Wanted a way to help me progress my career, having the opportunity to do this while working was definitely an attractive prospect.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

It is a great opportunity to get a degree qualification and help to develop myself and hopefully my career in the long run. To do this at no cost to myself and while I'm working is something that I wanted to grab with both hands. I enjoy the 1 day a week at college, focussing on learning and having the opportunity to network with colleagues from other services and organisations.

The effect it's had on my work is one of the more immediate benefits of studying Project Management. I've been able to implement my learning within the workplace pretty quickly and see improvements in my work. Taking notes in class on key points that I can use in the workplace the next day is a great way to reinforce the learning.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

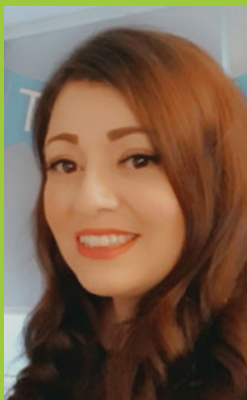
Make sure you can balance an apprenticeship with both work and personal commitments. It was a bit of a shock to begin with and can be difficult at times but you've got to accept that you'll need to invest a good few hours of your own time to work on assignments.

It can be tough at times but it shouldn't come as a surprise that you need to put the effort in and work hard to get a high level qualification and the hours that you do invest in learning are paid back through good grades and improvements in your work back in the office.

Tara Scott – Quality and Performance Officer, Lancashire County Council Customer Services Practitioner Level 2

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I was informed by my employer after completing an apprenticeship. Due to my quick learning and confidence by manager felt I would be great as an ambassador.



Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

I loved being an apprentice. It took me back to my school years and gave me another opportunity to improve my skills and qualifications. I even enjoyed the paperwork and filing system.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

The worst thing you can do for yourself is become complacent. You can't wait for things to happen to you - if you want something bad enough, you have to make it happen. And if you find that sounds too difficult, it probably means you don't want it enough.

Vicki Newsome – School Business Manager, Burscough Priory CMDA Level 6

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I was invited by my head teacher to attend one of the initial meetings with Blackpool and Fylde college and Lancashire County Council when the new CMDA course was being created. This was one of the first time I understood about the true benefits of the apprenticeship levy and I was delighted to be part of the first cohort to enrol on the CDMA management degree course.

I have always wanted to study for a degree and at the time of enrolling, I was working part time at the school, however, I had a desire to progress further within the education sector. Now in a full time roll this course and opportunity has helped me develop, grow and help me secure a role as a School Business Manager.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

25 years ago I was an apprentice when I first started working after leaving high school, this time is very different! I was already employed by my school, so being given the opportunity to complete the degree course through the scheme is even better. It is tricky juggling full time employment, a family and your studies; however through the support of the college and the network of other apprentices on the course it has helped. I would of loved to have been able to continue seeing the lecturers and fellow students every month, however, with Covid this has not been possible and our sessions have all been virtual.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and I would urge everyone to investigate and see if it can ok for you.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

Consider it...do not dismiss it. I have been an apprentice twice now. If you do decide to do it, embrace it, see it as an opportunity, ensure you soak up everything that it has to offer and get involved, see it as it is not just the academic side, but also the employer who is supporting you through the apprenticeship. Enjoy!

Sam Hogdson – Highways Operative – Specialist Skilled, Lancashire County Council Civil Engineering Level 4

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

As this is my second apprenticeship with LCC, I found out about this apprenticeship through my manager.

The reason I chose this route was because I enjoyed my job and I felt by doing this course it would help me better understand my role and further my job prospects in the near future.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

Being an apprentice whilst doing a full time job can be very tough, especially when juggling family and a personal life also.

I feel having more communication from the college would make everything 10x easier, especially during COVID-19, the lack of communication is disappointing to say the least.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

Do it. It may be tough in the short term but there's always support there and if you get paid to learn and work experience is so valuable. It's a no brainer

Mya Gouche – Digital Marketing Officer, NLTG Digital Marketer Level 3

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

After starting my A-levels I knew straight away that I wanted to progress onto an Apprenticeship once I had finished because the amount of pressure college put on me put me off. I have also always been a hard worker and keen to learn new skills. From the age of 13 – 18 I had worked my way from dishwashing in a restaurant to running the kitchen during breakfast and assisting with mains in the evening. I also spent some months table waiting and working in retail. This ultimately proved to me that the working environment was where I belonged. I chose to go into Digital marketing after completing my full Graphic Design A-level in 10 months (due to changing from law) and achieving an A. I really enjoyed using my creative skills digitally, so I set out looking for graphic design apprenticeships however without any related work experience I struggled so settled for digital marketing!



Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

I absolutely love being an Apprentice! I have made some great friends working at NLTG, making going to work every day (when not in lockdown of course) a pleasure. It has also made me mature as an individual because even though I am an apprentice my views are just as much appreciated than anyone else's which has built my confidence. It has also changed my life financially as I am now able to buy nicer luxuries for myself including a new car, many holidays but most importantly, I am starting to save for my own house! It makes me feel very lucky to have these opportunities.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

My advice would be: Don't follow what your friends are doing just because you feel pressure too. All my friends went to university and initially I was going to but in the end, I chose not to follow them but to do what I want. It's scary when you all start to move away from each other but being an apprentice has given me the financial stability to spend on going to visit them on the weekends and make new friends along the way!

**Yasin Bux – Parking & Enforcement Officer, Lancashire County Council
Level 3**

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I found it on the intranet. I wanted to develop in my job and my career.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

Being an apprentice allow me to work and learn at the same time. Keeping up with career development is important, doing an apprenticeship gives a mixture of learning but then also putting the knowledge into practice, with the assistance of tutors and mentors.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

Don't think twice. The efforts you will put in today will reap in many folds in the future.



**Alan James – Business Support Officer,
Lancashire County Council
Business Administrator Level 3**

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

I found out about apprenticeships through my employer Lancashire County Council and I chose to do the qualification because it seemed hugely beneficial to not only be doing my regular role but gaining a qualification and new skills alongside my current role and having it all paid for by my employer.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

Being an apprentice has largely involved a re-examining of my own role and realising both the skills involved already and where I can develop and apply my new found knowledge. I have enjoyed the greater understanding of my role and my organisation and place within it the apprenticeship has brought and the possibilities for future qualifications.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

I would advise them to make sure they understand the necessary 20% which is required and to consider what they could do after they complete their apprenticeship.

Jo Anderton – Learning and Development Officer, Lancashire County Council

“ Lancashire County Council recruits' new apprentices and uses apprenticeships to upskill current staff. Apprenticeships offer staff the chance for career progression and skill development.



Lancashire County Council has a dedicated apprenticeship team that work with a large number of training providers to ensure a varied choice of apprenticeships on offer. This has enabled staff to move away from the more traditional based classroom learning to a more flexible 'earn as you learn' approach.

Apprenticeships have had a positive impact at Lancashire County Council, as a result of apprenticeships being offered the authority has been able to forward plan workforce shortages. An example of this is upskilling current staff such as Family Support Workers to qualified Social Workers.

What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

I would inform any potential apprentice that I truly believe apprenticeships are a fabulous way of learning and working and I would produce the facts that evidence this. Recently I have been involved in

collating responses for the Lancashire County Council apprenticeship review process. The team and I rang over 250 apprentices to gain feedback on their apprenticeship. The results were very pleasing and 97.7% of people asked would recommend apprenticeships as a great way of learning.

What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

I believe businesses need to be shown the potential of recruiting apprentices and would dispel any myths or false representations of an apprentice. Apprentices do not have to be of school leaver age, in fact there is no age limit! Apprentices are able to bring skills that are specifically needed for your business.

It is essential that any business thinking about recruiting apprentice is aware of what the apprenticeship involves e.g. time away from work to attend college, ensuring the apprentice has appropriate opportunities to develop and learn new skills etc.

**Cath Robinson – Project Coordinator, Lancs Forum
Project Management Level 4**

How did you find out about apprenticeships and why did you choose this route?

Having worked in FE/HE sector for over 20 years I have been surrounded by apprenticeships and apprentices. In a previous role I had an apprentice working alongside me and saw daily the benefits this route gave to the apprentice.

Tell us what being an apprentice is like, what do you enjoy and are there any aspects you wish could be improved?

Being an apprentice is a very different experience to what I am used to. After leaving school I attended sixth form college for 2 years before continuing onto university to study a 4-year degree so after 24 years of undertaking only short qualifications, the transition to studying via an apprenticeship route was quite challenging. That said, I am reaping the benefits of improving knowledge and subsequently transferring this into my day-to-day job. In some cases, I have introduced new systems and improved existing systems.

What the best piece of advice you would give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

Remember that an apprenticeship is a job with compulsory education. It is by no means the easy option that many people believe it to be and you will need to be able to balance working with studying. I have found this to be the most challenging part of my apprenticeship, but the rewards far outweigh any challenges!



And finally..... THANK YOU!

**Joanne Pickering – Director of HR, Training and Quality,
Forbes Solicitors**

After 21 years at Forbes Solicitor and over 15 years linked to the Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassador Network and the North West Ambassador Network as an Employer Ambassador, we say goodbye to Joanne Pickering.

Over the years Joanne has given invaluable support to the networks, from supporting events to being a judge at the North West Apprenticeship Awards. We owe Joanne a debt of gratitude for her expertise and assistance. Thank you Joanne and enjoy your new adventures!!





The BAME Apprenticeship Awards recognises British BAME Apprentices, their employers and learning providers. The shortlist for this year's BAME Apprenticeships Awards was revealed 27th May 2021 at an online event. To watch the shortlist event [CLICK HERE](#)

The final of the BAME Apprenticeship Awards will be taking place online on Thursday 30th September 2021. Check out the [website](#) for updated information.



The date for The National Apprenticeships Awards 2022 has yet to be announced. It is thought that the date will be made public in the coming weeks to give everyone plenty of time to prepare. We will keep you updated – watch this space!!



The ASK programme is in its final months of the year, and it is thanks to some of you that we have had another successful year. Paige our ASK coordinator has moved on to pastures new, passing the ASK mantel to Tim and Cath and despite the challenges that lockdown has had on schools being open and accepting visitors, we have still engaged with more than 14,000 learners thanks to modern technology!!

A big thank you to you and to our North West YAAN colleagues for the support you have given us during the past 12 months. Your support and efforts really do add value to our input in schools and colleges.

Over the coming weeks, we will be delivering some virtual sector specific workshops to learners across Lancashire and would really appreciate any assistance you can offer. If you work in any of the sectors listed [HERE](#) and could spare 15 minutes of your time, please get in touch with Cath at cath@lancsforum.co.uk. Thank you to those of you who have already offered support.



Sub36 is Lancashire Business View's campaign to showcase Lancashire's young business talent. Nomination for The Sub36 Awards 2021 is open until 16th July 2021.

For further details or to make a nomination [CLICK HERE](#)



Support for Lancashire Apprenticeship Ambassadors

We are all working in challenging times but there is a lot of support available to you during this time.

As apprentices/employees you will have support from your employer and your HR department. If you would like any further support from Lancs Forum, Tim and Cath are here to help however we possibly can.

Lancs Forum is working from home and are therefore contactable on:

- tim@lancsforum.co.uk
- cath@lancsforum.co.uk
- Forum mobile number [07495 051789](tel:07495051789)

Below are some links that might be of use.

Feeling Anxious - Department of Health and Social Care

<https://twitter.com/dhscgovuk/status/1243282829519106048?s=21>

Amazing Apprenticeships Wellbeing Workshops

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com/wellbeing/>

NHS Every Mind Matters

<https://twitter.com/nhsuk/status/1242454798038970373?s=21>

Young Minds

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

Tips working from home/Tips for Employers and Leaders

<https://mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/while-working>

BBC Tips on working well from home

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51868894>

Government response to the Apprenticeship Programme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-apprenticeship-programme-response>

Introducing

LEAP (Lancashire Engaging Apprentices Programme) is being delivered by a number of the Forum members including Blackburn College, Blackpool and the Fylde College, Burnley College Themis, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Myerscough College, North Lancs Training Group and UCLan.

Here is an overview of LEAP and its purpose

The ESF LEAP project will deliver a targeted mix of support, training and development for 2104 apprentices and their work place mentors employed in the Lancashire SME (Small Medium Enterprises – those with less than 250 employees) workforce.”

Apprentice “additionality” and support for progression to higher level apprenticeships (“bridging”

LEAP

LANCASHIRE ENGAGING
APPRENTICES PROGRAMME

programmes) – this could be whilst you are on an apprenticeship or after completion. The aim is to give an opportunity to those looking to progress on to a high level of apprenticeship for example, whilst on a level 3 Business Administrator apprenticeship you could undertake elements of a Project Management level 4 apprenticeship which would help in the transition and progression.

CPD for workplace apprentice mentors and apprentice ambassadors – if you support apprentices or colleagues within your workplace to develop their skills, knowledge and professional behaviours you could enrol on to this and undertake a recognised coaching and mentoring qualification and continue with your own professional development.

The third element of the project is the Lancashire Levy Transfer Network

The Forum is part of a network that is set to introduce a levy transfer matching service for Lancashire, this service, which will give access to organisations wishing to donate levy funds to support other Lancashire-based employers in funding apprenticeship programmes will match funds to requirements of applying employers and its aim of keeping funds within the county and not going back to central government. To find out more keep an eye on our twitter [@LancsForum](#) or get in touch with tim@lancsforum.co.uk



Who can benefit/ get involved?

Due to it being funded through the European Social Fund we are only permitted to offer this to SMEs, if you work within a company with less than 250 employees in Lancashire and would like to access these programmes please get in touch with tim@lancsforum.co.uk.

How long is it available for?

The programme started at the beginning of June this year and will be available until the target of 2104 individual are enrolled or by October 2023, whichever comes first.

Is there a cost to me or my employer?

No, the project is funded through the European Social Fund and there will be no additional costs, unless you or your employer want to undertake additionalities (top up) above the standard programme being offered.

