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Maritime Skills Alliance Newsletter

May 2017

Greetings!

The Apprenticeship Levy is now a reality, so we thought we should slay a few myths about what's going on, and what's not going on, with apprenticeships.

Plus the usual updates.

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Apprenticeships: slaying some myths

Companies across the UK became eligible to pay the new Apprenticeship Levy from 6th April, but despite the wealth of information around, myths persist about what's what. We thought it would help to slay some of those myths.

MYTH 1: Companies can't take money out of the Levy pot if they haven't paid in.

International Jack Up Barge Operators' Association	Not so. In the maritime sector there are two types of company which do not pay the Levy:
International Association of Maritime Institutions	(a) those who are too small to pay it because their paybill is less than £3m pa,
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	(b) those who pay all or part of their workforce offshore, thereby reducing their UK paybill below £3m pa.
Marine Society and Sea Cadets	These companies have no reason to hold back: in both cases they are eligible for the Government's (substantial) subsidy for taking on apprentices. Our Briefings spell out the detail:
Merchant Navy Training Board	Briefing 4 for companies who DO NOT PAY the Levy
MYBA The Worldwide Yachting Association	Briefing 5 for companies which PAY the Levy.
National Workboat Association	The HMRC guidance on eligibility to pay the Levy is here .
Port Skills and Safety	The full Government guidance on the Levy (primarily written for employers) is here .
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	Larger employers which are paying the Levy can create and manage their online account here .
Royal Navy	MYTH 2: There's a very limited range of approved apprenticeships available
Royal Yachting Association	Not so. Don't be misled by all the talk about Trailblazer groups designing new Standards; in most case they are replacing existing apprenticeships - and you can use the existing apprenticeships NOW. There's no need to hold back.
Seafarers UK	The Engine Room Rating apprenticeship is a good example. There's work in hand to re-design it to suit both the Merchant Navy and the Royal Navy, but there are existing apprenticeships in both England and Scotland which meet both MCA standards and companies' needs, and they are available now. Details here .
Sea Fish Industry Authority	That said, if you see a gap in what's available, please say. It may be that work is in hand to close that gap, but if not there's plenty scope to create new apprenticeships if there's sufficient demand.
Thames Skills Academy	There's work going on to create new apprenticeships for maritime catering, onboard services (steward roles), Port Marine Operations Officers and Marine Pilots, with further possibilities for Small Vessel Engineers (in line with MIN 524) and maybe also OOW Near Coastal. Mersey Maritime and Liverpool John Moores University are also just about to kick off a new group exploring the scope for higher level and degree apprenticeships in the sector (which would obviously be available nationally).
	MYTH 3: Apprenticeships are only for school leavers
	Not so. There are no age restrictions. In fact older apprentices considerably out-number those who've just left school or college.
	The Government is keen to encourage employers to take on young apprentices and most companies will get a financial incentive to do so - but Government subsidy is available regardless of the age of your apprentice.
	MYTH 4: Apprenticeships are only for new employees.
	Not so. Traditionally the term "apprentice" means someone at the start of their career. What we're really talking about here though is the Government giving a subsidy to companies to encourage them to provide high quality career training for their employees - and they

certainly include in that companies choosing to invest in an existing employee.

You can't get that subsidy retrospectively, of course, but if, say, you have someone who's worked for you for a while in a junior role, maybe a casual role, and you see real potential there and want to put them on a proper career path - you can use apprenticeship funding to do so.

The MSA has provided a good deal of support to our members to create and review apprenticeships and we are keen to see companies make the fullest possible use of the opportunity presented by the Apprenticeship Levy. If you see a barrier, please don't let it slow you down; talk it through with your normal sector contacts, or if you're stuck contact us.

Industry News

We no longer have the Diploma in Scotland which provides the underpinning knowledge for Boatmaster Tier 1 Level 2 certification (Diploma in Maritime Studies: Rivers, Inland Waterways and Limited Distances to Sea - to give it its full title).

There had been no take-up, so we agreed with SQA (which offers the qualification for us) that they should delete it.

People in Scotland can of course still get their BML certification by traditional means. And the equivalent Diploma in England, which *is* used, is not affected.

The wider point is that provision of qualifications is a dynamic thing: if employers want them, we can create them, but if there's no demand, we'll lose them.

To keep up-to-date with what we're doing, please sign up for our newsletter - and please mail this on to others who might be interested.

Iain Mackinnon

Secretary
