



APPRECIATING APPRENTICESHIPS

With the apprenticeship levy fast approaching, Newark and Sherwood Homes have acknowledged the hugely positive impact this will have not only for our Company but for the local community. We are invested in delivering excellence which we believe encompasses valuing everyone. The levy gave us the momentum to launch our apprenticeship scheme 'REACH' (Recruiting and Employing Apprentices Championing Housing) as well as developing more opportunities to add value to our local community. In the coming months, we will be looking to host interview skills workshops and coaching for local people who want to develop their skills and achieve their professional ambitions.

Putting REACH into practice has been a learning curve and an incredibly enlightening one at that. There is no denying there is a lot of information for employers to get their heads around when setting up a scheme but it helps that the outcome is perfectly aligned with my own principles as well as the values of Newark and Sherwood Homes. The development of our apprenticeship scheme has required a detailed understanding of the new regulations which we have found put employers in the driving seat. We have undertaken a comprehensive and objective analysis of our business structure to carefully consider where apprentices would add the most value. Our Chief Executive Rebecca Rance has recently earned 15th Place in 24housing magazine's 'Top 50 Power Players' as a true influencer within the housing sector and this foresight and vision has certainly played a key role in cultivating an apprenticeship scheme that we are proud to be launching.

Newark and Sherwood Homes are in full support of increasing the recognition and professional value placed on apprentices. The levy brings about a much needed shift in the way we view education. The importance of lifelong learning has always been a personal value of mine and the new apprenticeship regulations finally start to break down previous age and educational barriers to offer genuine professional education and progression for everyone. The significance and recognition that apprenticeships have gained in light of the levy and the 10th Anniversary of National Apprenticeship Week has brought about a refocus for many organisations. Alongside developing and creating REACH, we have also looked more deeply into how we can further invest in our existing staff and develop the broad range of skills our employees already have. Most companies recognise the need for innovation but it is so often aimed solely at products and procedures. At Newark and Sherwood Homes, innovation runs through everything we do. Last year we were placed 27th in Inside Housing's Innovation Index as a Top Employer for 2016.

For us, innovation and improvement starts with the people who make your company successful – if you invest in them, you invest in your business.

Dara Voice
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