**Guidance for Social Work Apprentice and Occupational Therapy (OT) Apprentice**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **What is the apprentice programme about?**

Apprenticeships allow employees to develop and gain a qualification while continuing to work. It is an employer-led scheme: the apprentice learns ‘on the job’ with 20% of their time (1 day a week) allocated to ‘off the job’ learning.

As an OT or social work apprentice in Camden, you would work in that role, while also undertaking the qualification, which will lead to a degree award and a professional qualification as a social worker or OT. Apprentices will complete academic work and attend university sessions, but the main learning is through employment.

**2. How many places is Camden offering?**

* There will be up to 4 places in Adult Social Care (ASC) for either OT or social work apprentices for ASC applicants. One position in ASC is specifically for staff from Provider Services.
* There will be up to 3 places in Children’s Services for social work apprentices for CSSW applicants.

**3. Which university is delivering the degree qualification?**

For the social work degree apprenticeship course, the current provider is Kingston University.

For the OT degree apprenticeship course, the current provider is Coventry University (London).

Both courses were developed from a London wide tender to deliver bespoke apprentice courses. Camden works with other employers and the universities to ensure that the courses are tailored to meet our requirements.

**4. What is the duration of the programme?**

* For social work, the programme is 36 months.
* For OT, the programme is 48 months.

**5. When will the programme start?**

* The social work apprenticeship will start on 18 September 2024.
* The OT apprenticeship will start in September 2024 (exact date tbc).

**6. Who can apply?**

We can only use our apprenticeship levy funds for Camden employees.

Anyone who meets the following criteria:

* Minimum of 2 years’ experience of working in adult social care, children’s social care or health
* Permanently employed by Camden for 12 months at the point of application\*
* Working full-time or able to work a minimum of 30 hrs per week
* Must hold GCSE English and Mathematics (Grade C or above / 4-9 if after 2017) or equivalent qualification (e.g. Functional Skills level 2 in numeracy and literacy)
* Not subject to any performance or conduct issues
* Willing and able to commit to the academic and work- based requirements for the length of the course
* Willing to commit to work as a social worker or OT in Camden upon completion of the apprenticeship

**\*** including staff who have undergone a TUPE transfer to Camden, assuming you were employed by your previous organisation for the preceding 12 months

**7. Can I apply if I work part-time?**

Part-time employees can apply. To meet the requirements of the apprenticeship programme, you will need to be able to work a minimum of 30 hours a week once you start the programme.

**8. What is the pay grade for this role?**

HR Services has evaluated the job at grade Level 3 Zone 1.

If you are currently on a higher grade, you will remain on your current salary for the duration. However, in the instance where you are currently above a Level 4 Zone 1, please seek advice from Rebecca Atkinson before applying.

**9. Is there a minimum academic entry criterion for this role?**

Applicants must hold GCSE English (normally English language) and Mathematics at Grades 4-9 (or grade C or above for GCSEs taken before 2017) or an equivalent qualification (e.g. functional skills level 2 in numeracy and literacy). Both universities require that all apprentices starting on the Degree Apprenticeship programme meet the English and Maths entry requirement at the point of starting their programme.   
Camden requires all applicants to present evidence of their certificates during the internal recruitment process.

**10. How do I apply?**

There is a two-stage application process.

**Stage one (Camden)**

The roles will be advertised through the HR resourcing process, restricted to applicants from Adult Social Care or Children’s Services. You will need to complete an application for the apprentice role. This application will need to explain why you are applying for the role and how you meet the job description. This is what we will use for shortlisting.

These are the proposed timescales. They may change but would be pushed back and not brought forward.

Applications open **16 February 2024**

Closing date for the application is **10 March** **2024**.

Shortlisting will take place **w/c 11 March 2024**.

Interviews will take place **from 21 March 2024**.

The process is likely to involve a written exercise and an interview.

If you are successful at this stage, you will be provisionally offered an apprentice role: ***this is subject to a successful application to the university at Stage 2*.**

Stage 1 should provide experience and support to ensure that you are successful at Stage 2.

**Stage two (University)**

Once offered an OT or social work apprentice role in Camden, you will have to apply for the university course. For social work, this involves a separate application form and a university selection process. The application must be submitted by **17 May 2024.**

The Kingston University selection process will take place between **20 May and 28 June 2024**. You will need to pass a written test and an interview.

The Coventry University selection process will take place in May and June. The closing date for applications is in July.

**11. Can I apply for both the OT and the Social Work apprenticeship?**

In principle, you can apply for both roles, but we would prefer to see you demonstrate a commitment to a particular career path. We will ask you to indicate a preference on the application form. If you apply for both roles, you may need to be interviewed twice. Applicants from Children’s Services can only apply for social work apprentice roles.

**12. I am on leave during Camden’s application stage, will you accept late submissions?**

We cannot accept late applications.

**13. I am on leave when the university is hosting interviews and assessments. Will the university offer alternative dates?**

The application process extends over a few months so there should be scope to accommodate individual arrangements.

**14. If I am successful, when will I start in my new apprentice role?**

For both OT and social work apprenticeships, the course start dates are in September 2024. You will start your new apprentice role on the same day.

**15. What happens to my substantive job?**

You will be on secondment for the duration of your new role. Your substantive post will either remain vacant or be backfilled temporarily depending on the needs of the service. If, for whatever reason, you cannot complete the programme you would have a role to return to.

**16. What happens if my manager does not agree to the secondment?**

We hope that managers will support applications and an individual’s progression and development. You should inform your manager before you apply and discuss your application.

**17. Will I remain in my current team and service during the programme?**

You will work in either an Adult or Children’s social care setting for the duration of the programme. You will need to be in a role that allows you to progressively undertake suitable social work or OT tasks to meet the requirements of the degree apprenticeship.

For the social work apprenticeship, you will undertake a contrasting learning experience for 70 days in the second year to meet the requirements of the social work degree. There may be other opportunities for learning in other parts of the service during the programme.

For the OT apprenticeship, you will be required to have 3 practice placements which may be in health or social care settings.

**18. I already have a degree, can I apply?**

Yes. You must meet the requirements set out at question 9.

**19. Is funding for the apprenticeship guaranteed for the whole programme?**

Yes, funding is from the apprenticeship levy.  
  
**20. What support will I get during my qualification?**

You will receive support during the programme from an assessor and a mentor. The university and employers work together to ensure that apprentices have the best possible support and there will be a variety of different support forums.

**21. Am I guaranteed a social worker or OT role within Camden council when I complete the programme?**

We want to offer a qualified position to those successfully completing the programme. Assuming you have passed the course and there have been no performance issues, you will be able to apply for a role without a competitive process.

**22. Will I be expected to undertake ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) after I complete the social work apprenticeship?**

Yes. After you complete the social work degree apprenticeship, you would need to apply for a qualified position and the ASYE would run alongside this.

**23. If I don’t** **gain my qualification at the end of the 3/4 years, will I go back to my substantive post?**

Yes, you will revert to a role at your substantive grade.

**24. Will this opportunity be available again?**

The intention is to continue to offer an apprentice intake every two years.