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Employers must reset their view on apprentices research shows

The Apprenticeship Levy must be used as a means to not only engage with emerging talent, but also upskill existing teams to aid retention. That is according to the latest research from talent acquisition and management consultancy, Alexander Mann Solutions: *The Apprenticeship Levy – How to turn a major social change (or an unwanted tax) into a robust talent strategy.*

The white paper, which is based on in-depth interviews with organisations including Barclays, BT, CapGemini, GE, HSBC, Jaguar Land Rover and Santander amongst others, finds that major employers are planning to offer existing employees learning opportunities through apprenticeships, rather than simply boosting headcount at junior level to recoup Levy payments.

Separate research from Alexander Mann Solutions supports this view, with over half (52%) of HR leaders saying they are planning to use available funds to upskill existing employees, with a further 30% considering this option.

For example, a global IT services firm which was interviewed for the paper explained how smart use of apprenticeships could help to provide compelling career trajectories for high-calibre individuals who were more attuned to the technical, rather than the managerial, aspects of a role.

Tim Campbell, Head of Client Services, Emerging Talent, Alexander Mann Solutions, comments:

“While, from a government perspective, the Apprenticeship Levy is fundamentally designed to boost UK skills development and pipelines by targeting 16 to 18-year-olds, from a business point of view, the growth of such a provision must be linked to strategic business needs.”

“The fact that significant funds are being shifted into the people development arena means that HR professionals within larger firms will no longer need to sell the value of CPD to other areas of the business. And this has the potential to have a positive impact on engagement, development and, subsequently, staff retention.”

“Instead of being bound by traditional perceptions of apprenticeships, it’s important that businesses shape new models that meet the specific needs of the organisation, both now and in the foreseeable future.”

“Our sample included no examples of organisations rushing to proliferate low level training simply to recoup Levy funds. Instead, all were focused on how they could use apprenticeship models in a more imaginative way to deliver what the organisation actually needs.”