



Co-op Levy Share Donating Employer Toolkit



It's what we do

What's the Co-op Levy Share?

At Co-op, we are committed to helping people to find, stay and progress in meaningful employment. Covid-19 has exacerbated existing inequalities and far from being a great 'social leveller', the virus has highlighted social disadvantages, particularly in relation to race, class and age.

We recognise that it can be difficult to spend the levy, even for organisations who already provide apprenticeship opportunities and believe that the unspent funds (It is estimated £330 million was returned to Treasury in 2023/24) could be better used to support people into employment and to progress in their careers at a time of economic turmoil.

Since April 2024, levy-paying employers have been able to transfer a maximum of 50% of their annual funds to other organisations. In February 2021 we announced our collaboration with BITC to create a Levy Share opportunity in order to support apprenticeships for individuals from underrepresented groups. As of April 2024 we have worked with other like-minded employers to create a £25 million fund that will support the training and assessment of thousands of apprentices.

We have a specific ambition to close the 'opportunity gap' in apprenticeships for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds who are underrepresented within

apprenticeships, (making up 15.6% of the working age population but just 10.5% of apprentices) and support as many people into employment and career progression as possible; however the scheme is intended to address underrepresentation in all groups.



What are the benefits of pledging your unspent levy?

By pledging your unspent levy, you are helping to support other businesses with their Apprenticeship ambitions. This could mean developing your supply chain, forming strategic partnerships or demonstrating corporate social responsibility. You can specify the sector, geographical location or particular communities or backgrounds (e.g. care leavers) whom you would like to benefit from your levy and therefore will have control over where your unspent levy is used, targeting the businesses or communities you want to support.

Although there isn't a requirement to engage with the receiving organisations

beyond sharing funds, this could be a great opportunity to form links- either in relation to the Apprentice activity or in a wider business context. For example: could Apprentices within your organisation mentor or support the new Apprentices, sharing experience and learnings and creating an external network? Do you have expertise in a specific skill or sector that could be helpful to the receiving organisations?

Do the receiving organisations have insight or networks that could support you in your priorities for this year or beyond? Even if there aren't immediate opportunities for collaboration, participation in the service will create a link between the organisations that could be explored at a later date should you wish to do so.

How does it work?

We have created an online matching service www.cooplevshare.co.uk

When you register on the portal, you will be asked to confirm the amount you would like to pledge and set up any matching preferences as detailed in Section 2. Please be aware, that as with any matching system, the more criteria you enter, the fewer matches you may receive - however if you have a strong preference for how your funds are used, we encourage you to specify this.

When you have registered on the portal you will have access to a video to help with the pledging process, as well as FAQs. Once you have entered your details and any preferences about how you would like your funds to be spent, you will be contacted by the The Growth Company (our Partner for the service) if there are any suitable matches in the system.

What the fund covers

Funding is for Apprentices of any age, from levels 2 (entry level) to 7 (Post-Graduate level).

The levy funds you donate will support the training and assessment costs of the apprenticeships and will be paid monthly via the Apprenticeship Service for the duration of the apprenticeship (from one to five years depending on the apprenticeship standard) and will not be used to pay salaries or any other associated costs of employment. The Apprentices can be new hires or existing employees.



Things to think about

The Levy Share service is one part of Co-op's commitment to Social Mobility and Inclusion. If you don't already belong to the following networks or charters, we'd highly recommend taking a look:

- Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (engage.apprenticeships.gov.uk/aan)
- Young Apprenticeship Ambassador (amazingapprenticeships.com)
- All Equals Charter Home (allequalscharter.com)
- Stonewall (www.stonewall.org.uk)
- The Valuable 500 Stonewall (thevaluable500.com)
- Disability Confident - Are you disability confident? (campaign.gov.uk)