

## BCC 'thrilled' to announce approval for the Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship

3 years ago



Proposals for an Apprenticeship Standard for the cleaning and hygiene industry have been approved, potentially paving the way for employers to invest millions of pounds annually in training sector staff.

The British Cleaning Council (BCC), which made achieving the Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship one of its key priorities, is aiming to support the launch of the Apprenticeship Levy funded programme early in 2024.

It will be hosting a series of expert-led AAG (Apprenticeship Advice and Guidance) Zoom information sessions starting in October, where employers can find out what the Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship means for them and how to implement it in their workplace.

Employers are being encouraged to watch out for details of the free sessions, which will be announced via sector media, the BCC website (<https://britishcleaningcouncil.org>) and the BCC's social media channels.

All employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million have to pay around 0.5 per cent towards the Apprenticeship Levy.

Because there hasn't been a relevant Apprenticeship for many cleaning and hygiene businesses to invest in, millions of pounds of Levy funding paid by the sector annually has gone to the Government instead.

The decision by approving body The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to give the greenlight to the proposals means those businesses will now be able to use their Apprenticeship Levy

payments to fund staff to complete training for a Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship.

BCC Chairman Delia Cannings said: “My BCC colleagues and I are thrilled and delighted by this news. The Cleaning Hygiene Operative Apprenticeship will be a major and valuable contribution to the future success of the cleaning and hygiene sector.

“Accessible learning for all funded by the Apprenticeship Levy pot is a first of its kind and long overdue.

“It has been a huge, complicated and at times frustrating piece of work and it has taken much, much longer than expected, so it was hugely exciting when we finally heard that it had been given the greenlight.

“I can’t overstate how important this is in terms of addressing the sector’s recruitment issues, helping with succession planning and supporting the professional development of our staff.

“Providing uniform, industry-wide qualifications will help win wider recognition for the vital, skilled work that the sector’s personnel do with pride and professionalism.

“With such an important role in keeping the public healthy, safe, and well, particularly during the turbulence caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and with the risk of another such pandemic in the future, it is vital that this training programme is put in place.

“Handling chemicals, understanding the differences between cleaning and disinfecting, science-based cleaning techniques, the contribution the sector can make to the green agenda and the increasingly important role of technology are all crucial and need to be covered.

“It is long past time that our industry, as one of the biggest in the UK, had an Apprenticeship Standard for cleaning and hygiene staff.

“We have to give a massive vote of thanks to Lauren Kyle, Karen Slade, and their team, who have worked exceptionally hard on this to get it over the line. Thank you also to my predecessor as BCC Chair Jim Melvin and the many employers and colleagues who also gave their support.”

Previous attempts by the industry to win approval for an Apprenticeship for the entire cleaning and hygiene sector did not succeed.

The BCC launched the latest attempt in 2021 by sponsoring a Trailblazer group, comprising major companies from the sector along with supporting stakeholders, to spearhead the development of the Apprenticeship. A wide range of businesses in the sector gave it their backing.

A Healthcare Cleaning Operative (HCO) Apprenticeship was approved in early 2020 however it is largely focused on the cleaning activity carried out across the NHS. Now we have access to pathways and routes to enable the wider cleaning communities to become qualified and recognised for the key role they play regarding the health wellbeing and resilience of the UK.