



Bracknell Forest Council

Academy Model Career Pathways



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What is the Bracknell Forest Academy Model?

Academy model is the name used to describe each of the council's career progression programmes. It brings together all our current and new development opportunities in one place. This helps staff more easily identify pathways they can take within the organisation. You could think of it like an ever-growing tree, with each branch representing distinct career progression pathways across our services, including legal, finance, and social care. The academy model is underpinned by the council's [value](#) of always learning and will continue to develop and grow across all teams within the council.

Each programme has a clearly defined career pathway, so you can easily see the steps you need to take to advance in your career.

Within each programme there will be different entry routes. For example, within children's social care your career pathway could start with an apprenticeship, via Step Up to Social Work (children's) or as a family worker.

You'll always be learning, while receiving the support you need at every stage.

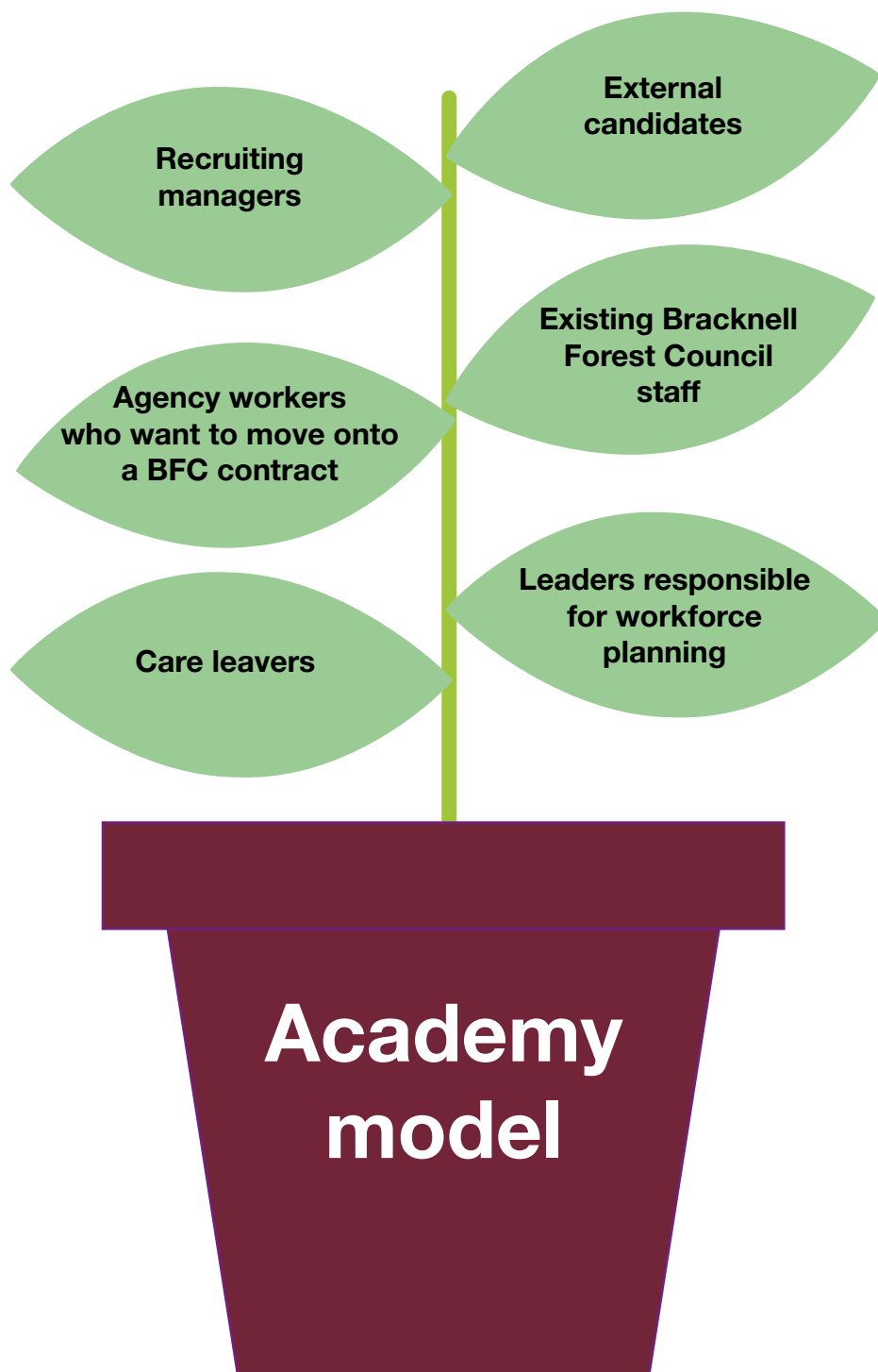
Launch: Supporting staff who are new into the organisation or new into the role to develop and grow.

Progression: Ensuring we have clear routes in place for support, development, and progression at all levels to promote individual professional growth and organisational succession planning.

Retaining expertise: Harnessing and retaining the skills and knowledge of experienced staff.

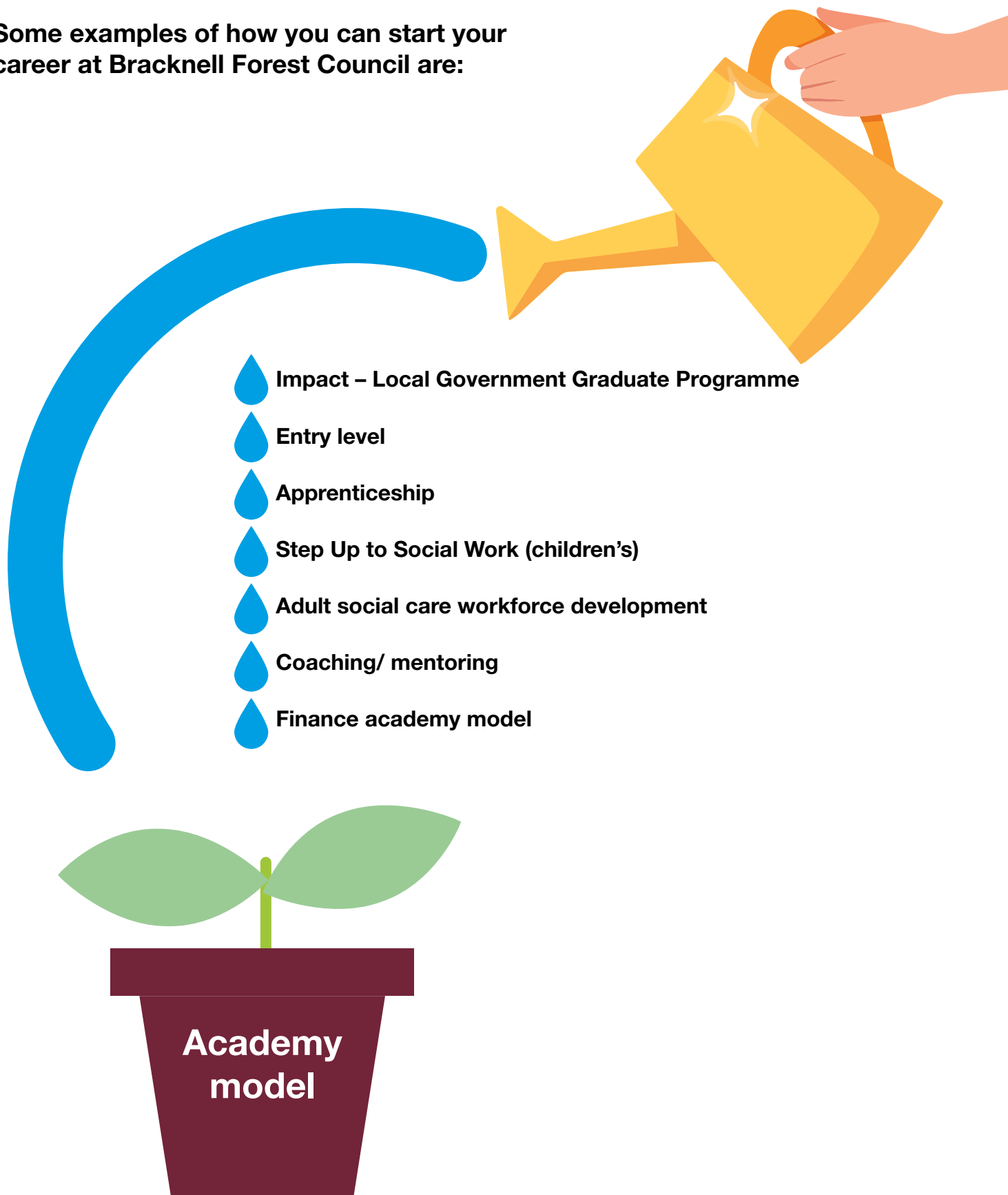
Who an **academy model** is for?

The Bracknell Forest Academy Model is available for all our employees, including new starters.



Ways into an **academy model**

Some examples of how you can start your career at Bracknell Forest Council are:



Minimum entry criteria for an apprenticeship scheme

An apprenticeship is a paid job with a related training programme, provided by an external training provider. Apprentices will need to demonstrate knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their job role to achieve their qualification. Apprenticeship programmes are available from Level 2 (GCSE) to Level 7 (Masters). The duration of the programmes range from 12 months to five years. For more information about the programmes available, please refer to the [Institute for Apprenticeships website](#).

To be eligible for an apprenticeship programme:



You must have been resident in the UK for the past three years. The residence must not have been wholly, or mainly for the purpose of receiving full time education. Providers will check residency on enrolment and may ask for a passport, driving licence or other official documentation.



All apprentices must hold maths and English at GCSE/or equivalent level and be able to provide certificates as evidence. For existing staff who are unable to provide the evidence, please contact the apprenticeship lead who can provide further advice on steps that can be taken to meet this criteria. Recruiting managers must contact the apprenticeship lead prior to issuing a formal offer of employment for further guidance, to ensure eligibility for the programme.



All candidates must be working 30 hours or more per week. Apprenticeships may be available to those working less hours. However, the duration of the apprenticeship programme will be extended. Please contact the apprenticeship lead for further guidance.



All candidates must be on a permanent contract, or a contract that covers the whole apprentice programme duration plus a minimum of six months additional employment, to allow for completion of the end-point assessment. Where maths and English certificates are not available, the contract period will need to be extended further to allow for completion of these qualifications. Please contact the apprenticeship lead for more information.



Public Health specific apprenticeship routes are available, including public health practitioner and community health and wellbeing worker.



Each apprenticeship programme has different entry level criteria. Employers and training providers can set their own criteria. For further information, please contact the apprenticeship lead.

Requirements for the **Step Up to Social Work** (children's) Programme

The **Step Up to Social Work** programme is an intensive, 14-month, full-time programme. If you want to become a social worker but do not have a degree in social work, you can train through this programme. You'd be required to resign from your existing post, then be taken on by Bracknell Forest Council as a **Step-Up** candidate, but you wouldn't technically be employed by Bracknell Forest Council.

If your application is successful, you will:

- train through a combination of academic study and hands on social work experience in a local authority.
- receive a bursary of £19,833 to support you during your training.

You can find out more information about the [Step up to Social Work](#) programme on the government's website.

Entry requirements:



Degree: A minimum of a 2:2 undergraduate degree qualification (level 6). This proof can be obtained from the university where the candidate graduated. For overseas qualifications equivalent to a 2:2 degree, validation will be handled by the Department for Education's (DfE) appointed recruitment partner, Peregrine. Your degree must be completed before applying. Final-year students are not eligible to apply.



Experience: At least six months of full-time (or equivalent) direct experience, either paid or voluntary, working with vulnerable children, young people, families, carers, or vulnerable adults.



GCSEs: English or English Language at grade 4 (C) or above (or an approved equivalent).

Impact graduate programme

Impact is a fast-track graduate programme for bright and passionate individuals who want to make a difference while excelling in their own careers. It offers the chance to work directly with communities, but also to influence policies and plans at a senior level.

Bracknell Forest Council takes on two graduates every two years. We do this so we can dedicate time and resources to ensure our graduates get the support they need to succeed.

Eligibility

Impact welcomes graduates from all backgrounds and areas of study. Our only requirements are:

- a minimum 2.2 undergraduate degree.
 - you must have the right to work in the UK for the duration of the two-year programme.
- Unfortunately, we are not able to sponsor visas.



Learning and development

Impact currently offers its trainees a fully funded CMI Level 7 qualification in leadership and management. This has been designed specifically to equip our trainees as leaders within the public sector. Assignments are completed in the workplace, putting theory into practice and opening doors for trainees to explore their own interests.



Salary

All graduates hired through the national recruitment campaign will be paid a minimum salary.

Current academy models

Finance academy model

At entry level, you will be employed on a permanent contract and provided with a secure base to learn from and be provided with support along the way. The team structure allows for career progression opportunities both during your learning and your post qualification experience.

Currently sat within the academy model:

Assistant accountant apprentice

Once Level 4 qualified, the apprentice will have the skills and experience to apply for a senior accountancy officer post. They can also consider applying for and studying NVQ Level 7 when the accountancy professional apprentice progresses.

Accountancy professional apprentice

Training and rotation and post qualification experience will set the apprentice on the career path to becoming a finance business partner.

Social care academy model

Entry into the social care academy model are:

Children's social care

Step up to Social Work an intensive, 14-month, full-time programme funded by the DfE. Entry onto the scheme requires a 2.2 degree and GCSE, or equivalent in English. Apprenticeship in social work – currently being explored.

Adult social care

Family worker, supported through the Bracknell Forest Council apprenticeship scheme to attain a degree in social work.

The **benefits** of Bracknell Forest Council's academy model

1

Skill development and growth

- Access to tailored training that helps you build new skills and enhance your current abilities.
- Stay up-to-date with industry trends, boosting your confidence and performance.

2

Career advancement opportunities

- Clear pathways for career progression within the organisation.
- Gain qualifications and certifications that can open doors for promotions and new roles across the council.

3

Personalised learning experience

- Flexible training options that fit your needs and learning style, including online, in-person, and hybrid programmes.
- Choose courses relevant to your career interests and professional goals.

4

Increased job satisfaction

- Feel more competent and valued in your role through continuous learning and development.
- Engage with meaningful training that directly improves your day-to-day work.

5

Networking and collaboration

- Opportunity to connect with colleagues across departments, expanding your professional network.
- Learn from internal experts and share best practices to enhance team collaboration.

Academy champions

An academy model champion is somebody who has:

- Supported the academy model through recruiting an apprentice.
- Supported a member of their team to develop their career within the council through training and development, including sponsoring them to complete an apprenticeship.

The champions will be advocates for the academy model at Bracknell Forest Council. They will be able to provide insights into how an academy model approach can support team development.

Academy model champions may be:

- Managers who have experience of developing, implementing, and maintaining an academy model approach. They are passionate about the scheme and keen to share their experiences with others.
- Employees who have been supported with their career development via an academy model who want to share their positive experiences with others. As an academy model champion, you will be playing a key role in championing the scheme at every opportunity, such as manager forums, and team meetings.

The academy model champions' role includes:

- Promoting and supporting networks.
- Supporting their team members to identify suitable officers for networking/ buddying across directorates, supported by HR.
- Promoting the academy across the council and within teams.
- Be available to promote model externally to prospective employees, for example, at careers events.



How will we **make it happen?**



Grow our own through apprenticeships, development opportunities and proactive succession planning



Academy model champions



Support from our managers across all directorates



Future commitment to the scheme



Support from CMT and members



Diverse workforce planning



Expanding the academy model across the council, with particular focus on roles which are hard to fill

How do you **join the academy model?**

There are many ways you can get involved with an academy model:

- You can join via one of the routes described in this handbook.
- If you're a manager, you can support your team members to get involved.
- As a manager, define academy model career pathways for your teams.
- Encourage entry level recruitment such as apprenticeship when recruiting.
- You could assume the position of a mentor or buddy to guidance and support to others.

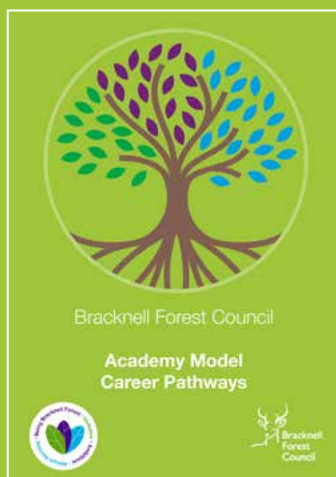
For more information, please visit our academy model homepage.

Turning **challenges** into **opportunities**

| Challenges | Opportunities |
|--|---|
| Covid legacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of face-to-face contact• Challenges in engaging with online training | Covid legacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different ways to engage in learning• Hybrid and agile working |
| Recruitment and retention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competitive market• High vacancy rate in some teams• High turnover rate in some teams• Use of agency staff | Recruitment and retention <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly defined career pathways• 'Apprenticeship first' approach• As corporate parents, identify opportunities for our care experienced young people• Progression routes through services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some teams lacking experienced officers• Reliance on managers and mentors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legacy mentoring roles• Meaningful and purposeful induction• Organisational succession planning |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of learning and development opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Development Programme 2024-27• Central repository of knowledge and skills• Career aspirational supervision and appraisals |

For more information about our Academy Model career pathways please visit our website <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/jobs/academy-model-career-development> or if you have any questions you can email our drop box academy.model@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

For apprenticeship queries please email the drop box Apprenticeships@bracknell-forest.gov.uk



If you need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with us, please call 01344 352000 or email: customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.