



AI & Cyber Security Apprenticeship Case Study



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The **solution** to building a tech enabled workforce

Introduction

Workforce learning, **reimagined**

Velocity Academy is the trusted partner for building future-ready workforces through essential IT, data, and technology skills. We provide professional apprenticeship programmes designed to enhance productivity and equip talent with the expertise needed for tomorrow's roles.

As a chosen provider to many large private and public organisations, we work closely with employers to understand their business objectives and evaluate existing team capabilities. From there, we design tailored learning journeys that close skills gaps and ensure new knowledge is applied directly in the workplace driving measurable business outcomes.

Our Impact

£200M+

Tracked ROI for our customers to date.

1000+

Learners enrolled through Velocity Academy

400+

Customers in the UK trust Velocity Academy for their tech training and recruitment

92%

Increase in customer workforce motivation and satisfaction

"The digital landscape is ever changing, Velocity is the solution to staff training and recruitment through access to the apprenticeship levy. We aim to be a trusted partner, delivering results, and adapting to the ever-changing digital barriers facing modern business."



Ben Newbould
Founder
Velocity Academy



Our Services

Upskill your team

You can make a direct saving on developing and training your current employees through the apprenticeship levy. That's right, apprenticeships are not just for new starters. Statistically, more companies train their current employees through the apprenticeship levy than they do new hires. So why don't you?



We can uncover
your skills gaps



Unlock
productivity and
performance



Save on
commercial
training costs



Increase
employee
retention



Recruitment of apprentices

We offer a full recruitment service for all entry and mid-level roles, all funded by the apprenticeship levy. New employees must enrol onto an accredited programme to be eligible.



We will understand
your role
requirements



Advise on
available
programmes



Advertise your role
across multiple
channels



Screen candidates
and arrange
onboarding



Our Partnership

Velocity Academy is proud to strengthen its partnership with Rochdale Council through the recruitment and delivery of Level 4 AI & Automation Practitioner and Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist apprenticeship programmes.

This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to developing future-ready digital talent and supporting the council's long-term workforce strategy.

Apprenticeships within Rochdale Council

Rochdale Council operates one of the region's most established and successful apprenticeship programmes, supporting both council departments and over 40 local authority-controlled schools through its levy-funded workforce development model. The programme is coordinated by the council's Raising Participation and Skills Team, now part of the Workforce Strategy Service, which oversees recruitment, induction, and ongoing support for apprentices across the organisation.

Rochdale Council's Long-Term Investment in Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships play a central role in Rochdale Council's approach to retention, succession planning, and internal capability building. Departments across the council use apprenticeships to grow their own talent pipelines with examples such as Children's Services developing internal staff into qualified social workers through structured apprenticeship pathways. The council also supports care-experienced young people into apprenticeship roles, offering additional financial and pastoral support to remove barriers to employment.

Rochdale Council has been recognised nationally for its commitment to apprenticeships, having previously been named one of the Top 100 Apprentice Employers in the UK. Over the last five years, the council has recruited more than 200 apprentices, with an average of 89% progressing into employment within the council, private sector roles, or further education upon completion.

The council's most recent intake welcomed 39 new apprentices, its largest cohort to date, with roles spanning ICT, customer services, planning, environmental management, and more demonstrating the breadth of opportunity available across local government. This commitment to workforce development aligns directly with Rochdale Council's digital transformation ambitions.



As highlighted by Nicola Strapps, Assistant Director for Digital, ICT and Transformation, the council is deliberately investing in AI, automation, and cyber security talent to build sustainable internal capability and reduce reliance on external consultancy. Apprenticeships provide a structured, long-term route to developing staff who understand both the technical landscape and the unique needs of local government services.

Case Study

About our client

Apprenticeships are central to Rochdale Council's strategy for growing internal capability and retaining skilled talent. Their Early Careers programmes include apprenticeships that blend on-the-job training, formal assessments, and support from experienced mentors and training providers.

Velocity Academy have established a relationship with Rochdale Council, delivering their Level 4 AI & Automation Practitioner and Level 4 Cyber Security Technologist apprenticeships. This includes the apprenticeship recruitment service Velocity Academy offers along with the training of the successful candidates.

Velocity Academy is proud to support Rochdale Council in developing the next generation of digital professionals and contributing to a workforce that is skilled, future-focused, and deeply connected to the borough it serves.

Q&A with Rochdale Council's Assistant Director Digital, ICT and Transformation

What were the key factors that led Rochdale Council to invest in AI & Automation and Cyber Security talent through the apprenticeship pathway, rather than relying solely on traditional recruitment or external consultancy?

Investing in AI, Automation, and Cyber Security talent through the apprenticeship pathway was a deliberate move for us. Apprenticeships allow us to nurture talent internally, giving individuals real-world experience while aligning their development closely with our needs. This approach helps us build a workforce that understands the council's role in the community, rather than relying solely on traditional hires or external consultants who may not have the same connection or insight into our services.

How does developing AI & Automation capability internally support the council's long-term digital transformation goals, particularly around service efficiency, data-driven decision-making and reducing manual workloads?

By developing AI and Automation capabilities within our team, we're supporting the council's long-term digital transformation goals. Internal expertise enables us to drive service efficiency, make data-driven decisions, and significantly reduce manual workloads. It's about embedding innovation into our everyday operations and making our services more responsive and effective for residents.



Nicola Strapps
Assistant Director Digital, ICT and Transformation



Case Study

Continuing our Q&A with Rochdale Council's Assistant Director Digital, ICT and Transformation

What impact do you expect these new apprentices to have on the council's ability to modernise services and improve outcomes for residents over the next 12–24 months?

Over the next 12–24 months, we expect these new apprentices to play a key role in modernising our services. Their fresh perspectives and growing skills will help us accelerate digital change, improve outcomes for residents, and make our processes more agile and resilient. This is a crucial period for us, and the apprentices are central to our plans.

How do you see the roles of AI & Automation practitioners and Cyber Security Technologists evolving within the council over the next 3–5 years?

Looking ahead, I see the roles of AI & Automation practitioners and Cyber Security Technologists evolving rapidly. As technology advances, their responsibilities will expand collaborating across departments, leading digital initiatives, and ensuring our systems remain secure and innovative. These roles will become increasingly strategic and integral to the council's vision.

What excites you most about bringing new digital talent into the council through this programme?

What excites me most about bringing new digital talent into the council is the energy and curiosity they bring. They challenge us to think differently, bring fresh ideas and try new things, helping us stay ahead in a fast-moving digital landscape. Their enthusiasm is infectious and fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement.



How Apprenticeships Benefit Your Team

Bridging the skills gap

Apprenticeships with Velocity Academy are designed to tackle the shortage of digital skills that many teams face. By training staff in areas such as cyber security, networking, and data, your organisation can ensure it has the right skills in-house to meet current and future technology needs. This approach not only closes immediate gaps but also builds long-term capability aligned to your business goals.



We can uncover your skills gaps



Unlock productivity and performance



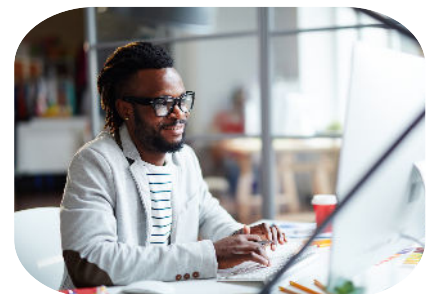
Save on commercial training costs



Increase employee retention

Improve staff retention through career pathways

Investing in apprenticeships shows employees that you value their development and are committed to their careers. By offering a clear route to grow skills and take on more responsibility, apprenticeships help retain ambitious staff who might otherwise look elsewhere for progression opportunities. Velocity Academy's structured programmes provide a pathway that keeps employees engaged, loyal, and motivated to stay with your organisation.



Increase team resilience and adaptability

Technology is constantly evolving, and teams must be able to adapt quickly. Apprenticeships give staff the flexibility to upskill in response to new challenges, whether that's emerging cyber threats or changes in infrastructure. By training with Velocity Academy, your workforce becomes more versatile and resilient, better equipped to support innovation and business continuity in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

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Velocity Academy sourced a fantastic tech apprentice on our behalf and we couldn't have been happier with the service. Regular check-ins, guidance and support from the start and genuine care were put into the recruitment process from Velocity, which meant they came up trumps with a cracking candidate. They have been outstanding. Thanks Velocity!

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Josie Frodsham
Head of HR

GivEnergy®

Next Steps

Ready to **partner** with us?



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