

## Leadership of the apprentice community at IBM

### United Kingdom

#### DESCRIPTION

At **IBM** in the United Kingdom, **an apprentice community has been set up to give voice to apprentices within the enterprise.** This was particularly important **during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to foster social connections among apprentices and offer support to individuals.** However, it has **evolved over time with broader and more holistic intentions**, aiming at giving a voice to apprentices within the organisation in all matters of concern, and currently it **represents almost 300 apprentices at IBM.** The leadership of the apprentice community (LAC) surveys all apprentices regularly (at present, four times per year) on relevant issues. For example, LAC wanted to gather apprentices' views and understanding of IBM's Safeguarding & Prevent Policy, and Fundamental British Values. They wanted to know about apprentices' perceptions and how important they considered these policies. This helped in addressing any gaps in apprentices' understanding and reinforcing the significance of these policies within the organisation. Some of these issues remain consistent over time, so that trends and changes in perceptions can be tracked and analysed; others are ad hoc questions that reflect current preoccupations. Outcomes of the surveys are presented and discussed in panel discussions between apprentices and IBM management. LAC has also developed an internal website with over 4 000 interactions annually.

**To ensure a structured and ongoing dialogue between apprentices and IBM senior management, they schedule regular meetings with the IBM Foundation Senior Leadership Team** to relay apprentices' perspectives and concerns.

**LAC is positively evaluated by both parties. When apprentices feel heard and empowered to express their views, it contributes to their sense of belonging, engagement and overall job satisfaction. For the employer, it enables them to benefit from their fresh ideas and insights to inform decision making as well as ensuring well-being and retention among employees.**