

## CASE STUDY

# Avison Young

Our **10 CEO Commitments on Diversity** have been a flagship Real Estate Balance policy for more than five years.

Setting out 10 inclusive actions that each member CEO agrees to take on diversity, the Commitments are designed to be interpreted and implemented by our member organisations in ways that are most appropriate for them.

We know our members are all at different stages in their journey with the Commitments, so we wanted to showcase some of the fantastic work already taking place and inspire and encourage others to find new and creative ways of engaging with them.

Here, we look at Commitment number seven. **Avison Young**, a global real estate advisor, shares how they are taking steps to implement change.



## Commitment 7

# Adopt a **balanced and diversified** approach to sponsorship

**10** **CEO** Commitments on Diversity

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## How did you implement this commitment?

The scale of the apprenticeship levy that is going unspent in the UK reveals the extent to which reform is needed. Current limitations make it difficult for businesses to use funds effectively and in a way that would lead to long-term change, despite the significant demand in the market for apprenticeships and the fantastic work of organisations such as the London Progression Collaboration (LPC) and its Reskilling the Recovery campaign, of which Avison Young is a proud supporter.

In 2020, Avison Young became the first commercial real estate firm to sponsor Reskilling the Recovery, pledging a proportion of its unspent apprenticeship levy to be transferred to London's SMEs, supporting their recovery from the Covid-19 crisis by paying for apprenticeship training for new or existing staff. Apprenticeships are key to building a resilient, inclusive economy post-Covid. The pandemic has resulted in many job losses, yet it is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged that are disproportionately impacted.

Our sponsorship of the LPC's campaign helped tackle some of the social mobility challenges that are unfortunately still part of our industry and provided the financial drivers to bring young people in, train them and employ them.

## What were the outcomes?

Apprenticeships can have a transformational impact on the progression and earning potential of disadvantaged learners, partially levelling the playing field relative to their more advantaged peers, and we were proud to support this initiative as a firm.

Despite our sponsored apprentices not being directly employed by Avison Young, working with the LPC has had a positive impact internally, raising awareness through a communications campaign around the lack of apprenticeship funding and the disproportionate impact the pandemic had on SME businesses and specifically the access to training for women and ethnic minorities.

This sponsorship has formed part of a wider effort throughout the business to attract diverse talent into the real estate industry, including taking part in school and careers fair visits, as well as coaching.

## How did you measure this?

So far, Avison Young has sponsored a total of nine apprentices, including several women and apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds, who went on to train with external companies as carpenters, construction document controllers, and plumbers, amongst other professions.

Overall, in its 2020/2021 cohort, the LPC's apprentices have an equal representation of male to female workers, as well as those who identify as coming from an ethnic minority background. In fact, the LPC has been highlighted as an example of best practice in terms of support for SMEs to take on new apprentices by both the think tank Onward and the OECD. It was of key importance to Avison Young to ensure our support would empower a diverse range of individuals in taking the next steps along their real estate career path.