



APPRENTICESHIPS

Briefing paper for Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact: Jo Clemente (Head of Learning & Development) 020 8379 4137

1. Executive Summary

This country has a long and proud tradition of Apprenticeships stretching back over centuries. The economic changes of the 1970s and 1980s, however, triggered a severe decline in Apprenticeship numbers. Government has been determined to reverse that trend. Since 1997, the numbers of Apprentices and the quality of their apprenticeships have improved significantly. Around 100,000 Apprentices now complete their Apprenticeships each year in England compared to 40,000 in 2001/02. It is recognised that this figure needs to grow enormously over the next decade if we are to meet the challenges of the global economy.

The Government has introduced a requirement for all young people to be in education or training until the age of 18, by 2015. It will be extremely difficult to achieve this without significant expansion of the Apprenticeship programme.

With the new participation age in mind, the Government has introduced an entitlement to an Apprenticeship place for each suitably qualified young person from 2013, and to deliver this entitlement, has announced that it will increase the number of 16–18 Apprentices significantly by 2013. The aim is that one in five of all young people will be undertaking an Apprenticeship within the next decade, so that an Apprenticeship place will be a mainstream post-16 option.

The starting point for this review has been Lord Leitch's aspirations for 400,000 Apprentices in England by 2020. To achieve this aims, and in line with the objectives laid down by Lord Leitch to increase the skills of those who have already completed their compulsory education, there is also an aim for significant growth in Apprenticeships for those aged 25 or over.

Apprenticeships are a popular choice for both young learners and adults, and it is the government's aim that by expanding the programme it will bring the benefits of choice to more individuals.

2. Apprenticeships for Enfield

2.1 Background and History

LBE does have a history of working with apprenticeships. We currently have working in the Council at any one time an average of 10 apprentices. These apprentices have typically been sourced through Enfield Training Services (ETS) and are undertaking a Business Administration NVQ level 2. We also recruit and place apprentices through ETS into the borough of Enfield in other private organisations. These apprentices work and study for an NVQ2 in Business Administration or Hair and can number between an additional 20-30 on the above figure.

Enfield also finds places for a number of Entry to Employment E2E places each year both in the Council and in private organisations and Hair. E2E benefits 16-18 yr olds to gain work experience before starting an apprenticeship scheme, whilst being paid their EMA Allowance of £30 per week. On average Enfield places around 35 a year in the Council and Borough.

2.2 Benefits of Apprenticeships at the Council

A number of benefits have been realised through the apprenticeship scheme in Enfield;

- The apprenticeship scheme is a cost-effective way of replenishing an ageing workforce and making sure new, younger staff are able to fill the knowledge gap created by older staff retiring, supporting workforce planning and development targets.
- Most training is on the job so they directly gain from the skill and experience of those around them ensuring that they have an immediate effect and impact on the business.
- The apprenticeship scheme supports the Local Area Agreement targets to improve NEET statistics, improve working age population qualifications to be at least level 2 or higher, and support achievement of level 2 being attained before the age of 19.
- Enfield has a declining proportion of young people in work. Evidence indicates that the population of young adults who have grown up in Enfield have not made an effective transition into the labour market (Skills and employment strategy 2008), we can target apprenticeship schemes to local young people specifically and can also ensure they are accessible to groups at high risk of becoming NEET such as 'Care Leavers' whom the council has a responsibility for as a corporate parent.
- The council is the biggest employer in the borough and as such take a lead in providing opportunities for young people to raise their skills.

In addition, there are clear social benefits to a successful Apprenticeship programme. It provides choice for learners and is an important option for those who learn most successfully in work-based learning environments. Apprenticeships have been shown to facilitate the often-difficult transition between full-time learning and work.

2.3 How it works at Enfield

Agenda 5.2

Apprentices are employed for a minimum of 30 hours a week. They undertake work based learning alongside a key skills qualification and usually have day release to college to develop job-specific technical skills. At work, they are managed by a line manager and may also have support from a mentor or coach. They are employed status, usually for about 1 year, which is the time it takes to complete their NVQ2 or 3, on average.

Training costs are funded by the LSC at no cost to the employer if an apprentice is aged 16-18. If an apprentice is aged 19 or over, the LSC contributes to the cost of the training, although some training providers have managed to find additional resource to cover the costs of a 19-24 yr old.

It is planned that during 09/10 Apprentices at Enfield Council will have their salary paid for by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund– a total of 45 apprentice positions will be funded this way.

2.4 Targets

A commitment has been made from Enfield Council, to London Councils to take on 100 apprentices during the period 2008 - 2012.

20 apprenticeship positions were found in 2008/9

45 apprentices will be placed in Enfield in 2009/10 and 11/12 under the WNF

35 apprentice positions will be found during 9/10 and 11/12 not funded under WNF

It has been agreed that apprenticeships in LBE will not just be in Business Administration, and that the offering will be expanded.

So far this offer plans to include, Parks – Horticulture and Arboriculture, catering, Revenue and Benefits staff, Customer services, Street Cleansing, Waste. Sports coaching, Teaching Assistants, Care and Housing.

Conversations are happening with Enfield Homes, a care organisation, and the PCT to take on some apprentices funded through the WNF.

It is planned to write into supplier contracts that they consider taking on apprentices when contracting with the Council and that we will monitor this activity.

We currently have 14 Apprentices working in Enfield Council and a commitment from managers for a further 25.

At the end of their apprenticeship, the apprentices will be offered the opportunity to apply for any posts suitable to them within Enfield Council. This has successfully happened recently for one individual and many have continued in their role on short term contracts. It is planned to have further conversations with 'partners' to identify any further job opportunities available for these individuals.

2.5 Marketing

There is an awareness raising event happening for staff/managers in November to promote apprenticeship in the council, and a planned presentations evening happening December/January 2009 to award previous apprentices with their certificate. This event will invite parents of the Apprentices, and potential employers to the scheme.

2.6 The Apprentices – Feedback

Feedback from Apprentices in Enfield Council is that they are enjoying their employment and around 70% would like to stay on as employees. The remaining 30% are unsure, or want to try other work environments and to use other skills, as an example one individual wants to go into Art Psychology, and another plans to go to university to study history. They have all enjoyed their time with LBE. Regular meetings with the Apprentices have been happening to gauge their enjoyment with the scheme and to gain valuable feedback on Enfield Council as an Employer.

2.7 London Councils and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

Jo Clemente has been working closely with the above two organisations who are leading on the Government drive to increase apprenticeships throughout the country. Regular meetings are held between the Council and the two organisations and JC is part of 'council groups' to take this forward.