

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 20 March 2014

HR Apprenticeship and Placement Update Report

REPORT OF:-

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Background

It was agreed at the April 2014 Scrutiny Committee meeting that an annual update report should be submitted. This report will provide an update inclusive of the scheme activity for the period 2014/2013.

Overall the Apprenticeship and Placement scheme has delivered well the following is some of the key outcomes:

- 86% of ex apprentices have gone on to employment or further education.
- The number of apprentices on the programme at one time peaked this year at 103
- The representation of young people in the council increased to 5%, the highest amongst London council's, who average is 2.74%
- A Care leaver employment programme was established called Care to Work
- 4 NEET Care leavers have secured an apprenticeship.
- 79 ex apprentices have been employed in the council to date
- 30 new work experience placements were facilitated. They included Job Centre Plus placements and work experience placement for school leavers aged 16 to 19 (non-school placements)

During the last four year the council has hosted over to 200 Apprentice placements. Over 90 individuals have completed the programme and gone on into permanent employment or full time further education. This year has seen the introduction of higher apprenticeships which offer access to degree level qualification and the introduction of two more new frameworks, Audit and ICT. We have also introduced trainee roles which facilitate the next stage of accreditation in areas like civil engineering. In the next few months we are recruiting to warehousing and accountancy. We are particularly pleased to report on the access routes being created in fields which had previously had stricter traditional recruitment barriers based on higher level qualifications and experience e.g. Audit, Accountancy and Civil Engineering.

The apprenticeship programme is seen as an established provision which provides a resource for both temporary and permanent staffing.

Enfield council has been recognised in London Council's report as having the highest representation of young people in its work force. This demonstrated that:

- Ex apprentices are sustaining employment in the council
- The Council's managers are more open to recruiting young people directly.
- The council is addressing its workforce development objective of future proofing its current workforce.

The beneficiaries of the programme are predominantly Enfield residents. This along with other partnership wide initiatives has contributed to the borough achieving its youth unemployment reduction goals. A table showing the scheme performance to date is attached in Appendix A

Work Experience

In creating youth employment opportunities we have also been committed to increase the availability of work experience opportunities in the council. While as a result of staff availability progress has been slower than expected, we have established the following:

- Improved awareness of the need for school placements with the council.
- Provided an access route for care leavers into apprenticeship
- Provided a conduit for job seekers to obtain work experience in the council.
- Provided an access point for information and guidance on the provision of work experience in the council.
- Identified work experience placements for pre-employment and work experience programmes

Care leavers

We would particularly like to highlight the Care to work scheme, delivered in partnership with the Leaving Care Team, the Youth service and Human Resources (The apprenticeship team) and designed in partnership with KRATOS (Children in Care Council). The programme offered Care leavers who are not in employment education or training (NEET) leavers a three stage introduction and preparation to work, which included skills assessment and testing, A three week accredited work experience programme, inclusive of a six day placement within the council and guaranteed interviews for an apprenticeship vacancy to successful participants. The pilot programme resulted in all 6 Care leavers completing the programme, five of who secured positive outcomes. Four are now apprentices, three of which are based within the council. One went into full time further education. The remaining participant has received additional support towards their employment and training goals. The second programme has recently been completed, Participants are in the process of being invited to apprenticeship interviews, or supported on to other programmes. Reports from managers and participants have been good. Further details are attached in appendix B.

The main challenges included:

- The client groups requires intensive time and support, this requires cohorts to be kept small. The recommended maximum is 7 or 8.

- Although the numbers of NEET Care leavers are relatively small, their concerns and issues can be complex, making the remaining group harder to reach. This will impact on the number of programmes we can run each year.
- There is a particular need to address the needs of care leavers who have recent youth offending backgrounds.
- Agreement and funding is required to support the programme delivery in the new financial year.

The Way forward

Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship programme will continue to run and be delivered in line with the council business goals and values. The development in 2014 will include:

- Supporting Procurement contract managers to promote and collect data on apprenticeships within our supply chain.
- The development of higher apprenticeship placements
- Working closely with local employers to find routes into employment following apprenticeship in the council.

Work Experience

The emphasis of the apprenticeship and placement team is to facilitate work experience opportunities within the council. This includes the promotion of School placements, provided by the Skills for Work team. The team act as a point of contact for general work experience enquires and facilitates predominately specialist placements e.g. traineeships, Job Centre Plus, learning difficulties, care leavers and other placements provided as an element of a specific learning or pre-employment programme. The team also provided guidance for managers who provided placements for 16 to 24 year olds.

The developments for 2014 will include:

- The provision of written work experience guidance for use within the council.
- To advertise and recruit to two traineeship frameworks (preparation for apprenticeship) in partnership with Capel Manor and The Skills for Work team. The frameworks are horticulture and business administration respectively.
- To promote and recruit to paid placements for people with Learning Difficulties in partnership with the Equals Team and SEETEC. SEETEC to provide sponsorship.
- The delivery of 2-3 further Care to Work programmes, depending on the availability of funding.
- The development of additional work experience opportunities e.g. internships

Summary

To date the programme has been successful in placing 237 apprenticeships in the council since 2010. We have expanded the types of apprenticeship available from being just Business Administration to include: Civil Engineering, Health and social Care, Audit, IT and Cleaning and Support (street cleaning), therefore offering a diverse range of opportunity for young people in the borough. The success of the programme has not only enabled us to increase the percentage of young people in the workforces and succession planning issues.

Our high success and 90% retention rate is due to factors which include a dedicated team, who are able to provide support, coaching, mentoring and training in addition to acting as advocates and champions aligned with supportive managers and a clear steer from the Corporate Management Board.