

Appendix B

Care to Work Update - 4 March 2014

Introduction

The Care to Work Programme is a dedicated access to employment and apprenticeship programme aimed specifically at Enfield council care leavers. The programme is designed to provide care leavers with employability skills, gained through training, work experience and a supported apprenticeship placement. The programme is delivered in partnership by The Council's Apprenticeship Team (HR) The Youth Service (Education) and the Leaving Care Team (HHASC)

The programme consists of three distinct elements:

1. An assessment period.

This provides an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their skills and suitability for the programme by the use of group activities, skills assessment, literacy and numeracy test. Participants were also given the opportunity to share additional information about their career aspirations and personality, which may not have normally be picking up during the traditional interview process.

2. Accredited Three week, Paid Work experience (Inc. of Work Trials)

A three week work experience programme, during which they have received 6 days on the job work experience, an AQA level 1 qualification in Administration, interpersonal skills, and job application and interview skills training.

3. Twelve Month Apprenticeship Placement

Care leavers who successfully completed the first two stages were offered an interview with a manager or company seeking an apprentice. Throughout the placement they received dedicated support from the Youth Service and if applicable mentoring from the council's apprenticeship team. Applicants not successful in securing an appointment within the council were advised of other opportunities. E.g. other apprenticeship or traineeship schemes. The youth service will continue to support them throughout their apprenticeship and until they are settling in their permanent employment.

The leaving care team provided additional support as required by the individual. This may have included travel expenses, clothing allowance and a living expense top up. The partners liaised regularly ensuring that information is shared swiftly to ensure the continued successful of the placement.

The need for this programme and its contents were identified via, consultation and advice from the KRATOS (Enfield Children in Care Council), previous council apprentices who were also care leavers and the need to increase provisions for Enfield care leavers. The development of the programme was supported by (the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel and CMB. The design of the programme

also takes into account best practice recommendation identified by Ofsted, London Councils and The National Institute of adult continuing Education (NIACE).

The pilot programme took place between 21st October and 8th November 2013. The aim was to work with a minimum of 6 participants with a goal of two participants going on to secure an apprenticeship placement.

6 of the 8 registered care leavers successfully completed the programme with 5 progressing into positive destinations as follows:

3 have been employed on the council's apprenticeships programme

1 has been employed as an apprentice in a local company via the council's Enterprising apprenticeship programme

1 started full time further education.

The remaining participant has complex needs and is continuing to receive support, advice and guidance from the youth service. A second programme commenced 17 February and is due to complete the 7 March.

One participant secured a place on an alternative programme just prior to our start date. The other was withdrawn from the programme as a result of an unresolved personal situation which would affect our ability to place them within the council.

Highlights

Council managers reported that all participants of the scheme were presentable, well prepared for the work place and to date, the indication is that all those appointed will pass their probation periods.

Council Manager quotes

"They displayed levels of professionalism and customer service way beyond their age and I was very impressed with them. I got a lot of feedback from my team and am happy to report that each member found them extremely polite, friendly, helpful and always willing to assist"

"It is rare to find a bunch of work experience individuals that truly grasp the opportunity presented to them and in such a short space of time whilst delivering high standards of work"

All involved in the scheme commented on the demonstrable changes in the individuals.

Care leaver quotes

All of the participants stated they would recommend the programme to others and that they found the programme enjoyable.

"These skills will help me in the future when I go for interviews or when I am in a stable job. I have also learnt about good time keeping and being able to prioritise my

work from what is more important to less important. Having good time management is one of the key aspects of the world of work I feel I have improved on most whilst I have been on the programme”

“I learnt that everyone has a different personality and you have to react differently to others around you, altogether I really enjoyed my experience and I would recommend it to any young person”.

Challenges

It was accounted for from the onset that this target client group may present more challenges than the more diverse group. A key element was the need to keep them informed and motivated through each stage of the process. Other challenges included:

- The interest in the scheme was generally high with over 12 confirmed individuals expected for the assessment day. Only half actual turned up.
- Many of the individuals had other problems which did not become apparent until the programme commenced. These included, housing debt, problems with benefit claims and mental health issues.
- Some of our communication with regards benefit and the nature of the programme was misunderstood i.e. description of the programme, offer letters this resulted in some benefits payments being suspended. This resulted in some frustration to participants and will be addressed in future programmes.
- Competing expectations of the programme often lead to complex discussion/situations with regards the needs of the care leaver, versus the needs of employers or the apprenticeship programme
- Some individuals would have benefited from greater preparation or time on the work experience element of the programme.

Care To Work Scheme Case Studies

Case Study 1 (CS1)

Having passed the assessment, CS1 demonstrated commitment and reliability throughout the three week work experience programme. She completed the AQA Level 1 within the deadline. As a result of her impressive performance and interview she was offered the remaining place on the Health and Social apprentice cohort for 2013. She started college in January 2013 and has received glowing report from her college and management. She has recently passed her probation period.

CS1 reported that she has continued to enjoy the Care to Work Experience. She stated that she loves her placement, has learnt much about the service users and different aspects of the placement.

Case Study 2

CS2 is a confident individual who having achieved her GCSE questioned her next steps. She participated in the programme and was successful in her application to complete an HND Business management course at college. Her goal is to return to employment at a higher level. Initial time keeping was poor, however she stated that the programme motivated her to be more organised, getting up early in the mornings ensure she attended the programme on time consistently throughout the three week placement.

Before I started the Care to Work Programme I had little knowledge about working in a working environment. Now that I have completed my training course I have learnt a lot about transferrable skills, how to base it on myself when writing and how it will benefit me within and out of work.

Case Study 3

CS3 is a self-motivated young woman who was able to communicate in a professional manner. She was undecided on her career choice and initially did not make the best impression at her placements, which although was her first choice was located away from the civic centre and where she would have preferred to work. However swift feedback led to her changing the perception of the manager to such an extent that the manager would have been happy to take her on as an apprentice. CS3 however failed her maths assessment with the council on three occasions. She was invited to participate in the Council's Enterprising Apprenticeship project. This project matches Job centre plus claimants with local businesses wishing to recruit an apprentice. After an initial disappointing first interview, CS3 went on to pass her assessment and secure an apprenticeship placement in a local business.

CS3 stated that she felt that the Care to Work programme had gone well overall stated that as a result of the programme she *learnt to use the correct language when*

speaking to staff, colleagues and professionals. She also learnt how to cope better with disappointment.