

Corporate Parenting Board

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Apprenticeships & Traineeships update

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Overview

- New Apprenticeship Strategy agreed February 2020
- Includes Apprenticeships and Traineeships - two Government schemes aimed at giving people in England the skills, knowledge and experience to enter the workforce and actively contribute to the UK economy
- The two schemes, whilst different in design and approach, offer opportunities for learners who do not wish to take the traditional academic route after GCSEs, as well as those at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

What is a Traineeship

- The 16-19 NEET prevention Team, under Kim Wattie's leadership, is responsible for creating and embedding traineeships in Worcestershire.
- Traineeships are education and training programmes with work experience for young people whose preference is to find a job or apprenticeship but who lack the skills, experience and behaviours sought by employers.
- Unlike an apprenticeship, a traineeship is a programme of learning and skills development aimed at developing employability skills. It is not a job.
- Traineeships were re-launched in July 2020 as the Chancellor introduced a number of amendments to the scheme. Traineeships are suitable for:
 - anyone not currently in employment and have little work experience, but who are focused on work or the prospect of it.
 - are age 16 to 24 and qualified up to and including a full Level 3
 - individuals who providers and employers believe they have a reasonable chance of being ready for an apprenticeship or other employment within 6 months of completing a traineeship
- Traineeships are not intended for:
 - the most disengaged young people, who require very intensive support (*directly taken from government guidance*).
 - those who already have the qualifications, skills and experience needed to start an apprenticeship or find work; or
 - those already in employment.

What is an Apprenticeship

- The Apprenticeships & Vocational Qualifications team, under Sarah Foster's leadership, is responsible for creating and embedding apprenticeships in Worcestershire.
- Apprenticeships are available to anyone wishing to train in a specific job role. In contrast to Traineeships, Apprenticeship learners need to be in paid employment to be eligible for the programme and will be required to stay on the programme and in employment for at least 12 months.
- Apprentices spend 80% of their time in the work setting and 20% of their time as "off the job" learning.

Apprenticeships provide for:

- Professional Qualifications available to all employees at all levels of the organisation
- Learning on the job therefore significantly greater opportunity to embed learning and improve performance
- Programmes (not salary) are paid for centrally via the levy
- Proven way of attracting new talent to the organisation
- Programmes relevant to the work the employee undertakes
- Greater opportunities to upskill our workforce as part of a clear career pathway

2020 – Enhanced Activity

- New Apprenticeship Strategy approved by SLT in February
- Main focus this year has been to:
 - Commence reducing levy underspend
 - Increase organisational awareness and appetite for apprenticeships and traineeships through 3 week communication campaign
 - Supporting managers to understand the benefits and responsibilities for apprenticeships & traineeships
 - Introduced Levy transfer policy to help boost local economy through apprenticeships
 - Care Leavers:
 - Developed Social Value policy to encourage businesses in our supply chain to take on Care Leavers as apprentices or undertaking traineeships
 - Created internal task force with sole focus of supporting Care Leavers into work or skills programmes via apprenticeships or traineeships
 - Ensured our Levy transfer policy criteria requires businesses to create apprenticeship opportunities with added social value for disadvantaged groups. For example, Care leavers; young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET); individuals with disabilities; long term unemployed

Progress to date

- We currently have 131 apprenticeships on programme throughout WCF & WCC:
 - 93 in our core business areas, plus
 - 38 within schools
- As a result of recent communications campaign, we have seen the following take up of traineeships and apprenticeships
 - 5 new traineeships commenced in September 2020. Whilst none are care leavers, all were at risk of becoming NEET
 - 44 new apprenticeships (internal and external) starting throughout the Autumn
 - Schools new sign ups are slower this term as their focus has been gearing up for return of children however there are still several lines of enquiry
- We have had 3 Care Leavers join apprenticeships programmes. 2 left WCC in 2019 and 1 went on Maternity leave in April 2020 and will resume her programme upon her return.
- Levy transfer – policy launched in August 2020 and advertised via the LEP. £75,000 of levy spend committed since launch to 6 local businesses (children's home, nurseries and adult care providers) helping boost the local economy

Other recent activity supporting Care Leavers

Work Experience

- In 2018 our recruitment team created the work experience placements programme for Care Leavers. The team seek opportunities internally and externally and then work closely with the Care Leavers team to provide matching exercise for placements.
- This has resulted in 28 placements, ranging from 1 hour taster sessions to six week long placements.
- Opportunities were created internally and externally, with support from third parties including construction, administration and architecture
- The team also created Two “takeover days” for care leavers (via “who cares we care” & “Speak out”) seeking out Care Leavers’ views on subject topics. IT was the preferred route and so coding exercises were undertaken within the business, as well as a CV & interview skills day.

Other activity

- All current vacancies within WCC and WCF are shared with the WCF care leavers team for onward discussions with Care Leavers
- Regular attendance at The Skills Show in order to promote careers within local government and apprenticeship opportunities for Care Leavers and all young people.
- Any care leaver who required an employment reference, we have provided these based on their time representing the young peoples panel

Challenges

- Many care leavers are interested in programmes we simply just don't offer. Examples of recent requests include (not exhaustive):
 - Sports & recreation (successfully referred to Redditch District Council)
 - Gaming
 - Beauty & Make up
 - Skateboard design
- We have also made referrals to Worcester City Council however we have not been able to make a match as yet.
- We are not seeing as many opportunities being made available in which we can support Care Leavers through either an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- Current working conditions do not naturally favour the support of traineeships, in that working from home presents challenges for traineeships. We are however overcoming these challenges, ensuring we equip the trainees with the support and the skills to be able to work from home.
- Care leavers finding apprenticeships and traineeships within WCF or WCC can be challenging because of the type of work undertaken and the fact we are their Corporate Parent. This is why we are encouraging greater links with our third party providers to support traineeships and apprenticeships for Care Leavers.

Future Action

- Our new apprenticeship strategy provides clear focus on enrolling more care leavers into traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Given the aforementioned 2020 activity, we feel we have now created a stronger and more receptive learning environment within WCC and WCF and as such the business will be more ready to provide a positive learning experience for our Care Leavers.
- Done this way, our Care Leavers will be best placed to have the greatest support and opportunities to succeed.
- Care leavers who do not have the minimum entry level requirements for apprenticeships (e.g. Maths or English) will be supported and upskilled via a traineeship in the first instance.
- Support will be provided for managers who manage care leavers while on placements.

Future Action cont....

Recruitment activity

- We will trial selected vacancies as being for Care Leavers only in the first instance
- We will continue to share every vacancy with the Care Leavers' Team
- Any care leavers showing interest in our vacancies (via Care Leavers' Team) will be fully supported through all aspects of the recruitment process
- We will undertake more CV writing skills sessions
- We will provide support for any care leaver wanting to apply for a job with either WCF/WCC; the recruitment team will offer 1-1 support for completing their cv & application form

Other Activity

- We will look to ensure all care leavers undergo a mandatory careers interview as part of the care leavers process, so we can provide targeted support, such as matching individual desires with vacancies
- All request to recruit forms (with the exception of social workers) will be diverted to the Apprenticeship team to see if we can support apprenticeships and/or care leavers before being allowed to continue with the recruitment process
- We will establish a process for managers to show a clear route for Care Leavers through our various internal programmes

What we need to succeed

- We need the new Apprenticeship Strategy to be a major part of our future Workforce Strategy (to be finalised October 2020).
- Barriers are continuing to be removed to allow and encourage care leavers into WCF & WCC but...we cannot create the opportunities, this needs to be done by managers/services.
- We now need the support from the businesses (WCF and WCC) to make positions available for care leavers moving into Traineeships and Apprenticeships.
- We need business areas to make referrals to Kim & Sarah's team.
- We will continue to forge closer links between the Care Leavers & Outreach teams and Apprenticeship & Traineeship teams, and need to ensure these teams are included and invited to any Care Leavers forums and referrals continue to be encouraged into Traineeships & Apprenticeships.

QUESTIONS

