

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 1 March 2021
Report for: Information
Report of: Sara Saleh, Corporate Director Strategy & Resources

Report Title

Trafford Council Kickstart Scheme

Recommendation(s)

That the content of this report is noted.

Financial Implications:	A successful Kickstart scheme is expected to income generate
Legal Implications:	Trafford's Legal team have read through the Government's Kickstart scheme terms and conditions and confirmed they are agreeable
Human Resources Implications:	The Kickstart scheme will link into the Council's Talent Management Strategy The scheme will support the Council's Corporate Prioritises
Asset Management Implications:	None
E-Government Implications:	None
Risk Management Implications:	None
Health and Safety Implications:	The Council's Health and Safety Manager has been consulted and is happy to support the scheme

1. Background Information

- 1.1 At the meeting on the 12th October 2020, CLT agreed for Trafford Council to go ahead with applying to be a Gateway organisation under the Government's Kickstart scheme. This is an opportunity to directly address youth unemployment in the borough of Trafford as the programme targets young people aged 16-24 years on Universal Credit. Through becoming a Gateway organisation, the Council will create 30 work placements (6 month duration) both within the Authority and with external local employers. The placements are fully funded by DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) and will help the young people to develop confidence, experience and skills to move forward into jobs and apprenticeship opportunities.
- 1.2 Our application to become a Gateway was submitted in December 2020 and we received confirmation of approval for all our internal placements and 11 of our external placements in early January 2021.

2. The Kickstart Scheme

2.1 The Government Kickstart scheme will run until at least December 2021 and is seen as the starting point alongside T-levels and work placements for supporting young people into good quality apprenticeships. Currently the last placement can start on 31 December 2021 and run for six months to 30 June 2022. Any Kickstart placement must not:

- Replace existing or planned vacancies
- Cause existing employees or contractors to lose their employment

2.2 There are currently no restrictions in regarding the location of the placements or how the 25 hours a week are worked. The placement needs to support the participants in developing the skills and experience needed to be successful in finding work after completing the scheme.

2.3 A payment of £1,500 per job placement is available for support and training for both internal and external placements. This payment is to provide tailored wraparound support to every young person, including induction, action planning and employability training. This payment goes to the Gateway organisation.

2.4 An additional payment of £300 per placement will be given by the government for organisations offering external placements to support with any associated administration costs.

3. The Kickstart Scheme at Trafford

3.1 A Kickstart Project Team has been created using current resource from the HR Service Workforce Strategy and Strategic Growth Teams to deliver on the scheme. A Trafford Pledge Youth Employment Task Force has been set up which Richard Roe and Angela Beadsworth as co-chairs. This includes representatives from DWP, Trafford College and other gateway providers within Trafford such as the Growth company. The aim of this group is to ensure successful delivery of the gateway offer across the borough, supporting young people in Trafford to gain employment.

3.2 An internal Taskforce has been set up including representatives from HR, Schools HR, Recruitment, GMSS, Finance, Unison, Legal and ICT. This has been instrumental in ensuring the scheme is robust and meets all our internal requirements.

3.3 The Project team have attended DMT sessions across all 7 directorates to launch the scheme and gain support. A positive response has been received across the directorates.

3.4 Attendance at recent school HR briefing received 9 expression of interests from schools within Trafford who are interested in offering kickstart placements.

3.5 We have engaged with the DWP to ask if our Care Leavers can be given priority access to our kickstart placements and this can be accommodated. We are currently working with our internal Aftercare team to gauge interest from our current care leavers.

3.6 Unison has representation on the Internal Taskforce but a separate engagement session has also taken place. They have raised concerns over ensuring safeguarding is covered in training for all involved and ensuring the young people are aware of changes to their benefit payments. Both these concerns have been resolved by ensuring any service offering placements must undertake safeguarding level 1 training as a condition of entry. We have provided via the council's online learning platform and asking DWP to provide a session on changes to benefits at the kickstart induction sessions.

3.7 A draft Trafford Support Offer for the Kickstart scheme has been created which is made up of individual elements for the young person and the employer/manager. This young person's wrap around support contains over 40 hours of personalised support starting with an individual action plan and check in within the first few days of the start of the placement. Support will then take place throughout the placement. The support will be delivered via a variety of methods including e-learning, MS Team's sessions and face to face learning (Covid permitting). This will include ongoing support of monthly check in sessions and monthly development sessions covering area such as employability skills. The employer/management support_ includes an Induction to Kickstart Placements booklet (including sign posting to Health and Safety legislation) and access to a Kickstart Co-ordinator who will provide advice & guidance

3.8 To evaluate the kickstart placements we are developing a self-assessment form for use by the Young Person which will be completed pre, during and post placement. We will also use qualitative measures throughout the programme, both to ensure we are meeting need and to measure impact. Feedback will also be sought after each taught session and through the peer mentoring support to ensure our offer is of high quality and any issues addressed in a timely manner. We will be continuously improving our offer as the placements evolve.

4. **Planned Placements start dates**

4.1 External placement start dates will be dependent on how businesses come out of the current lockdown. One of our external businesses is currently still open and would like to proceed with recruitment now. It is planned that we recruit one internal council placement into the HR Service to support with the administration and smooth delivery of the full cohort.

4.2 It is planned that the first internal council placement will commence on Tuesday 4th May and run until 31st October 2021. A schools cohort is planned to start on 1st September 2021.

4.3 Our aspiration is to have a second internal cohort of placements starting on 1st October, a further successful application to the DWP would be required to allow this. This would allow networking between the two cohorts and sharing of good practice from the placements.

5. **Conclusion**

4.1 Employment Committee is recommended to note the content of this report.