

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 11th February 2013
Report for: Information
Report of: Joanne Hyde, Director of Human Resources

Report Title

Trafford Council's Internal Apprenticeship Programme – Progress Update

Summary

This report sets out the ongoing progress with the Council's internal apprenticeship programme since its launch at the beginning of October 2011.

Recommendation(s)

- That the Employment Committee notes the significant progress to date.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Information

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Council's apprenticeship scheme aligns with its priorities, in particular 'Preserving and Improving Educational Excellence' and 'Improving the Health and Well-Being of Residents'
Financial	Salary and associated costs i.e. training fees
Legal Implications:	Apprentice training contracts are in line with relevant legislation
Equality/Diversity Implications	In line with relevant legislation and good practice
Sustainability Implications	None
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The apprenticeship placements are training posts and do not impact upon the existing staff base
Risk Management Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

1. Introduction

A total of 51 apprentices have started work with Trafford since October 2011; of these, 84% (43) remain employed by the Council and 8 apprentices have left due to significant social/domestic reasons, unconnected to their apprenticeship roles. Of the 43 who are still employed, 5 have now obtained permanent roles with the Council, leaving 38 apprentices on the apprenticeship scheme.

1.1 Priority Groups for Recruitment

The priority groups were agreed as Children Leaving Care, in line with Trafford's Corporate Parenting responsibilities, young people aged between 16-24 and Trafford residents.

Of the 38 apprentice recruits that remain in the scheme, 11% (4) are care leavers, 74% (28) are aged 16-24 and 66% (25) are residents of the Borough.

2. Apprentice Recruitment

In line with the apprenticeship strategy, a further campaign to promote the benefits of apprenticeships will be undertaken to link in with National Apprenticeship week (week commencing 11th March 2013).

It is hoped that a number of vacancies will be available to promote during the week and at other events that are taking place around this time. Currently, there is 1 apprentice vacancy in Democratic Services. This role will be promoted at Connexions' apprenticeships and jobs fair on 7th February 2013 at Sale Waterside.

Nominations for new apprenticeship roles will be sought from service areas in the next few weeks.

3. Care Leavers – Progress Update

Appendix 1 details the progress to-date of care leavers employed as apprentices at Trafford Council.

4. Learning and Reflection

Following discussions at recent Corporate Parenting sub-committee meetings, the following recommendations were made to the Apprenticeship programme;

1. To look to place care leavers in posts that are close to their home, in order to minimise any potential travel/time-keeping issues.

Progress update: discussions have taken place with the Aftercare team as to how this can be managed, in readiness for the next cohort of children leaving care i.e. through the identification of suitable vacancies via the self-smart assessment tool.

2. To undertake pre-apprenticeship activity with Rathbones, incorporating the self-smart assessment tool (working with the Children in Care team) and also the

Aspirational Futures programme (which develops young people's knowledge and understanding of the behaviours and competencies that are a common feature of employers' recruitment and selection processes). Consideration will also be given as to whether the self-smart tool can be extended to all apprentices.

Progress update:

- **A meeting has taken place with Rathbones, to discuss the development of a pre-apprenticeship scheme that would be delivered to care leavers. There are 2 programmes that could support a Care Leaver cohort, one of which is a pilot programme that provides additional support for vulnerable groups. In order to compare programmes, a meeting is also being organised with Skills Solutions who also deliver a pre-apprenticeship scheme.**
 - **Connexions also deliver a pre-apprenticeship programme, which supports vulnerable young people and prepares them for employment. It is hoped that these young people (once they have completed their work with Connexions) will be supported into the Council's internal apprenticeship scheme.**
 - **There may also be the possibility to bid for funding as part of the City Deal programme that could support pre-apprenticeship activity and this is currently being explored further.**
 - **Connexions and the Youth Offending Service are developing a project that will identify a cohort of vulnerable Year 11's. The young people will be identified from the Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit, Young Offenders and Care Leavers. The aim of the project is to provide additional support and guidance for this cohort over a number of after-school sessions. It is hoped that this cohort could feed into a pre-apprenticeship scheme and ultimately the Council's internal apprenticeship scheme. Further discussions are being held shortly to develop this activity**
3. As part of the recruitment process, hold an open week/taster sessions, so interested candidates can try out different departments and teams and get a feel for the environment and type of work undertaken, to help them determine their options and areas of interest.

Progress update:

- **Trafford College is currently re-developing their NEET programme delivery and as part of this, they are looking to offer taster sessions for their college students. HR is working with the college to identify opportunities for these sessions to be offered by the Council; this will provide young people with an insight into the possible career paths available at Trafford Council.**
 - **Discussions have taken place with the Aftercare and Connexions teams to identify key roles (ideally 10) at the Council that young care leavers may wish to learn more about. These roles will provide the basis for a number of taster sessions to be held during school holidays and promoted during National Apprenticeship week that will allow young people the opportunity to understand about the work environment and an area of work that interests them.**
4. To appoint a mentor to every (not just care leavers) apprentice as mandatory and within the induction, promote the role and benefits of a mentor.

Progress update: Discussions are currently taking place with apprentices to appoint mentors.

5. Provide training and support to appointed mentors. The Children in Care team will provide additional training to care leavers' mentors.

Progress update: A cross section of 43 experienced managers have recently been trained and will provide support to our apprentices along with support to young jobseekers aged between 18 and 24 from within Trafford borough.

Connexions has also offered to support any care leavers on the internal scheme through a buddy system, offering to provide support on a regular basis via informal catch- up meetings.

6. Regular 'formal' meetings are held, involving the care leaver, their Personal Advisor, their Mentor, HR and the line manager, to review progress, development, discuss any issues and discuss the 'step-down' process.

Progress update: regular meetings and communication has been taking place between HR and the line manager regarding the Care Leavers' progress. Reviews are currently taking place with apprentices and their line managers to discuss any concerns and progress on the programme.

7. In the last quarter of an individual's apprenticeship, support with CV preparation, job seeking and signposting and help the apprentices to get 'job ready'.
8. Introduce a reference process, based on skill set (similar to the approach taken with the Future Jobs Fund scheme).

Progress update: this is currently being established as part of the on-going development of the scheme and will support the on-going training activity provided to the apprentices.

9. At the induction, invite the new apprentices' line managers for an interactive session over lunch, where they can get to know each other.

Progress update: the next round of inductions is due to take place shortly and this will be incorporated into the sessions.

10. Children in Care team to train managers on additional support needs for care leavers. Include the Personal Advisor, so the manager has background information on the individual.

Progress update: as part of the induction process, managers will receive support and guidance from the Children in Care team on managing the needs of care leavers. They will also meet with the care leaver's assigned Personal Advisor to discuss each individual's specific needs.

11. To promote the success of our internal apprenticeship scheme through Trafford Today and Talk Trafford, including a case study of a care leaver apprentice during National Apprenticeship Week.

Progress update: Articles and case studies are currently being developed to promote the success of the apprenticeship scheme.

4. Further actions

Further development work is continuing to progress pre-apprenticeship opportunities for the vulnerable groups, identified as priority areas for the apprenticeship programme.

An apprenticeship website is also being developed that will be hosted on the Council website. The website will promote opportunities to potential apprentices and will detail key information to employers who are considering apprenticeships.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

It is recommended that the Employment Committee notes the significant progress to date.

Appendix 1

Apprentice 1

Apprentice 1 is undertaking a project development role.

A monthly review is held with Apprentice 1, involving HR, his line manager and the Service Head to track behaviour and performance.

He has great communication skills and creativity but needs to develop more confidence in his abilities.

“Apprentice 1 joined the Strong Communities Team in August 2012. He has come a long way, improving in a range of areas and we have seen a difference in his settling in with the team.”

Apprentice 2

Apprentice 2 works as a Children’s Rights apprentice as part of the CYPS MARAT team.

He has settled well into his role. He has taken a lead role in developing the Children in Care Council and has been to the Corporate Parenting Board to report on a piece of research on Trafford’s Children’s Homes. He is working closely with the fostering service as a member of the family placement panel and working with the trainer for new foster carers. His college work took a while to get going due to problems at the college but he is now working hard for his NVQ. He is keeping a learning diary and continues to seek out new opportunities for learning across CYPS.

Apprentice 3

Apprentice 3 is working as a Ground Force apprentice and is working towards an NVQ Level 2 in horticulture with Myerscough College.

He works on a mobile team within Ground Force and he has made good progress since starting and has gained in confidence, which is reflected in his work. He is receiving 1-1 tuition from the College due to his learning needs and is progressing well.

Apprentice 4

Apprentice 4 is working as an apprentice youth worker and is undertaking an NVQ in youth work with Rathbones.

The past six months have been very difficult for Apprentice 4 due to personal issues. However, she did manage to complete her training course with Rathbones and she is now qualified in youth work to NVQ Level 2.

She still has some distance to go with her learning on the job and she finds it difficult sometimes to find a balance between supporting the service users and becoming their friend.

As a Looked after Child in Trafford, she has in the past been a youth service user and is well known by most of the staff. This in some ways has been beneficial, but in other ways it has been a difficult transition for her from service user to worker; however, she receives a high level of personal support from her supervisor to overcome any difficulties.

She has made good progress and is starting to develop a good understanding of the professional role of a youth worker; this is demonstrated in her most recent practice. She has settled in well at Sale West youth centre and is currently working with the Junior Club at Sale west and at The Fuse.