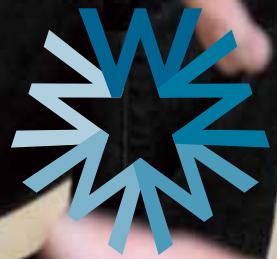


# OPENING DOORS TO APPRENTICESHIPS

*REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO  
ARE DISADVANTAGED  
AND DISENGAGED FROM  
APPRENTICESHIPS*

PAPER 2: REFLECTING ON WAYS FORWARD



**KIRSTY ANDERSON, MARCIA BROPHY,  
BETHIA McNEIL AND HANNAH WALSH**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Young Foundation would like to thank the three Pathfinder local authorities, Manchester City Council, Hertfordshire County Council and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, for their continued commitment to the Apprenticeship Pathfinder Project and particularly the Opening Doors strand.

We are grateful to the attendees at the two expert seminars held at the Young Foundation in April 2009 and March 2010 (see Annex 1 for a full list of those in attendance), particularly those who presented their work and assisted in the facilitation of the events.

We would like to thank the local authorities represented as case studies in this paper, for their time in sharing their successes and challenges with us.

Finally, we are grateful to all our colleagues at the Young Foundation who assisted in writing this report.

## GLOSSARY

A glossary has been produced to accompany this paper and the first 'Opening Doors to Apprenticeships' paper. It contains some key pieces of terminology in relation to 'opening doors' to Apprenticeships for disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people that are important to clarify. Some of the concepts referred to in both papers have various, often disputed meanings and this glossary provides a description of what is meant in this particular context.

An online version can be accessed here:  
[http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors_glossary.pdf)

## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>REFLECTING ON WAYS FORWARD</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>THINKING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED AND/OR DISENGAGED FROM APPRENTICESHIPS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ENGAGING EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ANNEX 1 – MATRIX OF CASE STUDIES</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>ANNEX 2 – EXPERT SEMINAR ATTENDEES</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>99</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Apprenticeship Pathfinder is funded by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). The Pathfinder aims to provide empirical evidence of the processes and relationships that will be required by local authorities, the NAS and others, including Connexions, schools and employers, in achieving the Government's aspirations for Apprenticeships, namely that:

- Apprenticeships become a mainstream learning route for young people aged 14 – 19
- young people meeting the specified entry standards will be entitled to an Apprenticeship place by 2013
- one in five young people are engaged in Apprenticeships within the next decade.



A key strand of the Pathfinder Project is focused on supporting access and 'opening doors' to Apprenticeships for young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged from this learning route. This includes:

- young people who want an Apprenticeship place but who experience barriers to access, such as:
  - those who lack qualifications for entry
  - those facing geographical barriers (location of home, work and college)
  - young people with criminal records
- young people who are furthest from education and training and lack awareness of Apprenticeship opportunities, including those in jobs without training (JWT) and those working in the 'informal economy' receiving cash in hand.

Young people who are 'disengaged' from Apprenticeships as a learning route also includes those who are achieving well academically, and participating in education and training, but who have never considered (or been supported to consider) Apprenticeships as an option for them. This group is a key priority for NAS and local authorities alike, in progressing towards Government aspirations for the take-up of Apprenticeships; indeed, the Apprenticeship Offer plays a central role in achieving this aim.

As part of this strand of work the Young Foundation convened a seminar in April 2009 bringing together experts in the field of Apprenticeships and vocational education. The purpose was to explore the barriers that can prevent young people from accessing the Apprenticeship pathway. A subsequent paper was published, which built upon the issues discussed in this first seminar and set out the scale of the challenge in 'opening doors to Apprenticeships' for young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged.

A second seminar was convened in March 2010 to build on the discussions emerging from the first, focusing on practical next steps that can be taken to improve the understanding of disadvantage and/or disengagement from Apprenticeships, increasing awareness, more effective pre-Apprenticeship routes, and better employer engagement.

This paper reports back on the discussions of the second seminar, identifying actions which should be taken. This is supplemented with case studies from a selection of local authorities around England, including the three Pathfinder authorities. The studies detail the initiatives and approaches being taken to support access to Apprenticeships for disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people. They highlight how local authorities are preparing young people for Apprenticeships, how councils are targeting particular groups of vulnerable young people, engaging with employers locally and the approaches being adopted to fund these initiatives. These case studies recognise the challenges that local authorities have faced but also acknowledge the successes and achievements in opening doors for young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged.







## THE SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

In recent years there has been a considerable expansion in the number of Apprenticeships being taken up across the 14 – 19 age range, and the Government has committed itself to an ambitious programme of development for this learning pathway. As part of this, the Government has established NAS, a new agency with 'end to end responsibility' for Apprenticeships.

The Government's ambitions for Apprenticeships include significant expansion of the number of young people engaged – a target of one in five 16 – 18 year olds by 2020. This sits alongside the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA):<sup>1</sup> Apprenticeships will need to draw in a range of young people to help meet the aim of 100 per cent participation. As part of this, the Apprenticeship Offer, placed in statute in the *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act*, entitles all young people meeting minimum entry requirements to an Apprenticeship place from 2013. As local authorities prepare for their new responsibilities handed over from the former Learning and Skills Council (LSC) under Machinery of Government<sup>2</sup> changes, they must also consider their role as provider, procurer and planner of Apprenticeship opportunities for young people.

The recession has placed the spotlight on Apprenticeships, highlighting Apprenticeships' role in offering learning and work opportunities to young people, and in supporting businesses to recover. It is clear that 16 – 24 year olds have been worst hit by the economic downturn, and are likely to be the worst affected in the long term: despite reductions at the end of 2009 in youth unemployment, the figure rose again at the beginning of 2010 to 929,000<sup>3</sup>, a rise from 700,000 in February 2008.<sup>4,5</sup> Whether it is

young people who lack formal qualifications or those who experience wider barriers to entering the workplace, the recession has had a negative impact on the wellbeing and resilience of these already vulnerable young people. Apprenticeships have a role to play in building bridges into the labour market, thus countering the negative effect of the recession, but must play this role alongside their positioning as a challenging learning route for all.

There are, however, significant numbers of young people missing out on the benefits of Apprenticeships, whether through lack of awareness, barriers to entry or lack of available opportunities. Demand for 16 – 18 year old Apprenticeships already far exceeds supply, and there are concerns that a dwindling pool of opportunities reduced by the economic downturn will further disadvantage those on the margins. Allied with the Apprenticeship Offer, which commits to ensuring young people with requisite academic qualifications (a full level 1 qualification or above including English and Mathematics) will be able to access a place, fears are growing that these trends will further exclude the excluded. The exception to this situation has been the recent effect of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) initiative. From January until March 2010 NAS provided this grant of £2,500 for employers taking on 16 and 17 year old apprentices. This resulted momentarily in the number of employer opportunities outstripping the number of young people wanting places.



It is important to acknowledge the distinction between disadvantage and disengagement. Young people who are disadvantaged in accessing Apprenticeships may be highly engaged with this learning route, but experiencing barriers to entry such as lack of qualifications for entry, geographical barriers or a criminal record. Conversely, young people with a strong record of academic achievement, who may be well placed to move into Apprenticeship, may be deeply disengaged due to a lack of awareness. Other young people, including many groups who are under-represented in Apprenticeship (such as young people with physical disabilities, those from Indian, black Caribbean and Chinese communities),<sup>6</sup> may be both disadvantaged *and* disengaged. To date, the majority of initiatives to widen access to Apprenticeships and increase opportunities locally have focused on the most vulnerable young people – those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), leaving care, or young parents, for example. Wide media coverage of the NEET figures that were gradually escalating throughout 2009 demonstrates that this is not a challenge to be underestimated, and is of critical importance to local authorities. Many of the young people who fall into the category of NEET have not succeeded in formal or academic education and can potentially benefit greatly from the blend of vocational training and employment that an Apprenticeship can provide. However, concerns have been expressed that linking Apprenticeships too strongly to 'a NEET solution' may undermine their status as a 'mainstream' learning route and perpetuate perceptions of their being an option reserved for those who struggled at school.

The first expert seminar and subsequent paper sought to identify the scale of the challenge in reaching out to young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged from Apprenticeships. These issues were explored further in the second seminar. A number of key challenges emerged, which can be gathered into four key themes:

1. Thinking about young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged from Apprenticeships
2. Raising awareness and understanding of Apprenticeships
3. Preparing young people for Apprenticeships
4. Engaging employers.

## 1. THINKING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED AND/OR DISENGAGED FROM APPRENTICESHIPS

- It is important to respond to the diversity of experience of young people NEET: this is not a homogeneous group and young people NEET face barriers to accessing Apprenticeships for very different reasons. As well as being NEET, these young people are also more likely to be leaving care, experiencing mental ill health, young parents, come from certain Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, have learning or physical disabilities or a combination of these circumstances. At present, there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for reaching young people on the margins in respect of Apprenticeships, and particular groups such as young people who are homeless or vulnerably housed remain overlooked.
- A focus on NEET status can eclipse the impact of gender, ethnicity and disability on access to Apprenticeships, where disadvantage and disengagement meets under-representation. This issue must be explored not only across Apprenticeship participation but also by sector and level.
- Young people in jobs without training<sup>7</sup> are emerging as a priority group for extending the reach of Apprenticeships, coming under increased scrutiny as we progress towards the Raising of the Participation Age in 2013. Their employed status means these young people may not be receiving sufficiently focused support as they are officially outside the 'NEET group', but it is often these young people who experience 'churn' between successive learning and work opportunities. Huge diversity exists within this group, from young people taking 'gap years', those who are employed and receiving informal or non-accredited training and others in low skill, low pay roles with a weak attachment to the labour market. It is the latter two groups that are of most concern and targeted most concertedly for Apprenticeships. It must also be recognised that some young people will prefer to remain in their current role as it is likely to attract a higher salary than an Apprenticeship.
- There is a significant challenge in reconciling the Government's aspiration of parity of esteem for Apprenticeships with the main learning routes in the 14 – 19 phase, and the wish to position Apprenticeships as part of the 'NEET solution'. Alongside this, it is important to recognise that local and national priorities to reduce the numbers of young people outside learning and work, give Apprenticeships a central role and may take precedence over activity to promote Apprenticeships to young people currently on academic pathways.
- A key element of increasing the appeal of Apprenticeships to young people currently on academic pathways lies in strengthening and clarifying progression routes beyond an Apprenticeship, including to higher level Apprenticeships and into Higher Education (HE). This lack of clarity around progression routes can result in a perception that Apprenticeships are restrictive, if a young person is unsure of their future learning and work aspirations.
- Concern has been expressed<sup>8</sup> that the relationships between training providers and local authorities are poor, in the lead up to the transfer of responsibilities from the LSC to local authorities in April 2010. With confusion around roles and responsibilities, there is an increased likelihood that the most vulnerable young people may slip through the net and miss out further on potential Apprenticeship opportunities.
- The introduction of Minimum Levels of Performance (MLPs) has encouraged training providers to be 'risk averse', opting in some cases to work with young people most likely to complete their Apprenticeship Framework.



## 2. RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS

- Current careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)<sup>9</sup> provision is falling short of offering an impartial representation of Apprenticeships, alongside other options within the 14 – 19 phase, to all young people. Impartial information advice and guidance (IAG)<sup>10</sup> has not always been available, and Apprenticeships in particular have suffered. In addition, there is a risk that current approaches are failing to reach young people on the margins: many young people are outside formal education settings, and/or do not have the technology or ability to access information provided outside school or college.
- Family and community are recognised as being highly influential in shaping young people's learning and work aspirations. Young people are most able to thrive and develop resilience in life through the support of their families and communities.<sup>11</sup> However, there are significant numbers of young people who cannot draw on the support of their parents, and who live in areas where Apprenticeships are not valued by the community. Existing approaches to CEIAG do not always extend to parents and the community, as seen for example in the lack of materials around Apprenticeships in community languages.

- Evidence from the Pathfinder Project suggests that there remains widespread confusion about the definition and concept of Apprenticeships, and persistent perceptions of this learning pathway being predominantly for 'non-achievers' or those young people who struggled in formal education. This tends to lead to information around Apprenticeships being 'filtered' for those who are perceived to 'need' it the most. The *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act* places a statutory duty on schools to provide equal information about all post-16 options including Apprenticeships. However, evidence emerging from the Pathfinder Project suggests that teachers in more academically focused schools tend to see Apprenticeships as second rate in comparison to an academic route, and are reluctant to include Apprenticeships in general CEIAG.
- The drive to raise awareness and understanding of Apprenticeships needs to be balanced with the ability to meet resulting demand with enough opportunities: unmet demand and expectations could lead to a devaluing of the Apprenticeship route.

## 3. PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

- Further development of pre-Apprenticeship provision is needed, both to build more effective routes into Apprenticeship for disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people, and to better support retention and achievement once in Apprenticeship. Pre-Apprenticeship provision can also provide vital opportunities to build confidence and vocational direction, as well as a chance to begin forging links with employers. To date, there has been no systematic analysis of the conditions and approaches which best support success in and progression beyond Apprenticeship.
- Some young people are not ready for an Apprenticeship at 16 and require more support and preparation than others. This can particularly be the case for the most vulnerable young people, such as those who have not achieved in formal education, young people with criminal records or those who have recently left care. Pre-Apprenticeship routes need to take account of both preparation for Apprenticeship and appropriate placement, in order to reduce drop-out and incidences of placement breakdown.



- Many local authorities are developing Apprenticeship initiatives in response to the numbers of young people who are perceived to be unable to access an Apprenticeship without additional and dedicated support. This suggests that current pre-Apprenticeship provision could be improved, and poses questions about what the focus of such provision should be. Some argue that the ultimate aim is to provide direct progression into Apprenticeship for young people facing disadvantage, whilst others seek to level the playing field and better enable young people to compete. Whilst providing direct progression into Apprenticeship is a common feature of local authority initiatives, there are those who argue that it risks devaluing the Apprenticeship 'brand', associating it with an 'easy' option for those who have not achieved academically.
- There remains confusion around the distinction between the new Diploma and Apprenticeships. Whilst the Government has made great efforts to identify Apprenticeships for those who have clear vocational ambitions and Diplomas as a far broader, general qualification, some view the two pathways as competing. The Skills Commission highlighted calls for better integration between the two pathways, "facilitating progression and cohesion between the two programmes."<sup>12</sup> With Diplomas still a relatively new choice, it remains to be seen what their impact on Apprenticeship take-up will be.
- There is a risk that the introduction of the Apprenticeship Offer, with its minimum qualification requirements, will further demotivate those young people who are not achieving academically. Arguably, minimum qualification requirements are perhaps a disincentive for young people seeking a vocational learning route, which more often than not values wider skills and knowledge.
- Research has consistently demonstrated that employers are less demanding of technical skills, considering them trainable, if potential employees can demonstrate a range of 'employability'<sup>13</sup> and soft skills, and other 'positive attributes'.<sup>14</sup>
- The extent to which flexibility can be incorporated into Apprenticeships needs to be explored. Flexibility (varied start times, flexible hours

and curriculum content according to need) has been shown to be highly successful in engaging young people on the margins of education and training, but in the context of Apprenticeships, must be recognised as being largely at the discretion of the employer. The status of Apprenticeships as 'work' (as opposed to 'learning') is both a contributory factor in their attractiveness to young people who did not succeed in mainstream education and a potential barrier for those without experience of the workplace.





## 4. ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

- Employer engagement is one of the most significant issues in order to increase supply of opportunities and shape young people's access to and completion of Apprenticeships. The needs and requirements of employers must be understood before introducing the concept and benefits of an apprentice. Bureaucracy, or a perception of it, can often deter employers from taking on apprentices. A further challenge is presented when balancing the need for employers to keep costs down in the current economic climate alongside widening access and supporting young people who may have additional support needs into Apprenticeships.

- The importance of academic qualifications to employers appears to vary, but there is unanimous agreement on the role of so-called 'soft' or 'non-cognitive skills', such as team working, communication and timekeeping. There is a risk that the new Apprenticeship Offer, which is predicated on the achievement of academic qualifications, will prioritise academic achievement over motivation and commitment.
- Employers often find that converting low wage staff, who are categorised as in a 'job without training', onto an Apprenticeship is difficult.
- Larger organisations may be better positioned and resourced to support young people with particularly complex needs. Small or medium enterprises (SMEs) may need to look to local authorities, training providers and/or third sector organisations to provide this support.
- Employers' perceptions of apprentices can be that "Apprenticeships involve too much effort for too little return".<sup>15</sup> Concerted efforts to support 'hard to reach' young people into Apprenticeships could risk perpetuating negative perceptions of Apprenticeships as the 'remedial option'.

The first paper in the Opening Doors series highlighted the potential for Apprenticeships to greatly impact and enhance the wellbeing of young people by increasing their confidence of eventual employment, and through building their employability and soft skills. Young people with potentially most to gain from Apprenticeships are those who are furthest from learning and work opportunities and those who experience the greatest barriers to access; those young people who are also most likely to have suffered from or continue to suffer over the coming years from the impact of the recession.

In the next section we build on the themes that were discussed at both seminars and consider the practical next steps that need to be taken in order to better understand disadvantage and/or disengagement from Apprenticeships, to raise awareness, to create more effective pre-Apprenticeship routes, and to improve employer engagement.

A photograph of a person in a server room. The person's arm is extended, reaching into a server rack. The rack contains various server components, including cables and hardware. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background shows more server racks and equipment.

## REFLECTING ON WAYS FORWARD

### THINKING ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED AND/OR DISENGAGED FROM APPRENTICESHIPS

#### Challenges:

- RESPONDING TO THE DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE WITHIN 'THE NEET GROUP'
- RECOGNISING THE IMPACT OF GENDER, ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY
- REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE IN JOBS WITHOUT TRAINING
- RECONCILING THE 'SOCIAL INCLUSION' AND 'MAINSTREAMING' AGENDAS
- CLARIFYING PROGRESSION ROUTES
- STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TRAINING PROVIDERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, AND SUPPORTING PROVIDERS TO 'TAKE RISKS'

- The most successful Apprenticeship initiatives **tailor their support** for employers and young people to the target group. This involves:
  - gauging the target group's awareness and understanding of Apprenticeships
  - mapping the target group's exposure to Apprenticeship 'messages' and building on these messages positively
  - exploring your target group's aspirations for Apprenticeship and the common barriers to access
  - working with employers to understand the demands of the labour market/workplace
  - developing provision which overcomes barriers, empowers young people to access existing opportunities, and meets employer needs.
  - It is also important to build a better local picture of which groups are under-represented or disadvantaged, and where, in order to respond effectively.
- It is important to **differentiate between 'disadvantage' and 'disengagement'** in practice. There are many young people facing disadvantage, such as young parents or young people from certain BME communities, who are keen to engage but face barriers to access. Conversely, there are young people who may have achieved in formal education, and face very few barriers to accessing Apprenticeships, but are highly disengaged from non-academic pathways. Working with local Connexions services, local employer networks and using data from regional NAS teams can help to understand patterns of young people's engagement, disengagement or under-representation in Apprenticeships, and explore why young people may be unsuccessful in taking up opportunities.
- Local authorities, working with Connexions services, can begin to explore the roles and sectors where **jobs without training** are most prevalent. Tracking young people moving into these positions enables targeted contact to introduce learning opportunities, and engagement with employers. It is important that employers understand the implications of the RPA, and their role in supporting training for young people. Accrediting some or all of the training available to young people in the work place to national standards should be a priority under the RPA agenda, alongside better post-16 follow up and support systems to prevent young people entering 'dead end jobs'. NAS has a key role in linking employers with training providers to facilitate these conversions.
- Young people should have the time, space and information to **reflect on whether Apprenticeships are the right option** for them. This is frequently about helping young people to understand the way they prefer to learn, and the environments in which they are more likely to achieve. It is easy to make the assumption that Apprenticeships are the best option for young people who have not benefitted from formal education, but this analysis is too crude. Equally, employers need to be convinced that young people put forward for their vacancies are motivated and committed to the role, and understand what is expected of them.
- Further clarity is needed around the respective **roles of the local authority, training providers and NAS** in respect of reaching and engaging vulnerable young people in Apprenticeships, particularly in light of Machinery of Government changes.<sup>17</sup> The potential for a single, local authority-led plan could be explored.
- An unhelpful dichotomy has developed in both policy and practice debates which positions the **social inclusion agenda for Apprenticeships in opposition to the 'mainstreaming' aspiration**. There is a strong perception from local authorities that ring-fencing opportunities is the only way to support disadvantaged young people into Apprenticeships. However, this approach is not advocated within the new Apprenticeship Vacancies system, where opportunities cannot be limited by age, residency, or NEET status, for example. A potential shift towards academic qualifications as a proxy for 'Apprenticeship-readiness', stimulated by the Apprenticeship Offer, could exacerbate the perception that ring-fencing vacancies is the only effective approach. Given the impact of the recession on young people's employment opportunities, the drive to increase access to Apprenticeships for young people NEET is likely to remain. A priority must be finding the commonality of language to develop new solutions, and to overcome perceptions of opposition.



- **Third sector and voluntary organisations** have an important contribution to make in re-engaging the most vulnerable young people with Apprenticeships and providing vital additional support. The potential for such organisations to employ apprentices could also be further explored, alongside opportunities to develop peer support or Apprenticeship Champion models.

## RAISING AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Challenges:

- MAKING APPRENTICESHIPS MORE VISIBLE WITHIN CEIAG
  - EXTENDING INFORMATION AROUND APPRENTICESHIPS TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE
  - REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE OUTSIDE FORMAL EDUCATION SETTINGS
  - BUILDING ON THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
  - CLARIFYING UNDERSTANDING OF APPRENTICESHIP
  - BALANCING AWARENESS RAISING WITH MEETING DEMAND
- In developing CEIAG approaches, it is important to **understand current demand for Apprenticeships**, including the profile of young people who are most engaged, the source of existing information, and how Apprenticeships are perceived in the wider community. This will also assist in planning for likely demand under the new Apprenticeship Offer.
  - A much more lateral approach to IAG is needed. For both **parents and communities**, materials for IAG need to be produced and distributed in accessible languages and methods in order to successfully convey the positive messages about Apprenticeships.
  - Those in the **'guidance community'** such as youth workers and librarians are potentially underused resources. The amount and quality of information about Apprenticeships they possess is unclear and likely to

be patchy. It is important to map both young people's points of access with the wider guidance community, and the levels of awareness of Apprenticeships among this community.

- By providing broad **CEIAG in schools much earlier**, and beginning to introduce the concepts in primary school, there is the potential for a much greater impact on children, young people and their families. By the time some young people learn about Apprenticeships, they are already set on their way to 'A' Levels or further education.
- Young adults who have recently completed an Apprenticeship can provide young people with an opportunity to **learn about the reality of being an apprentice from a peer**. This would provide an opportunity to 'walk' a young person through the experience of applying for and choosing an Apprenticeship. This approach can also support schools to identify where ex-pupils have moved into Apprenticeships, and where the pathway has led them.
- Teachers, having followed an academic pathway, may feel particularly disconnected from Apprenticeships and the opportunities they can create. **Providing teachers with relevant and up to date information** on Apprenticeships will be important in enabling them to support impartial CEIAG, and to respond to young people's interest.
- The practical nature of an Apprenticeship can be incorporated into



CEIAG approaches, building information into [practical taster sessions or work experience](#). Work tasters are also instrumental in opening up relationships with employers, helping young people to make decisions about learning and work options, and can be converted into Apprenticeships. It is important to recognise that not all young people will have the motivation and resources to access information on Apprenticeships online.

## PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Challenges:

- BUILDING MORE EFFECTIVE ROUTES INTO APPRENTICESHIP FOR DISADVANTAGED AND/OR DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE
- SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE MORE INFORMED CHOICES TO REDUCE DROP-OUT AND PLACEMENT BREAKDOWN
- RESOLVING THE FOCUS OF PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION
- CLARIFYING THE LINKS BETWEEN THE DIPLOMA AND APPRENTICESHIPS
- OVERCOMING THE POTENTIAL RISK POSED BY THE APPRENTICESHIP OFFER IN DEMOTIVATING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT ACHIEVING ACADEMICALLY.
- BALANCING THE NEED FOR FUNCTIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS WITH EMPLOYABILITY AND 'SOFT SKILLS'
- [Engaging with employers](#) in the pre-Apprenticeship stage not only increases business influence on how young people are prepared, but also enables the formation of relationships before either side makes a commitment. For young people who are disenchanting with formal education, they are more likely to be engaged by employers, as they represent the 'real world' of work. Employer dissatisfaction with the skills and knowledge brought by young people into the workplace is frequently reported: better education and business links can help to overcome negative perceptions and increase engagement with the Apprenticeship route.
- There is no single pathway into an Apprenticeship, and for young people on the margins of education, employment and training, rightly so: there needs to be [choice and flexibility](#) to accommodate different circumstances. There is now the opportunity to more effectively tailor pre-Apprenticeship routes through the development of Foundation Learning provision, but recognising that more innovative solutions may be needed to better prepare young people to progress into Apprenticeship.
- In response to some employers' concerns that young people are not 'work-ready', pre-Apprenticeship support should revolve around the ['soft skills'](#) that employers value more highly than academic qualifications. These skills include self-management; team working; problem solving; application of IT; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; as well as business and customer awareness.<sup>18</sup>
- Clarifying and promoting the [pathways beyond an Apprenticeship](#) allows young people and parents to understand that an Apprenticeship can be used as a route to further learning and is not the 'final destination'. It is important to make choices 'real' for young people: significant numbers of young people will not have contact with peers who are in Apprenticeships, and can lack confidence in 'being the first' to opt for this pathway. Similarly, progression routes through Apprenticeships need to be modelled for young people, to transform them from theoretical possibility to reality.
- A more [holistic approach](#) should be adopted in pre-Apprenticeship provision to take into account life circumstances, prior experiences and the emotional wellbeing of disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people. These young people have quite often experienced disadvantage whether in an economic, social or education context. Preparing them to move into Apprenticeships requires more rounded support than working towards qualifications.
- [Providers need support](#) to engage with the most vulnerable young people, rather than focusing on those perceived to be most likely to

succeed in Apprenticeships. Incentives in the form of quotas or social clauses may go some way to addressing this challenge.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

### Challenges

- INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF EMPLOYER PLACES TO MEET DEMAND
- BALANCING THE NEED FOR EMPLOYERS TO KEEP COSTS DOWN IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE ALONGSIDE SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS INTO APPRENTICESHIPS
- SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS, PARTICULARLY SMES, TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE
- OVERCOMING PERCEPTIONS OF APPRENTICES AS DEMANDING TOO MUCH TIME AND RESOURCE
- The marketing of [positive messages](#) combined with [personal contact](#) is key in encouraging employers to engage with Apprenticeships. Evidence<sup>19</sup> has shown that across sectors, employers recoup their investment in an apprentice in monetary terms within two to three years. The same research demonstrated that Apprenticeships are associated with lower labour turnover, company commitment and perhaps most positively, apprentices can bring new ideas and innovation into a business.<sup>20</sup> These incredibly powerful, positive messages should be marketed to prospective employers to encourage their involvement. It is important to build on these messages with personal contact: it is this personal contact with employers which is particularly significant in developing opportunities for more 'hard to reach' young people.
- Developing [relationships between local authorities, employers and training providers](#) will help to ease the tension between the mainstream and social inclusion agendas. When supporting young people with additional or complex needs, communication with the local authority or training provider should begin early to ensure that employers are aware of circumstances, and of the support and preparation that can be provided. One way to foster such relationships is through employer forums, to develop links and source placements for young people.
- Good [communication between training providers and employers](#) is vital in ensuring that employers are informed about the qualification element of the Apprenticeship, and are able to provide the breadth of experience in the workplace required. Local authorities and regional NAS staff play a key role in brokering and supporting these relationships.
- Standard recruitment processes may not benefit young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged, due to the emphasis on academic achievement and work experience. Young people who are furthest from the workplace are unlikely to hear about opportunities through word of mouth, nor have the networks to open up new possibilities. [Building relationships with employers](#) before making a commitment can overcome some of these challenges, and can develop more innovative approaches to recruitment, such as practical assessment days or work experience carousels.
- There are benefits to be gained through [pre-Apprenticeship initiatives](#) by the young person and the employer in starting the relationship early. Employers would have the opportunity to shape pre-Apprenticeship information, formats and activities, resulting in young people who are more 'work ready'. In research conducted by the Young Foundation, employers preferred apprentices with the right attitude rather than the right qualifications.<sup>21</sup> If employers engage with pre-Apprenticeship programmes there is a greater chance of young people developing the relevant and required employability skills.
- [Employer involvement in taster sessions and work experience](#) would enable them to develop their knowledge of Apprenticeships, meet with possible future apprentices, overcome negative perceptions and get involved before having to commit long term. Employers who integrate in such activity can only benefit themselves if they are then able to contribute to the Apprenticeship process alongside the local authority. Such involvement is also an excellent way of forging links with the local authority and training providers which can then develop into longer

term working relationships providing sustainable Apprenticeships.

- As important as mapping and understanding the demand from young people, it is equally vital to **understand the supply from employers**. If local authorities and the NAS are able to understand the characteristics of the local labour market, and know where and possibly why employers are not taking on apprentices, targeting and engagement will be more effective. By gaining a real understanding of local employers, the local labour market and young people's interests, programmes and initiatives can develop to be mutually beneficial.
- Within a local authority, agreeing a **central point of contact** with employers can provide continuity and avoid duplicating approaches for work placements, Diplomas, Apprenticeships and similar. This would also support crossover and progression for young people between different options, and simplify access to assistance for the employer. Developing one to one relationships supports sustained involvement in Apprenticeships, and increases resilience when challenges arise.
- **Social clauses** are legal requirements placed into contracts and agreements that the council enters into with third parties. For these to be effective in encouraging employers to take on apprentices, social clause requirements should be considered at the very beginning of the procurement process. Local authorities could work with the appropriate Sector Skills Councils in determining appropriate Apprenticeship outcomes for social clauses. It is important that employers have confidence that suitable, motivated and 'work-ready' young people are referred to them. This could come through pre-interview training and support, using specialist training providers if necessary to ensure young people are ready for work.
- **Local authorities who recruit apprentices** across their service areas act as an excellent role model to the wider community and private sector employers. Particularly in cases where local authorities employ young people with complex needs, they are able to demonstrate to other employers the benefits of Apprenticeships and the support that can be put in place to make them a success for the business and the apprentice.



## CONCLUSIONS

This paper has reported on the key issues emerging from the first paper in the Opening Doors series, and discussions at the two expert seminars. At these seminars, there was a consensus around the benefits of Apprenticeships in supporting the transition to the workplace, the development of vocational and employability skills, and the path to adulthood and independence.

However, there is unequal access to Apprenticeships. Many young people experience barriers to access, just as others lack the information and resources to pursue a potential interest. There is less agreement on the question of whom Apprenticeships are for. Significant numbers of local authorities are developing initiatives to support young people on the margins of education, employment and training into Apprenticeship opportunities – a response to the recession and rising youth unemployment that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. For others, this approach risks linking Apprenticeships too closely to a 'NEET solution', which may ultimately undermine efforts to increase employer engagement. With the recent transfer of responsibility for 16 – 19 learning from the LSC to local authorities, overcoming the policy and practice issues associated with the positioning of Apprenticeships is critical.



Clarifying messages around Apprenticeships is important when extending the reach of CEIAG to young people who are disengaged from this learning pathway, and in communicating with their parents and the wider community. For too long, Apprenticeships have lost out in relation to other learning opportunities; achieving the renaissance for Apprenticeships that has such cross-party support will require a cultural shift. Reflecting the vocational nature of

Apprenticeships in CEIAG approaches is a welcome development, particularly in making Apprenticeships more 'real' for young people, and in giving them the opportunity to reflect

on whether Apprenticeships are the right choice for their future. Apprenticeships will not be suitable for all young people, and an important factor in positive experiences (both for the employer and the apprentice) is giving all stakeholders the time and space to make this decision.

Preparation for Apprenticeship is a priority for local authorities, training providers and third sector organisations working with young people. Existing provision designed to progress young people in Apprenticeship has not achieved the outcomes anticipated (particularly Entry to Employment), leading to a range of locally-designed initiatives which can be difficult to sustain longer-term. There is broad consensus around the 'critical success factors' for pre-Apprenticeship provision, which include early links with the workplace and individual employers, a focus on wellbeing and emotional resilience, and developing the employability skills so in demand amongst employers. For some young people, particularly the most vulnerable, this is likely to be a long process, with a wrap-around of strong practical support. Debate is ongoing about whether such provision should seek to place young people directly into Apprenticeship or enable them to compete for available vacancies on a level playing field. Arguably, such competition may never be an option for some young people, signalling a need for flexibility and targeted approaches in developing Apprenticeship opportunities.

The development of relationships sits at the heart of so many aspects of this agenda. Evidence is emerging from the Apprenticeship Pathfinder Project of the importance of personalised approaches to CEIAG, walking young people through the process of applying for and taking up an Apprenticeship. Similarly, strong relationships between local authorities and training providers will assist in overcoming perceptions of risk in engaging young people on the margins of education, training and employment. Ultimately, relationships with employers open up opportunities to broker work tasters and placements, enhance their input into pre-Apprenticeship provision, and help to challenge perceptions of Apprenticeships and apprentices as 'too much effort for too little return'.

The Apprenticeship Pathfinder Project is highlighting the potential for Apprenticeships to build the wellbeing of young people and their families together with promoting the Apprenticeships route as an equal learning pathway to 'A' levels, Diplomas and Foundation Learning. Apprenticeships can also pay dividends for business, not least by providing employers with the opportunity to 'give something back', an aspiration particularly of those employers who came through the Apprenticeship route themselves. However, it is often the case that young people with potentially most to gain from the Apprenticeship route are those who experience the greatest barriers to access. The Apprenticeship Pathfinder, alongside the experience of local authorities more widely as reported in the case studies featured in this report, is beginning to shed light on new and innovative approaches in 'opening doors' to Apprenticeships.

## CASE STUDIES

### INITIATIVES AND APPROACHES TO OPENING DOORS TO APPRENTICESHIPS

<i>HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>KENT COUNTY COUNCIL</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>SOUTH TYNESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL</i>	<i>84</i>

This paper has identified some of the steps that can be taken to break down the barriers and to encourage more young people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged into Apprenticeships. Some of these steps are already being taken in local authorities around the country. Lessons can be learned from activity being practiced and built upon to ensure disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people have the opportunity to access and complete an Apprenticeship.

The case studies were selected to provide a good representation of the different locations, a range of initiatives targeting different groups of vulnerable young people, different approaches to funding and different types of employment opportunities offered (Annex 1). Information was gathered through a series of telephone interviews conducted with key stakeholders within the local authorities where details of the initiatives were discussed alongside the challenges and successes of each approach.

## HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – FUTURE 565

Combining Future Jobs Fund activity and Performance Reward Grant funding to create 365 local Apprenticeship opportunities in both the private and public sector with 65 targeted specifically at vulnerable 16–19 year olds.

### SUCCESSSES

- 53 Apprenticeships were created between October and December 2009, seven of which are filled by vulnerable young people
- positive widespread response from parents
- the 'Work Places' scheme helps to tackle the negative stereotypes surrounding Apprenticeships in the area.



### BACKGROUND

Hertfordshire lies immediately to the north of London, and has a population just under 1.1 million. A survey of the directions of Year 11 school leavers in Hertfordshire in 2008 has shown that 86 per cent went on to continue with full-time education. This is a higher than average rate of young people opting for the academic route at 16. In contrast to this, Apprenticeship participation has traditionally been low in Hertfordshire. Numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the area have historically been low and despite an increase during 2009 in line with rises in youth unemployment, the NEET figures at 31 January 2010 are the lowest on record at 4.68 per cent. There are large public sector employers in Hertfordshire, including Hertfordshire County Council, but these are greatly under-represented in Apprenticeship opportunities.

### FUTURE 565 PROJECT

Future 565, launched in autumn 2009, brings together Future Jobs Fund activity in Hertfordshire and Performance Reward Grant funding allocated to the local authority, with the aim of creating a range of employment opportunities for young people locally. Alongside 200 Future Jobs Fund opportunities that are forecast to be created, the project aims to provide 365 Apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds who are NEET. 150 of these will be in the private sector, another 150 in the public sector, with a further 65 targeted at vulnerable young people. The funding for the project will run for 18 months, until March 2011.

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is managing the Future 565 project, in partnership with the Hertfordshire Provider Network, Job Centre Plus, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The project has received encouragement and support from the Chief Executive of Hertfordshire County Council, Caroline Tapster, who has pledged to support Apprenticeships within the local authority.

Employers are offered a range of support through the project, including with recruitment and selection, through fully funded work placements, and a mediation service. Funding is available for a period of one year for employers taking on apprentices. Public sector organisations are given £1000 per apprentice and private sector employers are given £2000. For those companies employing a vulnerable young person, a subsidy of up to £4000 is offered. This will go part way to covering a young person's wages, and will also be determined by whether an employer will have to make modifications for a vulnerable young person (such as wheelchair access).

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire works closely with the aforementioned partners to promote Future 565. Additionally, teams supporting vulnerable groups of young people direct them towards the programme to ensure young people who are most in need are aware of and can access available opportunities. The application process is not competitive, so Apprenticeship opportunities are genuinely accessible. Future 565 employment brokers with Youth Connexions short-list young people for available vacancies, and to broker work tasters. Youth Connexions provide young people with support in CV and application writing, as well as job skills and development advice. Additional pre-Apprenticeship support consists of ensuring that the appropriate programme of training and Apprenticeship framework are in place for the apprentice. Employers compile a profile of the suitable candidate, including any special requirements for the position. This is aimed at ensuring that the correct young person is placed in the correct position, both for their own benefit and the employer's. Employers receive support by employment brokers and NAS.

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is using several routes to recruit young people. Applicants can access vacancies through the Youth Connexions and Apprenticeship Vacancies online websites. Additionally, Youth Connexions work alongside teams who work with young people with learning difficulties and disabilities young carers, offenders, young mothers, and care leavers. The recruitment of young mothers is proving challenging, due to the difficulties

with childcare and time commitments. Youth Connexions Hertfordshire also employs a Public Sector Champion – a post funded by the former local Learning and Skills Council and Hertfordshire Provider Network to promote Apprenticeships in the public sector, for example through visiting schools to promote Apprenticeships among both young people and school staff. Additionally a 'junior mediator' – a young person aged 18 – 24 who is employed by Youth Connexions in the Apprenticeship team – is assigned to young people on the scheme to support the recruitment of young people, as well as their wellbeing throughout via peer mediation.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Currently, Apprenticeships are mainly offered by 'traditional' apprentice employers such as in construction and hairdressing industries. There are emerging opportunities to work with Olympics 2012 teams, as one of the Olympic sites is in Hertfordshire. The Future 565 project is seeking to encourage more employers to participate in the Apprenticeship initiative with the help of partner organisations. Youth Connexions Hertfordshire has an agreement with the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce. This gives direct access to the employer database, as well as to the Chamber of Commerce magazine, allowing marketing of Apprenticeships through press releases. The employment brokers employed by Youth Connexions are also able to promote Apprenticeships schemes to employers at Chamber of Commerce events. Press releases regarding the initiative have appeared in local newspapers and the Hertfordshire-wide 'County Jobs' magazine. The Public Sector Champion works directly with public sector organisations to increase the number of Apprenticeship opportunities.

A sub-initiative is being run specifically to engage employers. The Work Tasters scheme is funded by Youth Connexions, from funding allocated for work with young people NEET. The scheme provides 10-week work placements for young people. The CVs of suitable young people are forwarded to employers who are encouraged to take on a young person. The aim of Work Tasters is to demonstrate the benefits of employing a young person without having to commit, but ultimately encouraging employers to sign up to the



Apprenticeships scheme. Work Tasters has been particularly successful – so far 80 per cent of the employers who have been involved have agreed to extend the placement to an Apprenticeship.



## CHALLENGES

The future for Future 565 beyond March 2011 is unclear. There are some short term goals, the main one being the engagement of more employers. The reputation of Apprenticeships in Hertfordshire must be developed and, crucially, sustained in order to make the Apprenticeship route seem a realistic opportunity for both young people and businesses. Both these aims present challenges. There are a limited amount of employers willing to commit to Apprenticeship places in Hertfordshire. Preconceived ideas about Apprenticeships and negative images of young people are one possible reason for lack of enthusiasm amongst employers, although this is being challenged through the use of work tasters. In Hertfordshire there is an 'A level' ethos which automatically demotes the status of Apprenticeships for young people and employers alike.

## SUCCESSSES

There are two important ways that Youth Connexions Hertfordshire is tackling the negative stereotypes surrounding Apprenticeships; the Work Tasters scheme, and the employment of young people within Youth Connexions as an example to other employers. Young people are employed on the Apprenticeship team in the roles of junior administrator, a junior finance employee and a junior mediator. The success of employing these young people may encourage private employers to join the Apprenticeship scheme. There has been positive widespread response from parents, as the Future 565 project is offering opportunities to young people who previously may not have had them. Between October and December 2009, 53 Apprenticeships have been created through the project, seven of which have been filled by vulnerable young people.

For further information please contact Stuart Sapsford Stuart (Service Development Manager, Youth Connexions Hertfordshire)  
[stuart.sapsford@hertsc.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.sapsford@hertsc.gov.uk) 01992 901540

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL KENT SUCCESS

Addressing NEET levels in the area by ensuring young people are aware of the opportunities available, and offering Apprenticeship places through the Kent Apprenticeship scheme and the Council Apprenticeship initiative Kent Success.

## SUCCESSSES

- offers at least 250 Apprenticeship opportunities with the Council
- an Apprenticeship team was established prior to the scheme inception
- formal Kent Success Apprenticeship contracts.



## BACKGROUND

Overall, Kent is relatively affluent but there are pockets of deprivation. Additionally, in recent years Kent has had a significant number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). In October 2009 the percentage of young people NEET in the county was nearly seven per cent, but in some areas this figure was significantly higher. Kent County Council employs over 32,000 people, but a large percentage of this work force is nearing retirement age, suggesting that strategies were needed to combat the ageing workforce.

## KENT APPRENTICESHIPS AND KENT SUCCESS

Kent County Council's leader, Paul Carter, set out a four-year plan in 2006 to prepare young people for employment. The focus of his vision was on ensuring that young people have access to the right information, advice and guidance about opportunities, including Apprenticeships. This was a problem in the area; young people were NEET because they were simply not aware of the opportunities available to them. The overall Apprenticeship scheme in Kent is known as Kent Apprenticeships, and encourages local young people and employers to be involved. Kent Apprenticeships is a partnership between Kent County Council, Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). After the inception of Kent Apprenticeships, there was recognition within the Council that they must lead the way with Apprenticeships. As such the Council developed its own Apprenticeship initiative as part of the Kent Apprenticeships programme, known as Kent Success.

Kent Success is coordinated by Key Training Services, a work based learning provider that is part of Kent County Council. Key delivers the training aspect of the Apprenticeship programme. It employs around 80 staff, and the scheme is overseen by two members of staff who are dedicated to Apprenticeships. The aim is that Kent County Council employers and apprentices can be recruited easily, as Key does the footwork for both. The scheme is supported within the Council by the personnel team. This includes supporting the development of an 'Apprenticeship contract' (ensuring

guaranteed interviews for apprentices who meet the minimum criteria when applying for roles with Kent County Council, and personalised support to apprentices) and dealing with any day to day issues. Initially the Council employed 10 apprentices, but aimed to provide 250 by 2010. This target has now been exceeded with over 300 young people beginning a Kent Success Apprenticeship since October 2006. The scheme was also designed to combat the effects of an ageing workforce, with a high per cent of Council employees nearing retirement age, and to develop the workforce and managers of the future.

Kent Success apprentices are paid £105 per week, more than the weekly minimum wage for apprentices. These wages are funded from the budget of the individual department. Initially in 2006 there was a corporate pot of funding for Apprenticeships, but this was moved to the responsibility of the team. The thinking behind this move was that it encourages apprentices to be treated as a real resource and a staff member, instead of 'free help'.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

Apprenticeships across the local area, including those within the local authority, are advertised through Connexions, the NAS online vacancy matching service, JobCentrePlus (both in the high street and online) and via Kent Online.

Prospectus, a site advertising opportunities for young people 16 – 19 in Kent. For the first time this year, young people are able to register their interest to do an Apprenticeship when they finish school in June. The Kent Apprenticeship team holds a database of all young people who are leaving Year 11 this year and have registered their interest to do an Apprenticeship. In April and May 2010 the Kent Apprenticeship team will be holding a series of 'Apprenticeships and YOU' information sessions to further educate those that have registered an interest so they are able to make an informed decision on whether an Apprenticeship is the correct route for them. Young people who are currently NEET apply for Kent Apprenticeships by filling out an online enquiry form, the Kent Apprenticeship team then select the appropriate training provider to deal with the query.

Young people interested in working for the Council as a Kent Success apprentice apply directly through Key. The recruitment process begins with a young person sending an enquiry to Key about a vacancy. The young person then attends an informal group interview, held once a month. At this session application and interview advice is given, and young people are asked to complete a skills assessment. Following this a one on one interview is held by Key. To apply for Kent Success the young person is then emailed or sent the Kent County Council application form, and once completed this is added in to a talent pool held by Key. When a vacancy becomes available in a sector, the manager is sent a selection of Apprenticeship application forms. Some vacancies have specific qualification requirements, although those within Kent County Council do not, and these are taken in to consideration. The recruitment process then moves to the manager, and further interviews are held by them.

Kent Success apprentices are initially employed for a six-week probationary period, and during this time a representative from Key works with both the young person and the employer to ensure that any problems are solved quickly and efficiently. Throughout the Kent Success programme, wrap-around support is offered by Key, including a 'help fund' from Kent County Council which can provide financial aid to cover, for example, travel expenses or food costs to apprentices who may be living alone and whose wages are not covering their outgoings.

A number of training providers are delivering pre-Apprenticeship programmes to support young people who are not yet work ready prepare for an Apprenticeship.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Employers are recruited for Kent Apprenticeships by Kent County Council, KATO providers and the NAS, who approach employers on behalf of young people, as well as recruiting young people directly for employers. Kent Success works specifically within Kent County Council, and managers are encouraged to lead the way by employing apprentices. Through an

Apprenticeship employers are offered support from Key, and are able to arrange one to one meetings to discuss any issues. The six-week probationary period helps employers to feel comfortable with an apprentice and if problems arise, either in the probationary period or in the longer term, managers can contact Key for support. There is a document (Kent Success Managers' Guidance) available for managers involved with Kent Success which provides tips and advice.

## CHALLENGES

One of the challenges has been ensuring wrap-around support for apprentices. To try and provide this, Key Training Services has a close relationship with employers, and encourages them to seek advice if there are problems with an apprentice's attitude or work. Often this is a sign of something else, and support from Key can help to identify this. If the apprentice has had a change of attitude because they are having money issues, some support is available from a 'help fund' in Kent County Council.

## SUCCESSSES

The people who work with Kent Success have a real passion for driving the scheme forward and ensuring it works. The project has picked up momentum year by year because of this. Even before the scheme began, a proper team had been established and formal contracts and processes had been drawn up. The detailed planning and implementation have helped to make the scheme successful.

For further information please contact Sarah.Moore@kent.gov.uk 01622 694939





# LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – FUTURE HORIZONS

A tailored Entry to Employment (E2E) programme, designed to provide young people NEET or leaving care with the skills, knowledge and work experience required to access an Apprenticeship.

## SUCCESSSES

- 13 out of the 18 Future Horizons pilot participants have progressed onto an Apprenticeship, with others moving into further education
- the programme has successfully recruited 60 young people so far this year.



## BACKGROUND

Over 1.1 million people live in Lancashire and this figure is increasing. Lancashire is home to some major aerospace and high technology industries. Lancashire County Council is the biggest employer in the county, employing over 40,000 people. Increasing numbers of young people in the area are achieving higher-level qualifications, but the rate of increase is lower among those children and young people whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

## THE SUPPORTED APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT AND FUTURE HORIZONS

The Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) Supported Apprenticeship Project is being delivered across Lancashire (excluding Blackpool and Blackburn) and was developed with Lancashire County Council's Children and Young People's Service and CXL (a social business which provides guidance to both individuals and employers). The aim of the Supported Apprenticeship scheme is to raise the achievement of young people through work-based learning, and to engage those who are currently disengaged with Apprenticeships. The priority groups for the Supported Apprenticeship project are 16 – 19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), care leavers or other vulnerable young people such as young offenders, and those with less than five GCSEs grade A\* - C. Apprenticeships are available in a variety of sectors, but mainly with traditional trades and crafts and business administration. An additional aim of the Supported Apprenticeship project is to increase the engagement of employers in workforce development in Lancashire, targeting in particular small or medium enterprises (SMEs) that have growth potential and are willing to support an apprentice. The project began in April 2008 and is running until April 2011, and will provide 60 Apprenticeship opportunities over the three-year period.

The Future Horizons scheme was developed by Lancashire County Council in partnership with the North Lancs Training Group, and was launched in December 2008. It is a tailored E2E programme, which provides specific pre-Apprenticeship support for local young people NEET to access an Apprenticeship. The human resources team leads on the programme, and

focuses on partnership development, bringing together commercial and non-commercial contracts, for example the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), Improvement and Development Agency for local government IDEA, North West Employers Organisation (NWEO) and the district councils. It is hoped that the programme will level the playing field for those young people who are under-represented in, or who struggle to access, Apprenticeships. The majority of Future Horizons placements are in business administration, although not all. The programme is person centred, and young people can try different frameworks to see which one is suitable. The aim for 2010-11 is to have 60 – 80 young people participating in Future Horizons. From each cohort it is anticipated that 50 per cent will progress onto an Apprenticeship. Future Horizons has gained support from Councillors Tim Ashton (Cabinet member for Environment and Planning) and Mark Perks (Cabinet member for Young People).

Future Horizons is 16 weeks long, beginning with an eight-week placement with North Lancs Training Group. This placement involves a two-week induction, working at the local council, and an introduction to working in the public sector (including basic work skills, language and office procedures). As part of the first eight weeks, young people take part in a 'Get that job' workshop, designed to help young people NEET through the Apprenticeship application process which involves a challenging and lengthy application form. The workshop provides interview tips and preparation.

The young person then moves onto another eight-week placement with either the County Council or a district council. The placement gives young people work experience that they may not have had, as well as providing a reference at the end. As part of the scheme the young people work towards a City and Guilds Employability and Personal Development qualification, which prepares them for working towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in the workplace. At the end of the Future Horizons programme the local authority holds a celebration event. Funding to support the Future Horizons programme is via E2E funding and the full time recruitment and placement officer is provided by the cabinet budget.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

Young people are referred to Future Horizons by the Children and Young Person's Service through adverts in young people's centres. Police Community Support Officers have distributed leaflets outlining the scheme to young people who are at the risk of offending. Young people NEET are provided with support to complete the Future Horizons application process from the Councils Recruitment and Placement officer, who also organises mock interviews for young people during the Future Horizons programme. Successful applicants are invited for an informal interview, which considers the young person's interests and aspirations. During the first eight-week placement with the training provider, a training officer works with the young person to match them to a position for the following eight weeks. The young people are then encouraged to apply for an Apprenticeship. The Council's Apprenticeship programme is advertised in the young people's centres, and on the NAS, Lancashire County Council and Jobcentre Plus websites.

A new supported Apprenticeship scheme is being piloted in Lancashire, Future Horizons+. The scheme is aimed at young people who have completed Future Horizons but who need further development before progressing onto Lancashire County Council's Apprenticeship scheme. It was designed to stop young people from returning to a NEET status after completing the Future Horizons programme. Future Horizons+ apprentices have a 12-month contract with Lancashire County Council, for the business administration Apprenticeship, which will provide them with work experience and will help to develop the work skills necessary for future employment or further training. The young people on this initiative are likely to need additional support from the workplace, and so monetary support will increase from Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) on the Future Horizons scheme to the former Learning and Skills Council (LSC) recommended Apprenticeship training rate of £95 per week.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Funding has just been approved from the Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) for the Future Horizons@your business project, which began

in April 2010, and provides young people who have completed the Future Horizons programme with the employability skills that are important to SME's in Lancashire. It is hoped that 20 young people per year will be matched to an employer who will receive a £3000 financial incentive over the two years from LCDL. To ensure sustainability, the funding is not a wage subsidy, and is fed into the business as apprentices meet certain milestones. The employer is provided with a mentor and membership to the Chambers of Commerce.

## CHALLENGES

The engagement of looked after young people for the Future Horizons programme has been difficult due to the appeal of the LACES (Looked After Children's Employability Skills) project – a partnership with The Children's Society – which provides work experience placements and projects and pays young people a limited wage. The Future Horizons programme only provides EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance). Lancashire County Council has been working with the Children and Young People's directorate to offer extra incentives, encourage longer-term approaches and view the Future Horizons scheme as more long term, leading onto a paid Apprenticeship.

Another challenge has been the effect of the recession on the amount of young people searching for work, with a larger number of young people with higher qualifications failing to achieve university or college places. This has increased the amount of better-qualified young people (including those with high graded GCSEs or A Levels) going through E2E to gain work experience. The solution has been to create 'Future Horizons Gold' – a fast track project for more able young people. Participants on this scheme take part in a two-week induction programme and then progress straight onto a 12-week extended placement opportunity. This helps the local authority avoid 'churn'<sup>22</sup> amongst a cohort of young people caught in the effects of the recession. There is also an agreement that the young people can be kept on the programme until they find another place or job elsewhere, to prevent them from returning to NEET status.

## SUCCESSSES

Thirteen of the 18 young people involved in the Future Horizons pilot have successfully progressed onto an Apprenticeship with others moving into further education. So far this year, the programme has successfully recruited 60 young people. Lancashire County Council is currently working with NAS to offer consultancy on the Future Horizons programme. Additionally, Lancashire County Council has been successful in winning awards in 2009, including the Beacon Award, the North West Employers Organisation (NWEO) award, Regeneration and Renewal – worklessness award, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development CIPD finalists, Personnel Today winners and Public Sector People Managers' Association Talent Management winners.

The Council hopes that the Future Horizons programme is a sustainable option. So far it has succeeded in saving the county money, by the re-direction of agency orders from businesses to social and economic priority groups, including Future Horizons, as well as changing the local economy and improving the opportunities of individual young people. The Future Horizons programme offers managers a 'free' pair of hands during busy times, whilst also providing those most in need with work experience and references.

The scheme is overcoming the preconceptions of apprentices by SMEs, and is working with NAS to progress this further. The Council is seeking to attract higher levels of looked after children and those leaving care into Future Horizons or Supported Apprenticeships. A new team member has been employed part time to push this agenda forward. Another new team member has been employed on a part time basis to target ex-offenders. A link has already been formed with the National Probation Trust and, if successful, would be extended to youth offending teams and across Lancashire's district partners on a two-tier basis.

For further information please contact Charlotte Iddon (Senior HR Officer: Skills and Employability, Lancashire County Council) [Charlotte.iddon@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:Charlotte.iddon@lancashire.gov.uk) 01772 530505

# LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – CARE LEAVERS APPRENTICESHIP

Developing the local authority's corporate parenting role by providing realistic Apprenticeship opportunities for young people leaving care.

## SUCCESSSES

- up to 15 care leavers at any time may be in an Apprenticeship as part of the scheme
- the scheme has received political support within the local authority
- it has received national and local recognition in the media.



## BACKGROUND

Lincolnshire is a rural county in the East of England with a population of around one million (2008). There are no major cities, apart from Lincoln, and the area is mainly made up of 10 large towns. Lincolnshire County Council is based in Lincoln, and there are seven district councils. The level of unemployment is generally low, although it is rising, and falls below the national and regional average. Additionally, only five per cent of young people in Lincolnshire are NEET, again falling below the national average. However, the rate of care leavers who are NEET is disproportionately high at around 30 per cent. A lack of employment and training opportunities is a major obstacle in care leavers' achieving economic independence – and Lincolnshire County Council aims to address this.

## CARE LEAVERS APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

The Care Leavers Apprenticeship Scheme (CLAS) was originally discussed around four years ago, as an option to develop the local authority's corporate parenting role and their responsibility to provide opportunities for those at a disadvantage. Lincolnshire County Council is a large organisation, and it was suggested that the logical course of action was to offer work experience to young care leavers in their own business. The Council had a desire to help those who were unable to reach their potential due to their circumstances, and to provide genuine opportunities that could change the life of vulnerable young people. The chief executive of Lincolnshire County Council, Tony McArdle, is a great supporter of the scheme, and has been since the inception. The scheme also receives support from the leaders of the seven district councils.

Initially a pilot study was conducted with a training provider, but this proved unsuccessful due in part to the lack of a dedicated care leavers' Apprenticeship coordinator with the time and will to drive the scheme forward. There was also a lack of understanding surrounding the complex needs of care leavers. The scheme was then formed as part of the Employment, Training and Education (ETE) project, and was based on a partnership between Lincolnshire County Council, the leaving care service



(based in Barnardo's) and Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland. An ETE coordinator was employed within the leaving care service to oversee CLAS. The scheme is run on behalf of the Council, but is managed by Barnardo's and the leaving care service.

When the scheme began, Apprenticeship positions as part of CLAS were only offered in Lincolnshire County Council. The recruitment of the ETE coordinator saw this extended to both district councils and private employers; the Apprenticeships offered by the Council were limited and did not appeal to all young care leavers. Now, Lincolnshire County Council and the seven district councils are committed to providing Apprenticeships as part of CLAS. The ETE coordinator works with heads of service, as well as HR departments in other organisations to secure additional Apprenticeship positions. The types of positions are varied, for example previous Apprenticeships have included: teaching assistants, joiners, electricians, and chefs. Some large companies have been involved with the Apprenticeship scheme, for example Tesco and the Co-op have both employed apprentices.

CLAS apprentices are paid in line with the lowest grade of council employee; they receive £230 per week or £12,150 per annum. Initially the wage was lower than this (although still higher than the £95 a week wage requirement) but it was realised that this was further disadvantaging already vulnerable young people. The main factor in raising the level of wage for CLAS apprentices was that many care leavers would not be able to complete an Apprenticeship alongside paying rent and living costs.

The funding for CLAS is top sliced from the Council budget. The 'corporate parent thinking' behind CLAS holds the whole of Lincolnshire County Council as responsible for young people. Currently the authority is experiencing financial cutbacks, and a priority for the leaving care service is to secure alternative funding so the scheme can continue.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

The recruitment of young people to the scheme is managed by Barnardo's. All young people who are eligible for leaving care services via the Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service can be referred to the scheme. To be eligible for the scheme young people must have the ability to achieve an NVQ level 2 (as demonstrated by initial assessments of literacy and numeracy), as well as demonstrating an understanding of the type of work they will be undertaking and possessing a willingness to learn. Those young people who do not fulfil the CLAS requirements are signposted to other provision such as E2E programmes. The application process begins with an application form, which must be filled in by the young person and returned with a CV attached. Applicants can receive help for these from their Leaving Care Worker, personal adviser or a social worker. Recruitment is not qualification based, although young people are required to complete initial literacy and numeracy basic skills tests.

There is a variety of tailored support in place for apprentices. The young people involved with CLAS come from incredibly disadvantaged and sometimes traumatic backgrounds, and need a high level of support. Even before the young people have any contact with employers they undergo around 40 hours of work preparation with the ETE coordinator. Some of the young people have no experience of work or even people who have jobs, and so need support in even the most basic work related tasks from suitable work wear, jargon busting, work boundaries and leave through to pay slips, and National Insurance. The ETE coordinator also deals with the administration aspects of the Apprenticeship, such as establishing a new Council post and proving that the young person has a right to work in the UK.

During the Apprenticeship placement young people continue to receive support from their leaving care worker, employed by Barnardo's. During the first few weeks of an Apprenticeship, the ETE coordinator will meet with them every week. After several months in the position the meetings will be reduced to once every two weeks, and eventually if the young person is progressing well the meetings will be once a month. During the placement young people also have a work place supervisor (identified by the ETE coordinator in

conjunction with the host employer) and a named mentor. In some of the district councils the named mentor role is advertised internally, and the employee will receive an extra increment.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Initially young people were only employed within Lincolnshire County Council, but this was excluding young people who had little interest in any of the Council sectors so provision of Apprenticeship was extended to other district councils and private employers. A database of employers was created but this was not particularly successful. The area is very rural, and in some cases employers signed up in an area where there was no interest from young people for their vacancy. Now, young people are consulted regarding their interests and aspirations, and careers guidance is undertaken with the ETE coordinator. Then, the employer is sourced. Barnardo's has direct access to heads of service in the Council, so that vacancies can be quickly found. If the young person wants to work in a sector that is not within the Council but is linked, contact can still be made through heads of service. If the young person wants to work in something completely unrelated to the Council, such as retail, then the ETE coordinator will contact the company directly.

## CHALLENGES

The CLAS scheme is expensive. Care leavers are, as a necessity, paid a higher wage than young people on other Apprenticeship programmes. The overall cost of a care leavers Apprenticeship is estimated at around £15,000 per annum. This includes both wages and additional costs (the care leavers' service provides some funding for any additional costs that the young people may have, including buying suitable work clothing, and providing some apprentices with a basic toolkit at the beginning of their training, for example a set of knives for an apprentice chef). Each year between 10 and 15 young people are on the scheme. Add to this the wages of the ETE coordinator and any named mentors in the district councils, and the overall cost of the initiative is relatively high. This is particularly pressing, as Lincolnshire County Council is experiencing some budget cuts, which may affect the number of

Apprenticeships that can be offered as part of CLAS. A main priority is to secure funding from another source, or to explore additional fundraising routes.

The level of wages has also created a challenge for the young people themselves. Prior to beginning an Apprenticeship, many will be surviving on a very low income. The massive jump from this up to £230 per week can lead to budgeting issues. Leaving care workers offer budgeting support, which may help to combat any money related problems.

## SUCCESSSES

The initiative in Lincolnshire has received national coverage and recognition, and the leaving care team are keen to maintain its high profile. The scheme received praise in local and national media an article in the Guardian in 2008, and has also in the Lincolnshire Echo. In addition the Director of Children's Services at Lincolnshire County Council, Peter Duxbury, is a great supporter of the scheme and promotes it at conferences and events.

For further information please contact Helen Stonebridge, Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service [helen.stonebridge@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:helen.stonebridge@barnardos.org.uk) 01529 309052



# LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM COUNCIL – BARKING AND DAGENHAM APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

Run by a specific Apprenticeship team, aiming to deliver a minimum of 750 Apprenticeship opportunities for local young people aged 16 plus by 2011.

## SUCCESSSES

- the Council is the largest employer of apprentices in the area
- has received political support within the local authority
- nearly 2,000 local residents have expressed an interest in the scheme.



## BACKGROUND

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham in east London is relatively deprived and unemployment is high. Average wages in the borough are the lowest in London and are below the national average. Skill levels in the area are also poor, with GCSE results that are well below the national average and fewer 16 year olds continuing in learning than anywhere else. In 2005, the borough was dubbed as the United Kingdom's 'NEET capital'<sup>23</sup>, with a quarter of teenagers out of school and without a job.

## BARKING AND DAGENHAM APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

In response to the high numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the borough, and the skills gap created by an ageing workforce, Barking and Dagenham Borough Council has developed an Apprenticeship scheme in partnership with its Youth Offending and Housing Services, Adult College of Barking and Dagenham and its maintenance contractor, Enterprise. Enterprise works with businesses to encourage them to expand their company by employing apprentices.

The Council hopes to transform the lives of local residents and was the first council to sign the Skills Pledge in 2007 – a voluntary and public commitment to invest in workforce skills recognising the need for different ways to transfer from education to work. The Apprenticeship scheme in Barking and Dagenham is aimed at young residents. Priority is given to young people aged 16 – 18, but the scheme is open to all people aged above 16, in line with wider Apprenticeship eligibility. There is a focus on engaging young people NEET, young offenders and care leavers. The Council, including the leader of the Council Liam Smith, employs apprentices and encourages employers from the private, public and voluntary sector to do the same, with the aim of creating 750 new opportunities for young people by 2011. The Council committed to take at least 100 apprentices in 2009, and had employed 114 apprentices by the end of that year, in sectors such as health and social care, business administration, and horticulture. There are around 140 apprentices currently employed, and a further 55 vacancies with private employers have been created. Rob Whiteman, the Chief Executive of the London Borough

of Barking and Dagenham, is keen to nurture the Apprenticeship scheme in the area and was influential in its formation. He publicly announced a plan, inspired by the positive results for the Council and young people so far, to deliver 400 Apprenticeships in the borough in the coming years.

The scheme is run by a specific Apprenticeship unit, as opposed to an individual or team, with the aim of providing sufficient support to both young people and employers. This is part of the local authority and is based in the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham. The team is led by an Apprenticeship Development Manager, who is in charge of Learning Coordinators. Learning Coordinators focus on recruiting young people and employers onto the scheme, as well as providing support to apprentices throughout their training. An apprentice works within the team, and is given a variety of opportunities in the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham allocate funding to the scheme from the Area Based Grant and Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which will pay 50 per cent of the wages of apprentices employed within the Local Authority with the relevant employing department paying the other 50 per cent. To support the cost of wages for private employers the Apprenticeship unit can provide £6500 to each employer who creates an Apprenticeship opportunity for apprentices within the future jobs fund criteria. The Apprenticeship unit also provides financial help to cover the travel expenses of young people.

The Council's Adult and Community Services Directorate is committed to continuously improving the services it provides, and has been keen to buy into the Apprenticeship scheme by funding a programme to train young people to care for clients in their own homes. The project has recently widened to include independent care providers across the borough made possible due to extra funds from the Sector Skills Council, Skills for Care. Barking and Dagenham Council will receive additional Government funding of £200,000 from the Department of Health to develop its social care Apprenticeship scheme, with the money being distributed to companies who provide local home care services.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

The recruitment of young people for the Apprenticeship scheme has not proved difficult; demand in the area for Apprenticeship places is high due to the effects of the recession on local job opportunities, and even young people who had made the transition into the labour market once again found themselves searching for work. Despite this the Apprenticeship unit still employs a range of dedicated recruitment processes to ensure that all young people are aware of the available opportunities. This includes the Barking and Dagenham Apprenticeship brand that is used across the borough: a plasticine 'Morph' type figure called 'Apps' is used to promote the scheme and is widely recognisable across the locality. A dedicated website ([www.theapps.biz](http://www.theapps.biz)) allows young people and employers to access Apprenticeship information, register interest and apply for vacancies. The Apprenticeship vacancies online system is also used to promote some local vacancies. Young people are also recruited through Connexions Barking and Dagenham, who run group information sessions and, alongside the Youth Offending Service and care leavers' teams, provides regular referrals. The scheme is also promoted to young people through youth clubs, local 'job shops' and schools.

Once the scheme began, the importance of pre-Apprenticeship support became apparent, as some young people were scoring poorly on initial literacy and numeracy assessments, making them ineligible for Apprenticeship places. There is specific support available from the Apprenticeship team for those that fail to meet the criteria in the pre-screening. The Access to Apprenticeships (A2A) programme is a 16 week course available to young people aged 16 – 19, and helps improve the literacy and numeracy skills of those who have not reached level 1 in one or both of the initial assessments, as well as developing personal skills through work experience and providing interview tips and support. The A2A programme is available in business administration, customer service and health and social care. Throughout their Apprenticeship a young person has support from a dedicated member of the Apprenticeship team.



## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

The Council is the largest employer of apprentices, but other public sector partners and local businesses, not restricted to Barking and Dagenham employers, are encouraged to create Apprenticeships positions too for local residents. The Apprenticeship unit holds business and networking events for employers, to expand the Apprenticeship opportunities in the area and works with the Barking and Dagenham Chamber of Commerce to target relevant employers. The Council is working with NAS, who provide employer referrals. The Employer Express magazine, run by the Skills, Learning and Employment division at Barking and Dagenham, provides information and identifies training needs and opportunities for apprentices within an organisation. It also provides support for employers through recruitment and long-term apprentice management. Barking and Dagenham Council successfully secured Future Jobs Fund money, and this is being used as a financial incentive for new employers. The Council promoted the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE), available for SMEs taking on a 16 – 18 year old apprentice which ended in April 2010.

Businesses are supported by a 'scheme mentor' from the Apprenticeship team, together with staff from the nominated training provider. This is an important support system in ensuring that employers are comfortable with the apprentices they employ, and feel that they are both providing meaningful training for a young person and developing their workforce in the desired manner.

## CHALLENGES

The Apprenticeship scheme in Barking and Dagenham began during the recession, which has posed a challenge in encouraging employers to invest in apprentices at a difficult economic time. As with many other areas of the country there is very high demand for Apprenticeship places in the area, and the supply is currently not meeting this.

## SUCCESSSES

The recognition of the Apprenticeship scheme has been extensive, with nearly 2,000 local residents expressing an interest. The public nature of some Apprenticeships such as in local leisure centres helps to generate awareness. The health and social care Apprenticeship is helping to break down barriers between young and older people, and may also help to remove some of the negative stereotypes surrounding young people. The scheme has also received national interest, and in January 2010 was praised in an article published in the Financial Times.<sup>24</sup>

For further information, please contact Stephen Lee: [Stephen.lee@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.lee@lbbd.gov.uk) 020 8270 6511



# MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIPS

Encouraging long-term behaviour change through a coordinated Apprenticeship strategy which provides realistic and sustainable opportunities for young people across the city.

## SUCCESSES

- sustainable growth in Apprenticeships and long term behaviour change are being encouraged by building a strategy that does not rely on additional resources
- the Connexions service in Manchester has been nationally awarded for its work recruiting young people to join the Apprenticeship scheme (BBC People Award).



## BACKGROUND

Manchester is the UK's fastest growing city economically. New highly skilled jobs are being created in sectors such as creative, media and financial services. Manchester has a total population of 464,000 people. The population is primarily of working age, with fewer younger and older residents.

The city has experienced extensive regeneration to the centre and residential areas, but there is still widespread poverty. In poorer neighbourhoods, people have a lower quality of life. The Comprehensive Area Assessment highlighted that too many young people are leaving school without any qualifications – in some parts of the city more than one in seven young people leave school without qualifications and this figure is rising.<sup>25</sup> The city council has prioritised worklessness in its Local Area Agreement (LAA).

## MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIPS STRATEGY

In November 2008 there were higher than average rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 17 of Manchester's wards, yet there was a disproportionately low uptake of Apprenticeship places. The main factor preventing more young people taking up Apprenticeship places is believed to be the qualification requirements attached to many opportunities. In response, the city council has sought to develop a strategic approach which runs parallel to a number of key local initiatives, including a number of Apprenticeship initiatives developed by the Council in partnership with other organisations. In December 2007 Manchester City Council signed the Skills Pledge, a public commitment to improving the quality of skills in the area. The Apprenticeship strategy, linked to the Skills Pledge, is committed to providing realistic and, crucially, sustainable training opportunities for local young people. Many of these opportunities are within the City Council itself. These opportunities are open to all Manchester residents but look to focus on priority groups within the city for example young people from NEET priority wards and priority schools (the top five 'NEET producing' schools), looked after or leaving care young people, young offenders, teenage parents and young people with learning difficulties and or disabilities. The progress of the

strategy has been fast tracked since Manchester City Council's participation in the Apprenticeship Pathfinder Project. The strategy is coordinated by the 14 – 19 partnership and the Leader of Manchester City Council, Sir Richard Leese, who has given his support.

Manchester's strategy centres on embedding sustainable growth and development into Apprenticeship opportunities, and as such does not offer financial incentives or any additional funding to employers. The local authority itself is acting as a role model to local businesses through its own recruitment of apprentices.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

A range of support is available for young people seeking Apprenticeships, both pre-Apprenticeship and during their training. In order to provide a more equitable recruitment process and to ensure employers are actually recruiting people who have skills that are relevant to the tasks at hand, the Apprenticeship strategy encourages a competency-based model of recruitment. For example, the criteria for recruitment on to the 'Young People into Construction Programme' were focused on communication, team working, motivation, commitment and adaptability. Apprenticeship opportunities are advertised within Connexions and on the Apprenticeship Vacancies online system. The Council works with partners and employers to run recruitment events for young people interested in local Apprenticeship opportunities. Any assessment of young peoples' literacy and numeracy skills is carried out in order to tailor support based on individual need as opposed to a way of measuring whether someone can take up an opportunity.

As part of the 'Young People into Construction Programme' the initial event was followed by an opportunity to go to an on-site learning centre, where young people were able to take part in job tasters. The practical event was also helpful in addressing some gender divisions in applications for jobs; one young woman who 'shone' at the 'Build a Wall' exercise actually then admitted she really wanted to be a bricklayer but had in fact applied for a back office role as she did not feel confident enough at application stage to apply for the bricklaying Apprenticeship.

Many of the young people supported through the City Council's Apprenticeship strategy are from deprived and vulnerable backgrounds. The Manchester NEET coordinator, alongside the 14 – 19 partnership, leaving care services and local Connexions services, works closely with young people during their training to ensure a programme of wrap around support. For example, one young person had stopped attending both work and college and on further investigation it was discovered she could not afford to buy lunch. To solve this, funding was secured from Connexions discretionary funds and the young person returned to both the work place and college.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

The first Apprenticeship offered as part of the Apprenticeship strategy, and using competency based recruitment, was a joint initiative devised and funded by Northwest Vision and Media, Skillset, the BBC and the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This Apprenticeship offered media training for young people aged 16 – 22, and initially recruited 20 young people onto the initiative. Since then, a range of employers have been involved with the Apprenticeship strategy and now offer competency based Apprenticeship recruitment.

The Council has a rolling recruitment of employers, and has developed their own Apprenticeship initiatives in partnership with other organisations. The 'Young People into Construction Programme' was developed as a partnership between MCC Capital Programmes Division, Connexions Manchester, Construction Framework Partners (private firms delivering construction projects for the City of Manchester), The Manchester College, Construction Industry Solutions and Aspire (a social and personal recruitment agency recruiting on behalf of local employers). The target of the 'Young People into Construction Programme' is to offer Apprenticeship placements to 20 candidates per year over the three-year pilot period.

Employers are also recruited through existing projects, such as Manchester's NEET project. Young people assisted Manchester City Council's Bereavement Services with the Renovation and Restoration with Respect project, working

to improve the city's cemeteries. The Head of Bereavement Services was so impressed with the young people, he created a permanent Apprenticeship position.

## CHALLENGES

Generally, the young people who are involved on Apprenticeship initiatives find the work side of the programme very enjoyable, but it has been a challenge to ensure that young people are motivated to complete the learning element, particularly where it is college-based.

Another challenge for the Apprenticeship strategy has been the timing of the Apprenticeship recruitment process. College places are offered to young people usually by the January of Year 11, whereas the timing of an Apprenticeship place cannot be guaranteed. Although college is the right move for many young people, it may also lead to young people who would benefit from an Apprenticeship training programme missing out on the right opportunity. In order to combat this, programme-led Apprenticeships are offered. These allow young people to spend a number of months in college training until an Apprenticeship place is available. There is still no guarantee of when a work placement will start, but it goes some way to combating this challenge.

## SUCCESSSES

The critical factor behind achieving sustainable growth in Apprenticeships is that the strategy does not rely on external funding. By building a relationship without additional resources, longer-term behaviour change is encouraged. Following the launch of the Apprenticeship in media production, the Connexions service in Manchester has picked up a BBC People Award for its work recruiting young people to join the Apprenticeship scheme.

For further information please contact Sarah Ross (NEET Coordinator) Sarah.Ross@careers-solutions.co.uk 0161 245 4924 or Brett Kerton (Head of Education Service, 14-19) b.kerton@manchester.gov.uk





# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – THE REAL-START APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

Developing Apprenticeship opportunities within the Council for young people NEET.

## SUCCESSES

- being developed across the county, with increasing involvement from Borough and District Councils
- recognised as a national example of good practice by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
- apprentices in public positions such as Children's Centres.



## BACKGROUND

North Yorkshire is the largest county in England with a population of just over half a million, 19 per cent of which is over 65. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) rates are not high in North Yorkshire, but in 2008 – 09 the September Guarantee targets for Year 12 were not met, calling for an increase in opportunities for young people locally.

## THE REAL-START APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

The Real-Start Apprenticeship programme sits within the Young Persons Recruitment team, and is based in Corporate Recruitment in North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). The scheme, which started in September 2006, was initiated following a scrutiny review by council members. The review found that less than four per cent of the workforce was under 24, and that by 2015 more than half the workforce would be expected to have retired. The scheme offers Apprenticeship opportunities for all young people, and is designed to complement children and young people's services locally. It is also hoped that the initiative will contribute to providing more opportunities for young people NEET. The Real-Start Apprenticeship Programme is important during the current economic downturn, as young people have been hit particularly hard in terms of employment opportunities. By 2007, the provision of Apprenticeship opportunities had become a mandatory process within the local authority with the stipulation that every directorate offering a band 1-4 vacancy must offer it as an Apprenticeship unless there is a good reason not to. For the academic year 2009 – 10 North Yorkshire County Council aims to appoint 100 apprentices across the authority.

Initially the scheme was run by one member of staff, but as the Apprenticeship scheme began to grow and develop this was increased to three in September 2009. Now the team consists of a senior young person's development officer, a young person's support officer and a young person's employment coordinator. The expansion of the team was felt to be necessary in order to continue to develop the Apprenticeship programme as well as providing sufficient support to those involved.

All of the Apprenticeships are offered within North Yorkshire County Council, in a variety of service areas. Business administration apprentices are based in service areas such as children's centres, business and environmental services or finance teams, for example. There are recently recruited and appointed youth work apprentices, and a teaching assistant apprentice (who works in a school as a teaching/play assistant). Connexions also employ two apprentices. There are four Apprenticeship positions with the care leavers' team (young people's participation team).

The funding comes from the central staffing budget. Apprenticeships are fully funded by the service area. Apprentices have an incremental salary scale, and are paid £95 per week during the first three months of employment. Provided that the expected standards are achieved then there is the opportunity for apprentices to receive an increase in pay at three, six, nine and 12 months into the scheme. If apprentices work particularly positively then they may progress to a substantive salary or be fast-tracked and miss an incremental stage. There is also financial support offered to apprentices to fund travel expenses for the first six months of an Apprenticeship, if they travel over five miles to work or spend more than £10 a week on travel. Again, this support is fully funded by the service area's budget.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

The programme is open to all young people in North Yorkshire, but there is a particular focus on recruiting vulnerable young people, such as young people NEET, care leavers and young offenders. In order to achieve this, the recruitment process is not qualification based – opening up a variety of opportunities for young people without five GCSEs A\* – C. Young people who are interested in Apprenticeships visit the Real-Start website ([www.realstart.co.uk](http://www.realstart.co.uk)) and fill in a generic application form, which does not require any qualification information. The young person's details are held in a talent pool, managed by the employment coordinator, and are considered for suitable vacancies. If necessary the employment coordinator contacts a young person to request additional information. The young people signed up to the talent pool receive a weekly bulletin, outlining any Apprenticeship

vacancies. The Apprenticeship team also has a partnership with Connexions, who refer suitable young people. The talent pool bulletin is sent to relevant partners, such as personal advisors on the Children's social care team. The Real-Start team work closely with the care leavers' team, who sit on the young person resourcing group. The recruitment process is then transferred entirely to the employers – from short-listing applications right through to interviews and job offers. Managers use a standard recruitment procedure to consider young people for Apprenticeship places with their service areas, including an interview. North Yorkshire County Council has a partnership with Scarborough Borough Council to recruit apprentices, through the Real-Start team collating and short listing applications on their behalf.

There is pre-Apprenticeship support available for young people. Connexions offer employability sessions to provide tips on how to prepare for interviews or fill in application forms. As North Yorkshire is a very large and rural area there are several Connexions centres, and young people in the talent pool are emailed to invite them to their local employability sessions. Some Apprenticeships offer employability sessions prior to the Apprenticeship start, which allow young people to go to service areas to be welcomed and presented with additional information regarding their Apprenticeship (for example NVQ details, rates of pay etc). There are Apprenticeship Induction programmes offered by some service areas, which give apprentices a chance to meet councillors and other apprentices, as well as to build on employability skills. The programme takes place at an outdoor education centre, where the apprentices take part in practical and team building exercises. This helps young people to feel supported, and is particularly important as many areas are fairly isolated. Throughout the scheme an apprentice receives support: in particular there is a review every 3 months so that their progress can be discussed and any problems resolved. Currently, a Mentoring Programme for apprentices is being established which offers young people the opportunity to have a mentor to support and guide them in their Apprenticeship role. The mentors will be members of staff who are undertaking the National Graduate Development Programme, and will receive mentoring training.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

The local authority as the employer has the goal of acquiring support from staff and employers within the Council. In 2007 Apprenticeships became a mandatory process within the local authority, meaning that all vacancies at band 1 – 4 had to be advertised as an Apprenticeship. Managers are offered support from members of the Young Person's Recruitment Team. North Yorkshire County Council also has an agreement with Scarborough Borough Council, who have committed to recruiting apprentices.

## CHALLENGES

Although the Real-Start Apprenticeship scheme works with service areas within North Yorkshire County Council, there remain difficulties in gaining the full support from some employers within the Council. However, managers who have worked with apprentices before are keen to do so again having realised their positive potential. It is hoped that these positive experiences will permeate amongst their colleagues who are more sceptical of the benefits of an apprentice.

## SUCCESSSES

The Real-Start Apprenticeship programme has been well received by young people. There has also been a positive response from local people in general – by securing Apprenticeships in public positions such as children's centres the positive role of young people can be reinforced.

The successful North Yorkshire County Council scheme is now being developed across the county, with increasing partnership involvement from borough councils, Adult and Community Services and Local Government Yorkshire & Humberside (LGYH) who have established the Young People's Network bringing together representatives from the public sector that are involved in Apprenticeships. The scheme is recognised as a national example of good practice by the NAS. North Yorkshire County Council was one of the first authorities to be given access to feature vacancies on the Apprenticeship Vacancies online system.

NAS has recently given permission for North Yorkshire to offer part-time Apprenticeships for 16 hours per week. Although the Apprenticeship team is still in process of gaining all the necessary permissions for this and working out the logistics, it is hoped that part-time Apprenticeships will present opportunities for young people returning to work as well as for young parents who would have been limited before due to time commitments. North Yorkshire County Council also hopes to continue to form partnerships with other local authorities and public sector organisations, in order to offer more Apprenticeship opportunities for young people.

For further information please contact the Young Person's Recruitment Team: [real.start@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:real.start@northyorks.gov.uk) 01609 533499



# **SOUTH TYNESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL – YOUTH CHOICE AND SUPPORT APPRENTICESHIPS**

Developing Apprenticeship opportunities for young people NEET who have, or are working towards, the minimum entry criteria for the Apprenticeship Offer through Supported Apprenticeships, and young people on the cusp of entering or leaving care through The Youth Choice initiative.

## **SUCCESSES**

- nearly 100 apprentices have been recruited to date
- employers have remained committed to the programme
- visible support and commitment from the Transition and Wellbeing Team.



## **BACKGROUND**

South Tyneside is the 38th most deprived area in England (out of 354)<sup>26</sup> but this shows an improvement from 2004 when it was the 27th most deprived area. In this part of North East England, Apprenticeships are still seen as a 'golden nugget', due to the huge ship building and mining industries which previously dominated the local economy, and are consequently highly desirable amongst both young people and parents. Now, the major sources of employment are from manufacturing, shops and wholesale, and many public sector jobs. Many people, including young people, travel to jobs outside the area. The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in South Tyneside in 2006 – 07 was considerably higher than the national average, with 11.3 per cent of young people NEET compared to 7.7 per cent in England as a whole suggesting a suitable response is necessary.

## **YOUTH CHOICE AND SUPPORTED APPRENTICESHIPS**

The local authority runs two dedicated Apprenticeship initiatives, the set up of which was stimulated by a combination of factors including funding secured from the Area Based Grant and the dramatic rise of young people NEET in the area. The Youth Choice initiative is for young people who are on the cusp of entering or leaving care and the Supported Apprenticeships programme is for young people NEET who have or are working towards the minimum entry criteria for the Apprenticeship Offer. Nearly 100 young people have been recruited through the two initiatives to date. These groups in particular were targeted due to the limited number of opportunities available to them locally. Young people recruited onto the programmes are employed by the local authority, and are placed in a range of roles across a network of local businesses, including the council itself. The first cohort, working as apprentice youth workers, were recruited in July 2009 and will shortly complete their Apprenticeship frameworks. South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council has set a benchmark by providing nearly 100 Apprenticeship opportunities for young people locally. It is hoped that this will encourage employers to continue employing apprentices independently after the council initiatives end. The placements are being provided in a



variety of sectors, including youth work, business administration (BT and South Tyneside Council as an employer), building/construction, retail, childcare, health and care and catering.

Both Apprenticeship schemes are led by the Transition and Wellbeing team (part of the Children and Young People Directorate), with the Economic and Development team as key partner. Irene Lucas (Chief Executive of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council 2002 – 09) supported the scheme at its inception and it now has cross-party support. The widespread political support is a result of the need to reduce numbers of young people NEET and create opportunities for young people who are disadvantaged or previously disengaged.

Both programmes use an Area Based Grant to cover the wages of apprentices, which ends in March 2010. The Transition and Wellbeing Team hope to secure a further allocation to enable the initiative to continue.

Both the Youth Choice and Supported Apprenticeships programmes are learner-led, so young people can decide which Apprenticeship pathway they wish to pursue based on their own interests. Young people are afforded the opportunity to visit their top three sector preferences before making an informed decision. Social clauses are used extensively to secure work placements, tasters and Apprenticeships. They are conditions which are placed into contracts and agreements that the council enters into with third parties, aimed at ensuring Apprenticeships and other opportunities help to alleviate youth unemployment and support the school-work transition.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council employs a co-ordinator for the two programmes, plus two dedicated mentors. The team works with Connexions and other stakeholders (including the Leaving Care Service) to target certain young people who it is felt would benefit most from the programmes. Young people are invited to fill out an application form,

and then attend an assessment day, where their motivation and team working skills are explored. They are then shortlisted for an interview, which includes an employer representative so they are involved in the recruitment process. The team works with the successful young people to source appropriate placements and work tasters, if necessary, to assist them in choosing a framework or sector.

Pre-Apprenticeship support is available through short accredited courses for young people prior to an Apprenticeship (for example literacy and numeracy courses, Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze, Food Hygiene Level 1 and a range of Sports Awards) and Connexions sessions for young people in preparation for the scheme. In addition, sessions are held by the local authority just before the deadline for applications to give information and provide support in completing application forms. For care leavers who take up an Apprenticeship there is support through the From Care 2 Work pilot, which South Tyneside local authority is part of. The DCSF-funded From Care 2 Work pilot (lead by the National Care Advisory Service) helps to build opportunities for care leavers through the local authority's role as corporate parent.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

The local authority uses social clauses extensively throughout its supply chain to 'purchase wellbeing' through work placements, tasters and Apprenticeships. A dedicated 'social clauses co-ordinator' is employed to liaise with businesses. A news article was placed in the 14 – 19 bulletin, which is read by all of the 14 – 19 partners including employers, to advertise and provide basic information about Apprenticeships. Key employers are also invited to be members of the advisory group for the Apprenticeship programmes, and give input into the initiatives. The Transition and Wellbeing Team has an employer network which includes the South Tyneside Manufacturing Forum and the local business forum, through which placements are sourced.

## CHALLENGES

The capacity of the Transition and Wellbeing team was initially stretched by the demands of the two programmes, but the recruitment of a dedicated Apprenticeships coordinator eased this. Securing Apprenticeship placements and the commitment of other teams in the local authority was initially difficult, but has now been overcome by demonstrating the benefits that Apprenticeships have had on employers so far. The vulnerable young people involved with the scheme have complex needs that require intensive support throughout. This can be demanding for both the council and employers. The complexity on a case by case basis has led to difficulties in maintaining relationships with employers who have been unable to cope with certain needs. Staff have been finding that managing the needs of employers and young people has been time consuming as well as demanding. A solution to this issue has been to facilitate sessions with employers to inform them of the 'typical' issues these young people have and how they can be resolved using emotional resilience training.

## SUCCESSSES

Despite these challenges, Youth Choice and Supported Apprenticeships in South Tyneside have received visible support and commitment from the Transition and Wellbeing Team.

There has been an impressive level of retention and achievement amongst the young people involved in the scheme and a good level of commitment from employers in general to stay with the programme.

For further information please contact Jackie Nolan [jackie.nolan@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.nolan@southtyneside.gov.uk) 0191 427 1717



# WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL – THE WIRRAL APPRENTICE

A coordinated response from Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council and key strategic partners to support local business and stimulate the local youth labour market during difficult economic times, by providing Apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

## SUCCESSSES

- over 150 Apprenticeships have been established so far
- 170 businesses registered an expression of interest to the first wave of The Wirral Apprentice
- a second wave of the programme has been developed to provide a further 50 Apprenticeship opportunities for 16 – 18 year olds NEET.



## BACKGROUND:

Wirral is a peninsula in Merseyside, North West England. A variety of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and a number of large corporate businesses are based in Wirral. There is also an array of multi-billion pound infrastructure and regeneration projects in the area, including the UK's biggest regeneration project – Wirral Waters. Wirral's Local Area Agreement (LAA) includes targets to increase employment opportunities and grow enterprise. Additionally, the LAA highlights the need to address inequalities in unemployment, and offering opportunities for the residents of the most deprived communities to improve their skills.

## THE WIRRAL APPRENTICE

In 2009, Wirral Council in partnership with the Wirral Economic Development and Skills Partnership collected feedback from businesses on the effect of the recession. There were a number of adverse impacts of the economic slump, including reduced spending on training by employers leading to a reduction in the available Apprenticeship opportunities. Based on this, the Council developed The Wirral Apprentice. The initiative was initially funded with £1.7m of Working Neighbourhoods Fund for the creation of 100 Apprenticeship places through the supply of an 18-month wage subsidy. Since its initial creation, further funding has been secured which will double the number of places to 200. The opportunities are targeted at local young people furthest from the labour market. The scheme is a coordinated response between Wirral Council and key strategic partners, including the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. Although developed from an economic perspective by the Council's Strategic Development Service, the 14 – 19 team was viewed as a logical lead for the initiative. They were already delivering intensive support programmes to assist disengaged groups to move into education or employment and already had strong working links with the key strategic partners.

The aim of the initiative was to support local business during difficult economic times, while also stimulating the local youth labour market. Additionally, the programme was designed to engage new businesses with

the launch of NAS, and to open up Apprenticeship places to disadvantaged young people. The scheme was officially launched in October 2009, with the first 100 apprentices and their employers coming together to celebrate. The scheme has provided over 150 Apprenticeships to date. A targeted approach which consists of priority individuals and business representatives, The Wirral Apprentice model, was adopted to ensure the scheme had a genuine impact on those most in need, including 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET), 16 – 18 year olds at risk of becoming NEET, 'Entry to Employment' (E2E) leavers, looked after young people and unemployed young adults aged 19+. The priority for young people NEET was a response to the higher than average NEET levels in the area (in 2007 the NEET rate in Wirral was over 10 per cent). Wirral also has a relatively high 'churn' rate, with significant numbers of young people moving in and out of education throughout the year.

The Wirral Apprentice provides employers with an 18-month wage subsidy from an expected minimum of a two-year employment contract. Originally, this funding was due to run out in March 2011, but additional Working Neighbourhoods funding has now been secured. Funding has been obtained via the Liverpool City Region City Employment Strategy Pathfinder from the Pathfinder Enabling Project (PEP) until December 2011. In the recent Council budget a further £500,000 was allocated to The Wirral Apprentice, to support the project in providing a further 50 Apprenticeship placements by the end of two years operation. The Council funding will go towards employing apprentices in green sector projects, including the home improvement project.

## SUPPORT FOR APPRENTICES

Young people are recruited for Apprenticeship places via the Apprenticeship Vacancies online system and this recruitment is managed by Connexions' Vacancy Matching team to ensure impartiality and a central point of contact. In addition, Connexions use their own systems to target vacancy matching activities to young people in the priority groups.

The 14 – 19 team runs an ESF (European Social Fund) funded project, Wirral Wise, which supports young people 16 – 19 NEET or at risk of NEET and actively supported young people to take advantage of these new opportunities. For the first 100 cohort, the applications were sent directly to the employers who then shortlisted and recruited with the assistance of the named contact officer in the 14 – 19 team. For the second cohort there is a specific aim to target certain groups of young people who were invited to express an interest in an Apprenticeship funded by Wirral Council. The expressions of interest were for opportunities in an overarching occupational sector rather than for one particular job. In this way young people who had expressed an interest in engineering for example, were submitted for every engineering position to increase their chances of success and assist them to consider roles they may not previously have applied for. The criteria focus on young people between 16 – 18 years old, who are residents of Wirral, who are NEET or who have been NEET for a period of at least four weeks in the last months. Applications from young people from particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds are prioritised. Apprenticeship positions are being offered in a variety of sectors, for example construction, hairdressing, and hospitality and tourism. The Apprenticeship employment contract is between the young person and the employer who commits to funding their apprentice for at least six months beyond the subsidised period. Prior to registering an expression of interest, young people were supported with their applications by members of the 14 – 19 team and Connexions and those who have been shortlisted are being offered interview preparation and support.

## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

New Apprenticeship opportunities are being stimulated in the area with a twin priority targeted approach: 60 per cent SMEs with no history of Apprenticeship placements, 40 per cent all size businesses wanting to increase their Apprenticeship numbers. The Wirral Apprentice offers an 18-month wage subsidy package to businesses in return for the guarantee of a two year Apprenticeship contract. The package includes full funding for wages at £4.83 per hour (national minimum wage rate for 18 – 21 year olds), up to 40 hours per week for 18 months. Additionally, employers are supported by a named officer from the 14 – 19 team throughout.



The Wirral Apprentice is advertised to local businesses on the Invest Wirral website, the Council's business engagement arm. Additionally, the scheme is promoted to employers at conferences and events, such as the North West Apprenticeship Conference and a Local Government Apprenticeship Summit. Employers register their interest on Wirral's website, by filling in a short form. From the interested employers, an initial sift is conducted by a stakeholder selection panel. This is to ensure that the scheme is targeting priority or growth sectors as well as the type and size of businesses. In addition, the initial sift encourages an even split of Apprenticeships across sectoral groups matched with the information on sector demand from NEET young people in Wirral. In the first round, NAS supplied employers with details of training providers who delivered frameworks appropriate to their vacancy and then the employer chose which provider they preferred. As the second round has been targeted at 16 – 18 NEET young people, the Apprenticeship training providers have been identified ahead of recruitment and are actively taking part in the interview process with the employers.

## CHALLENGES

Wirral have found a key challenge to be the additional support that SME's specifically require in taking on apprentices. In some cases employers who have little or no experience of employing apprentices need extra support and input to understand what Apprenticeships are and how they work. This can be time consuming for local authority staff. It is essential, therefore, that the support officer has experience of conducting interviews and knowledge of Apprenticeships so that expertise can be called upon.

## SUCSESSES

The first wave of The Wirral Apprentice was highly successful; 170 businesses came forward to register an expression of interest in the programme and so it was significantly oversubscribed. Wirral Council developed a second wave of the Apprenticeship programme, which aims to stimulate the supply of 50 further Apprenticeship opportunities for young people aged 16 – 18 NEET, in particular those from disadvantaged groups and areas.

Previous to The Wirral Apprentice the Council did not operate wage subsidies with employers, but it was felt that this would be a timely move to combat the effects of the recession. An analysis of the initial performance of the programme suggests that the outcomes are positive. The approach to prioritise employers who had not previously engaged with Apprenticeships has been a success in raising awareness of the benefits of employing an apprentice. Many employers are said to be happy with their apprentice and some have even asked for and are willing to fund an additional apprentice, creating a 'buy one get one free' notion.

The funding for The Wirral Apprentice is time limited, and work will continue to make the scheme as sustainable as possible. So far The Wirral Apprentice has strengthened existing relationships with NAS, Connexions and Job Centre Plus, and for the Apprenticeship scheme to remain successful this needs to continue. There is a particular focus on embedding the Apprenticeship Vacancies service with both employers and young people, so that the offer and take-up of Apprenticeship places continues.

A full resource pack on how Wirral went about providing the programme is available via the North West Employers Organisation:

<http://www.nweo.org.uk/Workforce/Good+Practice+Resource+Library/>

For further information, please contact: Wirral Council 14-19 Team 0151 346 6590

## ANNEX 1 – MATRIX OF CASE STUDIES

This Matrix below was developed to ensure, where possible, that the case studies in this document give a good representation of the variety of local authorities, approaches to targeting certain young people, methods of funding, approaches to preparing young people for Apprenticeships and different initiatives used to engage with employers.

### HERTFORDSHIRE

<b>Government office region</b>	East of England
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	Young mothers, young carers, care leavers, young offenders and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	Future Jobs Fund and Performance reward Grant
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Teams supporting young people coming out of Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes and those leaving care, direct young people towards the programme
<b>Sectors</b>	A variety of positions are offered in both the private and public sector
<b>Partners involved</b>	Youth Connexions Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Provider Network, Job Centre Plus, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Vacancies on the Connexions and Apprenticeship Vacancies online websites. Connexions work with the care leavers' team and learning difficulties and disabilities support team to target priority groups

### KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

<b>Government office region</b>	South East
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	16 – 19 young people NEET, Year 11 school leavers
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority
<b>Funding</b>	Initial funding from Kent County Council to establish the programme. The medium-term plan is for departments to cover the salary costs. The LSC covers training costs
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	The Kent Apprenticeship team will be holding a series of information sessions so young people are able to make informed decisions. Directly on to Kent Success after recruitment
<b>Sectors</b>	Business administration health and social care, childcare, customer service and hospitality and catering.
<b>Partners involved</b>	Key Training Services, a training provider at the Council
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Young people apply directly through KEY. The recruitment process begins with a young person sending an enquiry to KEY about a vacancy, then attend a formal interview and then a one to one interview

## LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

<b>Government office region</b>	North West
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	16 - 19 NEETs looked after young people, those leaving care or other excluded groups (teenage parents, those from BME backgrounds, young offenders, those with less than 5 A-C GCSE's)
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	E2E funds, cabinet budget and small amounts from 12 district councils
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Future Horizon's is the pre-Apprenticeship program which leads directly into Lancashire County Council's Apprenticeship scheme
<b>Sectors</b>	A variety are provided but the majority are with traditional trades and business administration
<b>Partners involved</b>	The Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), North Lancashire Training Group, Lancashire District Councils, Children and Young People's Service.
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Young people are provided with support to complete the Future Horizons application process from the Councils Recruitment and Placement officer. Followed by an informal interview.

## LINCOLNSHIRE

<b>Government office region</b>	East Midlands
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	Young people leaving care
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority
<b>Funding</b>	Council budget
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service refer young people to the scheme
<b>Sectors</b>	A variety including teaching assistants, joiners, electricians, and chefs
<b>Partners involved</b>	Leaving care service (based in Barnardo's) Connexions Lincolnshire and Rutland
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Application form and CV – not qualification based but young people complete initial basic skills tests

## LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM

<b>Government office region</b>	London
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	The aim is to target young residents Priority is given 16-18s. The focus is on engaging young people NEET, young offenders and care leavers.
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	Area Based Grant, Working Neighbour-hoods Fund. Additional funding from the Department of Health to develop social care apprentices
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	The Access to Apprenticeships (A2A) 16 week programme available to young people aged 16-19, to help improve the literacy and numeracy skills before entering an Apprenticeship
<b>Sectors</b>	Include: health and social care, business administration and horticulture.
<b>Partners involved</b>	Youth Offending and Housing Services, Barking and Dagenham Training Services (part of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham) and its maintenance contractor, Enterprise
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	'Apps' brand figure used to promote the scheme, as well as a dedicated website. Young people are recruited through Connexions.

## MANCHESTER

<b>Government office region</b>	North West
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	Care leavers, young people NEET and young people attending 'high NEET producing schools'. Some initiatives also target young care leavers and young people from black and ethnic minorities
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	Skills Pledge funding
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Differs between initiatives – some hold recruitment or practical events
<b>Sectors</b>	Wide range of initiatives including, for example, construction, media and bereavement services
<b>Partners involved</b>	The Connexions Service, BBC North West Vision and a number of major construction firms
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Competency based recruitment



## NORTH YORK-SHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

<b>Government office region</b>	Yorkshire and Humber
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	Young people NEET, those leaving care, young offenders, those from Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) and traveller communities
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority
<b>Funding</b>	From the central Council/ staff budget
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Connexions offer employability sessions to provide tips on how to prepare for interviews or fill in application forms.
<b>Sectors</b>	Include: outdoor education, childcare, catering, electrical engineering administration and care.
<b>Partners involved</b>	Other borough councils, Adult Community Services and Local Government Yorkshire & Humberside (LGYH)
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Recruitment is not qualification based. Generic application form on the 'real start' website, young people enter a talent pool which employment coordinators consider candidates from.

## SOUTH TYNESIDE

<b>Government office region</b>	North East
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	Young people leaving care, young people NEET ,young people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	Area Based Grant
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Pre-Apprenticeship support through short accredited courses for young people. Connexions sessions Connexions and other stakeholders target young people who would most benefit
<b>Sectors</b>	Youth work, business administration construction, retail, childcare, health and care and catering.
<b>Partners involved</b>	Economic Development Team
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Assessment days, where motivation and team working skills are explored. Interviews with an employer representative.

## WIRRAL

<b>Government office region</b>	North West
<b>Young people targeted (e.g., care leavers/ Young people NEET)</b>	16-18 year olds NEET or at risk of becoming NEET, E2E leavers, looked after young people and unemployed young adults aged 19+
<b>Employed within authority or externally</b>	Within the local authority and externally with private employers
<b>Funding</b>	LSC, Working Neighbour-hoods Fund, Pathfinder Enabling Project, funding from the Council budget
<b>Directly into Apprenticeships or pre-App programme?</b>	Connexions promote to target groups. Young people involved with E2E are also targeted
<b>Sectors</b>	A variety of positions are offered in both the private and public sector
<b>Partners involved</b>	NAS, Connexions, and JobCentre Plus
<b>Recruitment methods</b>	Vacancies on the Apprenticeship vacancies online site.

## ANNEX 2

### ATTENDEES AT THE EXPERT SEMINAR, APRIL 2009

Dr Beverley Burgess	LSC
Dr Marcia Brophy	The Young Foundation
Balbir Chatrik	Centrepont
Debra Clothier	Nacro
Jennifer Davies	Rathbone
Jane Evans	Barnardo's
Steve Hillman	The Foyer Federation
Carol Jackson	Community Links
Dr Nalita James	University of Leicester
Mike Johnson	Barnardo's Palmersville Training
Dr Ian Johnston	Senior Consultant to the project
Ginny Lunn	Prince's Trust
Bethia McNeil	The Young Foundation
Dr Susan Maguire	CEI and the University of Warwick
Professor Bryan Merton	Independent Consultant
Anna Morrison	Hertfordshire Providers' Network
Geoff Mulgan	The Young Foundation
Dominic Potter	The Young Foundation
Yvonne Richards	UK Youth
Anton Shelupanov	The Young Foundation
Dr Thomas Spielhofer	NfER
Dr Hilary Steedman	London School of Economics

## EXPERT SEMINAR ATTENDEES – MARCH 2010

Mary Abdo	The Young Foundation
Kirsty Anderson	The Young Foundation
Nicola Bacon	The Young Foundation
Sophie Byrne	The Young Foundation
Rosie Chadwick	Catch 22
Lynne Coulthard	Hertfordshire County Council
Samantha Dodd	London Councils
Paula Gibson	NAS - North West
Jack Graham	Young Foundation
Jim Hillage	Institute for Employment Studies
Jonathan Hopkins	Centrepoint
Patricia Jones	LSC Manchester City Council
Penny Lamb	Local Government Association
Hazel Langley	Groundwork
Rupinder Lotay	NAS - East of England
Ginny Lunn	Prince's Trust
Susan Maguire	CEI at the University of Warwick
Paul Marriott	Depaul UK
Bethia McNeil	The Young Foundation
Professor Bryan Merton	Independent Consultant
Anna Morrison	Hertfordshire Providers Network
Fiona Murray	Private Equity Foundation
Debbie Neubauer	Changemakers
Emma Nicholson	Prince's Trust
Maureen O'Callaghan	Consultant – The Young Foundation
Karen Olney	NAS
Helen Radcliffe	NAS-North East
Cynthia Shanmugalingam	The Young Foundation
Martin Stein	IDeA
Julian Stevenson	YMCA Training
Nikki Wade	Prince's Trust
Jane White	NCAS/Catch 22

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> For a full explanation of RPA please refer to the 'Opening Doors to Apprenticeship Glossary'. Available online [http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors_glossary.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> The Machinery of Government changes refers to the transfer of responsibility for 14 – 19 education from the Learning and Skills Council (which ceased operation in April 2010) to local authorities.
- <sup>3</sup> BBC News (April 2010) *UK unemployment increases to 2.5 million*. Available online <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8634241.stm>
- <sup>4</sup> BBC News (2009) *Youth unemployment figures raise spectre of Thatcher's Britain* 21 April. Available online <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/aug/12/youth-unemployment-rate-bristol>
- <sup>5</sup> These figures do include young people in education and training
- <sup>6</sup> Edge (2008) *The VQ Landscape 2008: A review of vocational qualification achievements in the UK*. No data is available specific to the 16 – 18 age range, but this data highlights the achievement BME groups in Apprenticeships more generally.
- <sup>7</sup> For a full explanation of 'jobs without training' please refer to the 'Opening Doors to Apprenticeship Glossary'. Available online [http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors_glossary.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> Higgs, L (2010) Councils accused of failing to work with providers as 16 to 19 transfer draws near. *Children and Young People Now* 9 March. Available online <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/bulletins/Daily-Bulletin/news/988848/?DCMP=EMC-DailyBulletin>
- <sup>9</sup> For a full explanation of CEIAG please refer to the 'IAG' section in the 'Opening Doors to Apprenticeship Glossary'. Available online [http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors_glossary.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> DCSF (2009) *Statutory Guidance: Impartial Careers Education* sets out six principles for careers education:

1. Empowers young people to plan and manage their own futures
2. Responds to the needs of each learner
3. Provides comprehensive information and advice
4. Raises aspirations
5. Actively promotes equality of opportunity and challenges stereotypes
6. Helps young people to progress

Available online: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00978-2009DOM-EN.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, Y (2009) *Grit: The skills for success and how they are grown* London: The Young Foundation

<sup>12</sup> The Skills Commission (2009) *Progression Through Apprenticeships*

<sup>13</sup> The CBI defines employability as “a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy”. The competencies that make up employability according to the CBI in the same document are: self-management; team working; problem solving; application of IT; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; as well as business and customer awareness. Source: ‘Time Well Spent: Embedding employability in work experience’ CBI (2005). Available online: <http://www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/timewellspentbrief.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Winterbotham, M, Adams, L, Kuechel, A (2001) *Evaluation of the Work Based Learning for Adults Programme since April 2001: Qualitative interviews with ES Staff, Providers and Employers*. Department for Work and Pensions.

<sup>15</sup> Brophy, M, McNeil, B, Shandro, A (2009) *Thinking about Apprenticeships: Perceptions and expectations of employers, parents and young people*. The Young Foundation

<sup>16</sup> Kewin, J, Tucker, M, Neat, S and Corney, M (2009) *Lessons from history: Increasing the number of 16 and 17 year olds in education and training* CfBT

<sup>17</sup> The Machinery of Government changes refers to the transfer of responsibility for 14 – 19 education from the Learning and Skills Council (which ceased operation in April 2010) to local authorities.

<sup>18</sup> The CBI defines employability as “a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy”. Source: ‘Time Well Spent: Embedding employability in work experience’ CBI (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Warwick Institute for Employment Research (2008) *The Net Benefit to Employer Investment in Apprenticeship Training*

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Brophy, M, McNeil, B, Shandro, A (2009) *Thinking about Apprenticeships: Perceptions and expectations of employers, parents and young people*. The Young Foundation

<sup>22</sup> For a full explanation of ‘churn’ please refer to the ‘Opening Doors to Apprenticeship Glossary’. Available online [http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors\\_glossary.pdf](http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/openingdoors_glossary.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Barking and Dagenham Area Assessment (December 2009). Available online: <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/areaassessment/pages/default.aspx?region=51&area=306>



<sup>24</sup> Turner, D (2010) 'Innovative thinking reduces number of idle teenagers'. *The Financial Times* January 4. Available online <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f802b5ec-f8cf-11de-beb8-00144feab49a.html>

<sup>25</sup> Manchester Area Assessment (March 2010). Available online: <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/areaassessment/pages/default.aspx?region=53&area=380>

<sup>26</sup> Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2007) Communities and Local Government. Available online: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Young Foundation would like to thank everyone who attended the expert seminar on 'opening doors to Apprenticeships', held in April 2009, and contributed to the discussions that took place (see Annex 1 for a full list of those in attendance). Particular thanks should be extended to Dr Thomas Spielhofer, Anna Morrison, Prof Bryan Merton and Dr Susan Maguire, who acted as critical readers for the paper.



# ABOUT THE LOCAL WELLBEING PROJECT

The Local Wellbeing Project is a partnership between the Young Foundation, Professor Richard Layard of the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and three local authorities: Hertfordshire County Council, Manchester City Council and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council. The aim of the Local Wellbeing Project is to pioneer new approaches in the design and delivery of policies and services to contribute to public happiness and wellbeing, which could be replicated more widely.

## Project Partners:



South Tyneside Council

## Project funder:



## Core Partners:

