

Equality and Diversity Case Studies

Directorate: Resources

Service: Human Resources

Title:

Encouraging young people to engage with Cheshire West and Chester through its Apprenticeship Programme.

Introduction:

Recruitment of young people via the Apprenticeship Programme

Challenges:

To attract a wide variety of young people from all backgrounds who would not usually aspire to work for a local authority. To ensure our corporate parent responsibilities are addressed by guaranteeing a place on our apprenticeship programme for our looked after and leaving care children where appropriate.

How the challenges were overcome:

Regular contact with support workers and attendance at care to work meetings, arranging work trials for care leavers, communicating with Supported Employment Advisers and Connexions staff for Candidates with complex needs.

Attendance at various Princes' Trust courses to inform and encourage applications.

Contact with various community projects i.e. HHEET Centre by attending sessions and talking to young people about opportunities in CWAC, Making contact with people who have taken up mentoring opportunities with local young people and helping with opportunities, offering work experience across a variety of services to young people and encouraging applications

Attendance at schools to promote CWAC apprenticeship programme and help with interview techniques etc, using our website and an online

application form for easy access and submission. Pursuing new routes where possible.

Outcomes:

We have a good network and are able to reach young people from hard to reach areas by taking away some of the fear by having a presence in local the local community (and by word of mouth have built up a good reputation for helping).

What we could have done better:

Established links earlier.

Further information:

The success of the scheme has been further enhanced following the securing of 40 corporately funded placements as agreed by Senior Management Team in August 09, this allowed all services the opportunity to engage a young person and enjoy the benefits an apprentice can bring. We currently pay our apprentices £105.00 per week (£10 over and above the national minimum rate to help with travel costs).

Since April 2009

- Over 100 candidates have been interviewed
- 89 apprentices accepted onto the programme
- 48 apprentices have moved into temporary or permanent employment with the authority
- 42 apprentices are currently on the programme at the time of this report (March 2011)

Many of our apprentices are snapped up by the business long before the end of their 12 month contract. This means placement numbers continue to rise to accommodate the increase in employed status, a fantastic success story for our programme.

Overall our retention figures are very good, with only a small percentage leaving the programme prematurely, due to a variety of reasons, including returning to education or securing a permanent position outside of the authority.