

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

23 February 2016

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Care Leavers' Employment Opportunities – (Children's Services)

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to develop and implement an entry route into employment by the Council in order to improve the outcomes for care leavers.

2. Information and Analysis

The Council has an on-going responsibility to support looked after children as they make the transition to adulthood. This responsibility also applies to all care leavers until they reach the age of 21 or, if they are being helped with education or training, to the end of the agreed programme (which can take them beyond their 25th birthday). The current proportion of care leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) is unacceptable. 45% of all Derbyshire care leavers (80 young people) are NEET compared to less than 4% of all young people in the county. The Council is committed to ensuring that 100% of care leavers are positively engaged in employment, education and training by 2018. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to deliver this ambition:

Developing work experience opportunities across Derbyshire County Council

A Management Seminar in October 2015 pledged sufficient work experience placements that matched the career aspirations of care leavers. 56 pledges were made at the event and work experience placements are now being offered to 35 young people which are still to start. Of the remaining 21;

- 6 young people are in work
- 1 young person began their placement with the Council on 8th December
- 3 young people have enrolled on further learning
- 1 young person on work experience in an infant school
- 1 young person on work experience with Job Centre Plus
- 3 young people now identified as not available for EET
- 4 young people not engaging with care leavers Employment Project
- 1 young person is volunteering and is pregnant
- 1 young person has left the service

Care Leavers Employment Project (CLEP)

CLEP provides work experience placements across the Council and the private sector and supports up to 14 young people in private sector apprenticeships at any one time. Of those, 7 young people have recently secured permanent employment with their apprenticeship provider as a consequence of the scheme.

Traineeships / Study programmes offered by Derbyshire Adult Education Service (DACES)

DACES currently offers a very successful traineeship programme and study programme to care leavers. It is similar in content to the proposed Internship, but without pay, as these are learning programmes. The programme consists of work experience tasters, employability skills, maths, English and ICT.

I Step Up Summer School

Programme offered through ETE and DACES to support NEET young people with no identified destination to increase employability skills and motivation. Over 20 young people benefited from this in 2015. Another programme is planned for the summer of this year.

Apprenticeships with the Council

The County Council provides a growing number of apprenticeships, currently organised through Learning Unlimited. This contract ends in June 2016 and there is a report elsewhere on this meeting's agenda recommending that the recruitment of our apprentices be brought in house and that they be directly employed by the Council.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that care leavers have the best possible chance of securing a Council apprenticeship, through guaranteeing a final interview, the reality is that very few are successful. Any young person seeking an apprenticeship has to have a good level

of GCSE passes or have the potential to achieve these, especially in English or Maths. Less than 40% of care leavers have the required numeracy and literacy skills to meet the requirements of apprenticeship entry.

Evidence from recruiting managers indicates that care leavers often lack both the employability and interview skills to gain positions when competing against the general population. Similarly, even when they are successful, many struggle to cope with working life and it can take several months before they are settled into their role.

In response to these barriers, it is proposed that the existing offer is supplemented by a:

- Care leaver paid Internship
- Identifying job / work experience opportunities with organisations we procure from
- Developing senior managers to be able to support care leavers through monitoring and challenge within their roles

Care Leaver Paid Internship

We will develop and implement an entry route into employment with the Council through 10 (FTE) paid temporary Internships which will offer training, work experience, and payment at the age-related national minimum wage rates in an employment context. These internships will have the aim of leading to either further employment or apprenticeship within the Council through guaranteed interviews for appropriate vacancies.

The paid internship offers a genuine opportunity for a care leaver to gain valuable skills, qualifications and work experience, whilst also receiving an income, which to most is vital. The programme offers a real opportunity for care leavers to progress into permanent full-time work or an apprenticeship, through the development of their skills and employability. Paid Internship is a response to the fact that care leavers are not accessing the opportunities being offered due to a number of barriers, both financial and skills-related and is consistent with the Council's ongoing duty to advise and assist care leavers.

These internships will be for one year and will enable young people to develop their employability skills, gain paid employment to build up their CV and enable them to gain a work-based reference. The opportunity to enter into full-time paid employment with the Council will be an additional incentive for young people to take up these internships.

Building upon our successful traineeships and study programmes offered by DACES, each internship will be tailored to the young person's needs and aspirations. It will:

- be up to 12 months in length on a paid basis
- include work placement(s) based on the individual's aspirations
- include training consisting of:
 - English and maths up to level 2
 - Vocational training in an appropriate qualification up to level 2 e.g. retail, customer service, catering or business administration
 - Employability skills training e.g. Move on Up Level 1 Aim Award
 - ICT functional skills
 - Mentoring support
 - Information, advice and guidance

Within the last three months of the internship, young people will be able to apply for apprenticeships and internal job opportunities within the Council.

Identifying job opportunities with organisations we procure from

Building upon the Social Value Framework that is being developed, which will include key performance indicators for care leavers into work experience and work, the Care Leavers Employment Team (CLEP) will work with commissioning officers in the Council to identify future employment vacancies within the organisations we procure from and will advocate on behalf of care leavers to ensure they are given priority.

CLEP currently approaches private sector employers to take care leavers on work experience placements for a six-week period with a view to leading to an apprenticeship. This model has proved successful and it is proposed to examine how this may be replicated and expanded to ensure that more care leavers are offered this opportunity.

Senior Managers monitoring and challenging care leaver outcomes

To deliver improved outcomes for care leavers, it is vital that we work as a whole Council to support raising their aspirations and embrace the role of the corporate parent. To facilitate this, all senior managers will be allocated a small number of care leavers in order to act as champions with responsibility for monitoring progress, advocating on their behalf and challenging officers supporting the young person in order to help them achieve their aspirations. Training and support will

be provided to senior managers in order to fulfil these new responsibilities.

Work has commenced to brief senior staff on this work by the end of February. This will include clearly outlining their role and giving them the necessary tools to undertake the role effectively.

Performance Management

In order to ensure this work is effectively monitored there will be a clear governance structure. The Corporate Parenting Committee will take overall responsibility for the implementation of the programme, with regular reports to the Employment and Skills Board. Individual senior managers who have responsibility for a group of care leavers will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate and timely interventions take place, by holding service areas to account.

This will ensure accountability at all levels and regular progress reports are provided. All interventions will be recorded via Profile and Frameworki.

3. Human Resources Considerations

These ten, full-time equivalent, one-year internships will be ring-fenced to care leavers. The posts will be referred to as paid Internships and the hourly pay rates will be in accordance with the national, age-related, minimum wage rates. For the purposes of parity, the current apprenticeship scheme also applies the national minimum wage rates to apprentices working for the Council.

Within the last three months of their internship, the young people can apply for apprenticeship vacancies on a guaranteed interview basis as well as internal Derbyshire County Council vacancies. Similarly, this opportunity to apply for internal vacancies is offered to apprentices as well.

4. Financial Considerations

The costs for these paid internships posts for care leavers will be funded centrally and will not impact on individual service budgets.

The current national minimum wage rates are:

- < 18 year olds £3.87 per hour
- 18-20 year olds £5.30 per hour
- 21+ year olds £6.70 per hour

As it is not known at this time the age profiles of the care leavers who may successfully gain an Internship, it is not possible to provide an exact cost. However, as the majority of care leavers fall into the 18-20 age profile, the cost of 10fte internships at £5.30 per hour plus other incidental costs (such as National Insurance etc.) equates to approximately £125,000 per year.

In order to fund this initiative, it is proposed that £125,000 is allocated from the General Reserve in each of 2016-17 and 2017-18. During 2017-18, an evaluation of the success of the programme will be made. Subject to the scheme meeting the objectives set for it, and being felt to offer value to both the care leavers and the Council, a budget pressure will be added into the 2018-19 budget in order to fund the internships on an ongoing basis.

5. Legal Considerations

The Children Act 1989 places a duty on the local authority to advise, assist and befriend a child after the authority has ceased to look after them. Enabling the child to have the necessary skills for independent living is an integral element of this duty. Providing a gateway to employment via temporary posts with the Council ring-fenced to NEET care leavers is therefore consistent with this duty.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal and human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, health, environmental, transport, property and the prevention of crime and disorder considerations.

7. Key Decisions

No

8. Call-in

Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report? No

9. Background Papers

Cabinet Paper: 23 February 2016, "Future Delivery of the Internal Apprenticeship Scheme (Council Services)".

10. Officer's Recommendations That Cabinet:-

- Approves the development of pathways to employment within the Council as set out in the report, to ensure positive action for care leavers.
- Approves the creation of 10 FTE paid Internships within the Council ring-fenced to NEET care leavers.
- Notes the proposal to continue to identify job opportunities with organisations from whom the Council procures goods and services.
- Agrees to develop a monitoring and challenge role for senior managers tasked with improving education, training and employment outcomes for individual care leavers.

Ian Johnson
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