

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board (PPB)

DATE: 25th March 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Halton Borough Council Update on Apprenticeships

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide Members with an update on Apprenticeships in Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) That the Policy & Performance Board note the information.**
- (2) To seek Members views on how Halton Borough Council can better promote Apprenticeships and, in the future, Traineeships to employers.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Overview of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are real jobs with training. They take between one and four years to complete and cover 1,400 job roles in a wide range of industries. An apprenticeship is a set of qualifications called a 'framework' developed by Sector Skills Councils. Most apprenticeship frameworks follow a standard format that comprises of:-

- A National Vocational Qualification (eg Level 2 for Intermediate Level Apprenticeships, Level 3 for Advanced Level, upto levels 4, 5 and 6 at Higher Level Apprenticeships)
- A Technical Certificate (knowledge based qualification eg BTEC, HNC)
- Transferable Skills (eg English)

A Learning Provider provides the knowledge and develops the skills of the Apprentice while the employer provides the practical experience to put those skills to the test. Training can be delivered in a classroom, workshop or in the workplace depending on the subject and learning provider.

There is opportunity for progression within apprenticeships; this has traditionally been from Level 2 to Level 3. However, the development of Higher Level Apprenticeships has increased opportunities for movement from Level 3 upwards to Level 6, which is equivalent to a degree.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has an on-line vacancy service where all Apprenticeship job opportunities are posted on-line and are available to any young person registered with the vacancy service to apply for. Being able to view all vacancies opens up both local and nationwide opportunities for young people.

NAS are in the process of developing a programme to deliver sessions to schools across the Liverpool City Region with the aim of supporting teachers' knowledge and understanding of apprenticeships. This will include briefing sessions for schools including support for pupils to help them understand how to search and apply for apprenticeship opportunities via the NAS Apprenticeship Vacancy site.

For young people who apply for apprenticeships and aren't successful NAS are currently procuring face to face and telephone support for young people to improve the quality of their applications.

4.0 HALTON OVERVIEW

4.1 Apprenticeship Starts and Success Rates for Halton Residents

Over the last 6 years there has been a significant increase in the numbers of young people aged 16 to 24 undertaking an apprenticeship. A historic summary of apprenticeship starts by age band is shown in Table 1 below:-

		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
16-18	No.	310	306	435	422	370
	%	6%	6%	9%	8%	7%
19-24	No.	296	250	411	508	528
	%	3%	3%	5%	6%	6%
Total		606	556	846	930	898

Table 1.

Source: NAS Q4 dataset 2011/12, % based on 2010 ONS Mid-year population estimates

Success rates are a measure of how many young people achieve the full apprenticeship framework. For example a young person who achieves all but one of the apprenticeship framework components, which could be an ICT certificate, for example, would not appear as a positive success. However, the young person would have been awarded their National Vocational Qualification, technical certificate, other transferable skills and can continue to re-sit or resubmit work to complete their apprenticeship framework. A full breakdown of apprenticeship success rates for both 2009/10 and 2010/11 with regional and national comparisons can be seen in Table 2:-

		2009/10			2010/11		
		Level 2	Level 3	Overall	Level 2	Level 3	Overall
16-18	Halton	72.4%	81.2%	74.5%	65.8%	84.4%	69.6%
	North-West	71.1%	77.2%	72.7%	70.7%	79.9%	73.0%
	National	71.1%	76.3%	72.4%	72.2%	79.0%	74.0%
19-24	Halton	69.7%	73.6%	70.9%	75.6%	82.2%	83.3%
	North-West	72.7%	74.8%	73.6%	75.9%	79.3%	77.2%
	National	74.6%	75.5%	74.9%	76.7%	79.7%	77.8%
25+	Halton	86.2%	61.2%	78.8%	82.6%	79.5%	81.3%
	North-West	78.0%	70.9%	75.4%	81.3%	77.0%	79.5%
	National	77.5%	71.5%	75.1%	80.6%	76.2%	78.8%
All Ages	Halton	74.4%	73.2%	74.1%	71.8%	82.1%	74.7%
	North-West	72.7%	75.0%	73.5%	74.0%	79.0%	75.6%
	National	73.4%	74.8%	73.8%	75.3%	78.6%	76.4%

Table 2.

Source: NAS Q4 report, 2011/12

4.2 Halton Residents Starting an Apprenticeship by Sector Subject Area

Table 3 below shows a breakdown of 16-18 apprenticeship starts by the top 10 recruiting frameworks between 2009/10 and 2010/11, interim final year figures are shown for 2011/12.

Framework	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12 (interim)
Customer Service	23	75	46
Business Administration	38	40	39
Children's Care Learning and Development	35	28	32
IT and Telecoms Professionals (inc. ICT)	22	31	28
Active Leisure and Learning	39	52	28
Hairdressing	40	27	24
Construction	17	18	19
Engineering	42	35	19
Industrial Applications	1	6	14
MES Plumbing	8	7	14

Table 3.

Source: NAS Halton LA Apprenticeship Profile 2011/12 Q4

During 2011/2012 Customer Service continues to be the most recruited sector followed by Business Administration and Children's Care Learning and Development.

4.3 Apprenticeship Starts by Gender for Halton Residents

Within the 16-18 age band, more males start apprenticeship programmes than females, though the gender gap has narrowed since 2009/10. Across both 19-24 and 25+ age categories more females participate than males.

4.4 Halton Employer Information

There is a level of information that cannot be provided, which is:-

- Employer names
- Information on where companies recruiting apprentices residing in Halton are based.

4.5 Halton Borough Council Apprenticeship Development Plan

In 2012 Halton Borough Council adopted the People Plan 2012-2015, which aims to place our workforce at the heart of the Council. Twelve apprentices are working within the areas of Waste Management and Open Spaces and 3 within Employment, Learning and Skills. A target of 10 apprenticeships has been set for 2013.

There is a firm Council commitment to the apprenticeship model, and a desire that the Council should set an example, as the largest employer within the Borough, to developing its own apprenticeship programme. There is strong independent research of the return on investment from employing apprentices.

A 'snap-shot' of temporary and agency staff employed across the Council highlighted several work areas, for example in administration and social care, where the work could instead potentially be delivered by way of an appropriate apprenticeship framework.

This could re-direct some of the current expenditure on temporary and agency staff to the employment and training costs of an apprenticeship.

This creative application of apprenticeships could potentially offer some efficiency savings whilst also helping to minimise the negative impact upon services, and lead to more effective workforce planning.

Recruitment from groups under-represented in the Council's workforce will be prioritised and, supported by the Halton Employment Partnership, targeting residents who are NEET, and those leaving care.

4.6 Halton Employment Partnership

Halton Employment Partnership Team has funding available to assist new apprentices, residing in Halton, with providing financial support for travel, lunches and/or work clothes for up to 4 weeks from the start of the apprenticeship (or payment of their first salary). This Apprenticeship Support Fund was introduced in December 2012 and 6 grants have been awarded to date.

Locally, the Halton Employment Partnership committed to and secured 100 new apprenticeship opportunities (*confirmation awaited*) across the borough in 2011/12, with over 300 young people and adults across Halton signing up to the National Apprenticeship Service to help secure future employment and training. These opportunities will support the continued work of the 14-19 Partnership and of reducing young people not engaged in education or training.

As an employer Halton Borough Council has entered the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Awards 2013 for its commitment to apprenticeships and has also nominated apprentices from Waste Management and Open Spaces for Awards.

4.7 Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy

Halton Borough Council's Divisional Manager of Employment, Learning and Skills is the Chair of the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub. The group will take a strategic lead on the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy.

5.0 FUTURE POLICY

5.1 Apprenticeships

The Government is intent on a major expansion in the number and range of apprenticeships, with around 200 different career choices on offer in 80 different sectors, available to anyone over 16 years-old and not in full-time education. The target is to create 100,000 more apprentices by the year 2014, with a budget of £1,400m allocated in 2011/12.

The Youth Contract launched in late 2011 aims to provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for 16 to 25-year-olds. This will include encouraging small businesses to hire young apprentices with incentive payments; simplifying processes to make it quicker and easier for employers to take on an apprentice; a renewed focus on targeting the programme where apprenticeships deliver greatest value and the requirement for apprenticeship providers to offer training in English and maths up to the standard of a good GCSE (level 2) for all apprenticeships.

5.2 Traineeships

The Departments for Education, and Business, Innovation and Skills have issued a discussion paper on Traineeships with a view to introducing the programme in September 2013. The aim is to establish Traineeships as the preferred route for young people aged 16 to 24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to secure an Apprenticeship.

It is proposed that Traineeships would last around 6 months and consist of three core elements:-

- A focused period of work preparation training.
- A high quality work placement (extended, where possible).
- English and maths for those who have not achieved a GCSE Grade C or equivalent.

The programme, which would include mentoring and other pastoral support, would be highly flexible to allow for the needs of individual young people, and of the local labour market helping young people to successfully move into apprenticeships.

5.3 Richard Review of Apprenticeships – November 2012

The independent review of apprenticeships chaired by Doug Richard has issued its final report and recommendations. It calls for an improvement in the quality of apprenticeships and that they are made more focused on the needs of employers. The key recommendations:-

- Apprenticeships should be redefined and targeted to those new to a job
- The focus of apprenticeships should be on the outcome and linked to standards for professional registration
- The testing and validation process should be independent and genuinely respected by industry
- All apprentices should have achieved Level 2 in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship
- Government funding should be used to create the right incentives for apprenticeship training, with the purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training lying with the employer
- A greater diversity and innovation in training – with employers and the Government taking a more active role in safeguarding quality

The Secretaries of State for Business and Education, and the Government will now consider the recommendations.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Council Corporate plan, People Plan, Children and Young People's plan, Sustainable Community Strategy and Employment, Learning and Skills Strategies have key priorities to raise aspirations of young people and increase local employment opportunities for local young people and adults.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The 11-19 Partnership members are involved in the planning and delivery of provision for 14-19 learners in Halton. They will enable Halton Borough Council to implement apprenticeship requirements.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Raising awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships and increasing the numbers of apprenticeships available supports key priorities to ensure that Children and Young People do well wherever they live and provides opportunities for young people to be successful when they leave school by raising aspirations of young people.

8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Ensuring apprenticeships are available links to Halton's key priorities to:

- Reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Increase the number of Halton young people achieving Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications

8.3 A Healthy Halton

Will create opportunities to reduce NEET, young people in NEET are more at risk of ill health.

8.4 A Safer Halton

Young People who are not engaged in education, employment or training are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

n/a

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 Failure to continue with the drive to raise awareness of and increase the numbers of apprenticeships available to young people may lead to a mix and balance of provision driven by providers' priorities and may not meet the needs of young people or employers.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 Halton Borough Council has a statutory duty to secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of:-

- (a) Persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and
- (b) Persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to a learning difficulty assessment

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

11.1 None under the meaning of the Act.