

Designing and delivering pre-apprenticeships

**Second Chance
School (E2C73)**
Savoie, France



E2C73

Ecole de la
2^{ème} chance

Second Chance School (E2C73) *Savoie, France*

Case study summary

The Second Chance School Savoie (E2C73) which is based in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region of France, was set up in 2011 by the local authority with support from the wider Second Chance School (E2C) Network. The E2C73 programme seeks to boost progression opportunities for young people aged 16-25 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) by supporting them to gain the essential skills needed to enter an apprenticeship or the wider labour market. This case study showcases good practice in conducting the initial recruitment and assessment of young people. Young people who attend E2C73 take part in a thorough assessment process which is used to determine whether the programme is suitable for them. The assessment is comprised of an initial interview before young people join the programme, followed by another induction interview upon joining. The holistic information collected from these interviews is then used to develop a unique learning and development plan for each young person, which ensures their time on their pre-apprenticeship is tailored to their individual needs.

Key programme details

- E2C73 use diverse methods to drive the recruitment of young people through external and self-referrals, including through partnering with a range of local and national organisations.
- The programme is completed over a period of 8 months and consists of a series of workshops around topics such as essential skills, citizenship, sports, social projects, and a series of work placements.
- The programme is made up of three phases - this phased learning helps young people to gradually develop the range of skills required to progress to an apprenticeship.
- Work placements lasts two weeks, followed by two weeks in the training centre. Work placements are delivered in rotation; whereby young people alternate between work placements and in-house training for the full duration of the programme.
- Post-training support is a formal part of the E2C73 programme, where tutors and staff keep in touch with young people for one year following completion of the programme.
- The cost per person on the programme is €6200 per year.

Country context

A French apprenticeship (apprentissage) aims to give young people who have completed compulsory schooling, theoretical and practical training, leading to a certificate of vocational or technological education at secondary or higher level. Apprenticeships are delivered across most employment sectors in France, however they are most common in the customer service sector, including hospitality and business services. Other sectors where apprenticeships are common include retail, construction and hairdressing and beauty.¹ An apprenticeship lasts from one to three years, depending on the sector and the level of qualification sought.

The French government recently announced plans to transform the apprenticeship system with the aim of making it more attractive for young people, with a clearer focus on progression to the labour market. Young people aged 16-26 are currently eligible for an apprenticeship, this will soon change to include those up to age 30 following recent reforms. Apprenticeships usually take place in training centres for apprentices (*centres de formation d'apprentis*, CFAs). In the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region of France, where the E2C73 Second Chance School is based, there were 33,032 apprenticeship starts between June 1st, 2016 and May 31st 2017.

The proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in France is lower than in other EU countries, with 11.5% recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2017 compared with an average of 14.2% across the EU². Second Chance Schools (Écoles de la

deuxième chance; E2Cs) were set up in France to tackle the social exclusion that many young people experience. Second Chance Schools aim to reintegrate young people who have left school early, or had negative experiences of compulsory schooling with education and the labour market. There are now more than 52 second chance schools, with more than 124 sites across France.

A core feature of the E2C model is its focus on targeting young people who have left compulsory education without qualifications. In 2017, approximately 90,000 young people entered an E2C programme.

The pre-apprenticeship at E2C73 in Savoie

E2C73 in Savoie, which is in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region of France, was set up in 2011 by the local authority with support from the E2C Network. The programme welcomes young people aged between 16-26 who are NEET and regarded as socially excluded. In 2011, there were approximately 3000 local young people eligible for the programme. The number remains similar today highlighting the continued need for programmes that support young people to enter the labour market. The cost per person on the programme is €620 per year.

The E2C73 programme seeks to boost progression opportunities for young people by supporting them to gain the essential skills needed for an apprenticeship including maths, literacy and digital skills, employability, rediscovering their self-confidence; and a series of work placements to explore their personal career aspirations.

Recruitment of young people

E2C73 use a range of methods to drive the recruitment of young people through external and self-referrals. One way they do this is through developing partnerships with organisations who then refer young people to the programme. Referrals most commonly come from the Local Missions³, centres where young people between the ages of 16 to 25 can seek support and advice about work, training, accommodation and other important areas of their lives. Other referral pathways include local job centres, youth justice centres as well as social work or educational professionals. Having a variety of referral pathways ensures that the young people who are least likely to access education and training have multiple opportunities to do so.

The voices of young people are a central feature of the marketing and messaging used to advertise E2C73. This includes case studies of young people who have found an apprenticeship or employment through local radio, online and using social media. These approaches help to create positive messages and perceptions about E2C73 and the young people who attend, which in turn is key to improving perceptions of the target group amongst local employers and other partners in the local community.

Interview and initial assessment

Before joining E2C73, young people attend an interview which is used to determine whether they are appropriate for the programme. For example, during the interview staff explore whether applicants are 'work ready', their motivations for joining, as well as their personal and social

¹ https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2015/ReferNet_FR_2014_WBL.pdf

² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tipslm90&plugin=1>

³ Local missions were set up with the objective to reduce youth unemployment and to help integrate young people into French society.

circumstances. Likewise, this initial interview provides an opportunity for young people to decide whether the programme is right for them by gaining an understanding of what would be expected of them throughout the year and the benefits of joining, including the progression opportunities available.

Once young people have joined the programme, they attend an induction interview to discuss their personal, social and financial circumstances in more detail. The holistic information collected from this interview is then used to develop a learning and development plan for each young person, which ensures their time on the programme is tailored to their individual needs. Tailoring the programme in this way ensures that each young person can address their individual barriers to gaining an apprenticeship and entering the labour market, maximising the prospect of a successful outcome. The induction interview includes an assessment which measures each young person's level of essential skills e.g. maths, as well as competencies related to personal and social development. The assessment is completed by the young person, alongside their tutor, using a paper-based assessment form and is repeated throughout a young person's time on the programme to track their progress and identify areas for further development.

Young people then discuss this personal and social competency assessment in small groups during the first week of the programme. These group discussions are important in helping young people to learn why such skills and competencies are important for an apprenticeship, and ways they can be developed through the programme.

Model of delivery

E2C73 staff work with each young person to develop a personalised programme according to their goals and aspirations. This is designed to be an empowering process for young people, enabling them to develop a strong sense of commitment to the programme and the confidence to succeed. The programme is completed over a period of 8 months and consists of a series of workshops around topics such as essential skills, citizenship, sports, social projects, and a series of work placements. At E2C73, work placements take place across the whole eight-month duration of the programme, with each young person spending around 40% of their time in work placements with different employers.

Phased Learning

The programme is made up of three phases and is designed to help young people become more confident, skilled and clearer about their career aspirations as they progress through the programme. This phased learning helps young people to gradually develop the range of skills required to progress fully into the labour market.

Phase one lasts for four weeks and aims to re-introduce learners to an education and training environment; to rediscover a positive view of education and work; and to prepare for positive engagement in training. This intensive period of re-introduction is considered key to engaging young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and enabling them to sustain their engagement and progress. During this phase young people also complete their first work placement and work with staff to develop a personal programme for the next phase

During phase one, young people engage in a range of activities, focused around:

- Employability, such as CV writing and effective job searching
- Essential digital skills, such as using email and Google Drive
- Essential soft skills, such as team work and communication skills
- Hygiene and safety at work

Phase two lasts just over three months and aims to enable young people to consolidate their learning from phase one, to acquire essential skills needed for the labour market, and to explore their career aspirations. Phase three lasts for four months and is the last stage in a young person's time at E2C73 before they move on an apprenticeship. This is described as the phase when young people become fully independent and are ready for progression to the labour market.

Workshops

Classroom based learning takes place in the form of workshops which young people select when developing their personal programme. Each workshop is limited to just a small number of young people, helping them to build rapport with each other as well as with tutors. In each workshop, there is a strong focus on encouraging young people to take ownership of their own learning and development. Tutors encourage group discussion on a daily basis to help develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Young people are given the opportunity to suggest workshops that would interest and benefit them. This is seen as useful for keeping the programme focused and engaging. E2C73 utilise their positive working relationships with other organisations in the local area to deliver bespoke

workshops, such as media and journalism, or cookery and hospitality. Partners in the area are often commissioned to deliver these activities due to their expertise in the sector.

Sporting activities are considered an important part of the programme and are seen as a way of improving or maintaining young people's holistic health and well-being. Good health and wellbeing is an important foundation for positive engagement with the programme and progression to the labour market. Tutors emphasise that getting involved in sporting activities helps young people to build rapport with their peers; a key precursor to positive workplace relationships.

Essential skills such as French language and maths are embedded throughout the main workshops, providing a useful way for young people to engage with essential skills training and to realise the value of these skills in the workplace and in everyday life.

Employer Engagement and Work Placements

Throughout all phases of the programme, young people undergo simulation interviews with real employers and complete visits to companies in the local area. These activities help young people to get a flavour of different sectors and places of employment, an important addition to the programme given that many young people have limited labour market experience.

E2C73 have developed strong links with a wide range of local employers to ensure learners have opportunities to find placements that meet their needs and interests. The added value of the E2C concept has been recognised by the French government, which helps E2C73 to develop and maintain strong links with employers.

Employer engagement activities include inviting local employers to visit E2C73 to present their organisation and sector, mock interviews for apprenticeship roles, and visits to local companies. E2C73 view employer engagement activities as a core element of the programme, benefiting both employers and young people. Young people benefit from meeting a range of employers, whilst employers have the chance to overcome negative stereotypes they may have of young people at a second chance school. Feedback from employers suggests they value having one clear contact at E2C73 as this enables them to co-ordinate activities efficiently.

Work placements play a key role in helping young people at E2C73 to explore and realise their personal career aspirations. During phase one, young people are asked about the type of jobs and sector they would be interested in and are encouraged to try this out during an initial "broad" placement.

Young people alternate between work placements and in-house training for the full duration of the programme. This is a continuous and developmental process which is ongoing until a young person secures an apprenticeship place, or another progression outcome. Rotating work placements in this way has real benefit for young people as it provides a chance for them to explore different career paths, to build a realistic understanding of work in a given sector, and helps them to build a professional and well-rounded CV. The delivery of in-house training in between work placements provides a focussed period of support to address any skills gaps, or to explore new areas of interest, that may have been identified during a placement.

Young people are empowered to make their own connections with employers and to seek out their

own work placement opportunities. Each young person is encouraged to demonstrate greater independence to prospective employers as they progress through the programme, with support from tutors where required.

Through rotational work placements, interspersed with a personalised programme of in-house training, E2C73 take a thorough approach to continuous feedback and assessment. Training plans, career guidance and goals are constantly evaluated and adjusted along the way to meet the specific and evolving needs and progress of each young person. To support this, E2C73 consistently re-visit the soft skills assessment completed by young people at the beginning of the programme to track their progress, identify distance travelled and determine key areas for further improvement as they progress through the programme.

E2C73 have involved a range of local and regional stakeholders in the delivery of the programme to ensure it meets the needs of the local labour market. Each of these partners have an important role which plays on their strengths and areas of expertise. For example, by keeping good working relationships with social workers who refer young people to the programme, E2C73 can effectively quickly secure extra support for young people if they need it whilst they are on the programme. Many of the young people engaged in the E2C73 programme are disadvantaged and experience financial and social barriers to employment. To enable these young people to overcome the barriers they face, E2C73 staff emphasise the importance of accessible and inclusive support. For example, at a practical level, public transport is not well established in the area. Without adequate travel allowances from local authorities, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who live far away from the area would not be able to attend.

E2C73 follow a clear quality framework as part of the E2C branding process. Each E2C takes part in an independent audit every four years. The audit explores a range of criteria including the partnerships established on the programme, the aim of the programme, teaching practices and if the E2C has evidenced an ongoing commitment to improving practices and procedures. The E2C label was officially recognised by the National Council of Employment, Training and Vocational Guidance in 2015, a body that regularly carries out a review of French certifications and labels relating to the quality of vocational training.

Outcomes for young people

The most recent outcomes and progressions data showed that in 2017, 51 young people graduated from E2C73. Of these, nearly half (49%) moved on to a full-time outcome. Eight young people moved on to further study or education, 9 found full time employment and 7 young people found an apprenticeship place with one of the employers who provided work experience during the E2C programme. These outcomes reflect the local labour market, including the availability of apprenticeship and employment opportunities.

A further 24% of young people progressed from E2C73 to a short-term outcome, including 4 who found a short-term job, 5 went on to join a youth

guarantee⁴ programme and 3 found supported work placements for young people with learning disabilities. The remaining 27% of young people are currently looking for an apprenticeship place or job.

E2C73 measured these outcomes again 12 months after young people left the programme and found that all 51 young people had sustained their apprenticeship place or employment position.

Post-training support is a formal part of the E2C73 programme, where tutors and staff keep in touch with young people for one year following completion of the programme. Young people are contacted at least 4 times at 3-month intervals during the follow up year. This is important in terms of providing support to enable them to sustain their new apprenticeship.

On completion of the programme, young people obtain a formally recognised Certificate of Acquired Competencies, highlighting their progress and achievements on the programme to future employers. E2C73 view this formal recognition as an essential aspect of their programme which helps to boost young people's access to apprenticeships or vocational training.

Best practice – key success factors

- Phased learning provides a way for young people to gradually develop the range of skills required to progress fully into the labour market.
- Involving a wide range of economic and social stakeholders in the design and delivery of programmes ensures it continually meets the needs of the local labour market and is inclusive for young people
- Keeping in touch with young people after they have completed the programme helps to ensure appropriate support is in place to sustain their apprenticeship or job where necessary

⁴ Young people on a youth guarantee course follow a one-year intensive support programme, combined with training and professional experience; they receive monthly financial support. The programme is run by the local youth employment agencies (*mission locales*).