

# Sector-focussed traineeships

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*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion  
merged to form Learning and Work Institute*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) – now merged with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion to become Learning and Work Institute (L&W) – was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to research how the flexibility of the traineeship programme is currently being tailored to meet the requirements of particular sectors of the economy.

This short report presents the findings of the research along with case studies of employers and/or providers who have developed a sector-focussed traineeship. It ends with conclusions and recommendations for providers who identify a need to develop a sector-focussed traineeship programme.

### Key findings

The main reasons given for **developing** sector-focussed traineeships were to:

- address identified skills gaps in their sector;
- implement a pathway for young people to progress into existing sector specific apprenticeship programmes;
- provide more targeted support to enable local young people to get into employment; and
- encourage young people to consider a career in a particular sector.

Providers utilised a range of methods to **recruit** young people to their sector-focussed traineeships, including:

- through intermediary organisations;
- offering places to young people who apply for their apprenticeship programme;
- undertaking wider marketing activities to raise general awareness of their traineeship offer

**Key characteristics** of a sector-focussed traineeship include:

- tailoring every element of the programme (including maths and English and work preparation training) to the needs of the sector;
- involving employers in the development and delivery of the programme;
- embedding employability skills and English and maths in practical activities or real life examples;
- building sector specific qualifications or accreditation into the work preparation training; and
- demonstrating the range of roles available within a particular sector.

Sector-focussed traineeships deliver **a range of positive outcomes**, both for young people and employers, including:

- high success rates and positive employment outcomes for trainees;
- enabling trainees to make better informed decisions about their education options and future careers;

- equipping trainees with the specific skills needed to demonstrate their abilities to an employer;
- enabling employers to make a more informed decision about whether to take a trainee on as an apprentice or employee;
- providing employers with a pipeline of young people who have the skills, confidence and attitudes to be excellent apprentices;
- raising awareness amongst young people and the wider community of the roles available within particular sectors; and
- a range of wider benefits for employers, such as bringing new ideas and perspectives to their teams; improving team efficiency, especially with IT and technology; and improving staff motivation and morale.

## Conclusions and recommendations

One of the key strengths of the traineeship programme is the flexibility afforded to providers and employers to design individual programmes. This report demonstrates the effectiveness of tailored programmes in not only meeting the needs of individual trainees, but also the skills needs of specific employers and sectors. This can enable young people to make informed choices about the sector in which they pursue a career and to make linear and accelerated progression along a particular pathway. It can also enable employers to fill job and apprenticeship vacancies that, when unfilled, restrict productivity, profitability and economic growth.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and training providers may wish to consider the following should they wish to develop traineeships aligned to a particular sector.

### Development

- Providers looking to develop a traineeship aligned to a particular sector should involve employers in the development of the programme. This will ensure that every element of the programme is relevant, engaging and meaningful for the young person and equips them with the skills and experience they need to be a valuable apprentice or employee in their chosen sector.

### Recruitment

- Providers looking to recruit to a sector-focussed traineeship should use a range of methods to engage young people.
- Working with intermediary organisations can be an effective way of identifying appropriate applicants.
- Providers could also present sector-focussed traineeships as a robust recruitment method for employers' existing apprenticeship opportunities.

### Delivery

- Providers should involve employers in the delivery of all elements of a sector-focussed traineeship, to ensure that the entire programme is tailored to the needs of the sector.
- Tutors and other staff delivering sector-focussed traineeships should embed employability skills and English and maths in practical activities to prepare trainees to work in a specific sector or work environment.
- When developing a traineeship with a sector focus, providers should consider building appropriate sector specific qualifications or accreditation into the programme. This

enables trainees to undertake real work tasks during their placement and better demonstrate their abilities to employers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) – now merged with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion to become Learning and Work Institute (L&W) – was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to research how the flexibility of the traineeship programme is currently being tailored to meet the requirements of particular sectors of the economy or labour market. The aim of the research was to:

- scope current sector specific traineeship provision;
- explore how and why this provision developed;
- identify how effective sector specific traineeships can be in securing positive outcomes for young people and employers; and
- identify how potential barriers and challenges have been overcome.

This short report presents the findings of the research conducted between September and December 2015. Whilst traineeships do not have to be sector focussed, the flexibility of the programme offers providers and employers the opportunity to tailor traineeships to suit the needs individual young people and specific sectors of the economy or labour market. This report demonstrates some examples of where employers and/or providers have done this.

### 1.1 About the traineeship programme

Introduced in August 2013, traineeships are an education and training programme with work experience, designed to give young people the skills and experience they need to secure an apprenticeship or sustainable job. The programme is delivered as a partnership between employers and education and training providers<sup>1</sup>.

Traineeships are for young people aged 16-24 inclusive, and for young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments or Education, Health and Care plans up to the age of 25<sup>2</sup>. The core target group for traineeships are young people who:

- are not currently in employment and have little work experience, but who are focused on work or the prospect of it;
- are aged 16-24 and qualified below level 3; and
- providers and employers believe have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an apprenticeship within six months of engaging in a traineeship.

Traineeships can last up to six months and are comprised of a high quality work experience placement, work preparation training and English and maths provision, where appropriate.

For more information about traineeships, please visit the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

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<sup>1</sup> BIS (2015) Traineeships: First Year Process Evaluation. London: BIS

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education & BIS (2015) Traineeships: Framework for delivery 2015–16.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

This section presents an analysis of the key success factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the sector-focussed traineeship programmes identified through this research. The findings are presented under the different stages of the traineeship programme: development; recruitment; delivery; and outcomes.

### 2.1 Developing a sector-focussed traineeship

The main reason employers and providers developed a sector-focussed traineeship was to **address identified skills gaps** in their sector. For example, Arch Apprentices developed both their apprenticeship and traineeship programmes after the Blenheim Chalcot Group identified significant digital and IT skills gaps amongst young people entering their sector. Similarly, DCET Training developed their provision in response to feedback from employers that young people did not have the specialist skills and knowledge needed for a career in the electrical sector.

Another key reason for developing a sector-focussed traineeship was to implement a **pathway for young people to progress into existing sector specific apprenticeships**. Sheffield City Council developed their sector-focussed traineeships after realising that a large number of applicants to their apprenticeship programmes did not have the employability skills or experience needed to start at this level. Their traineeship programmes therefore aim to support young people to access apprenticeships in a particular area of the local economy, such as construction.

Employers and providers also developed sector-focussed traineeships to provide **more targeted support for local young people to get into employment**. For example, as a social housing provider, it is in emh group's interests for their young tenants to have the skills and experience needed to secure work. Their sector-focussed traineeship programme equips their tenants with the skills they need to find a permanent job in the social housing sector, which benefits both emh group and the local economy. Similarly, Hampshire Futures aims to support vulnerable young people to achieve their employment and wider personal development goals. By providing sector-focussed traineeship programmes, Hampshire Futures is confident they give their learners the best chance to progress into employment in the Business Administration, Mechanics, Health and Social Care and IT sectors, where there are identified skills gaps.

The final reason given for developing a sector-focussed traineeship was to **encourage young people to consider a career in a particular sector**. This Is Creative Enterprise (TICE) is a social enterprise which aims to support young people to pursue careers in the creative industries in the North East. In this region, the Sport and Culture sector has the fourth highest number of hard-to-fill vacancies due to skills shortages<sup>3</sup>. They immediately

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<sup>3</sup> National Careers Service (2015) Job market information: North East. Accessed at <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMIMaps/Pages/North%20East/North-East.aspx>

realised that a traineeship focussed on their sector would give young people the opportunity to gain real work experience and learn about different routes into the creative industries.

All of the providers who offered sector-focussed traineeships **worked closely with employers** to develop their programmes. Alternatively, where a programme was developed by an employer-provider, they ensured that their staff were involved in every stage of developing their traineeship offer. Involving employers or frontline staff in the development of the programme ensures that every element of the traineeship, not just the work experience placement, is tailored to the needs of the sector. Tailoring work preparation training and English and maths support to the specific sector within which the work experience placement is undertaken ensures that the whole programme is relevant, engaging and provides a meaningful step by step pathway for young people to progress towards employment. As a result, trainees are better equipped with the skills, knowledge and even qualifications needed to succeed which often leads to a more positive experience for both the young people and employers involved in the programme.

### 2.1.1 Recommendation for practice

Providers looking to develop a traineeship aligned to a particular sector should involve employers in the development and delivery of the programme. This will ensure that every element of the programme is relevant, engaging and meaningful for the young person and equips them with the skills and experience they need to be a valuable apprentice or employee for employers in their chosen sector.

## 2.2 Recruiting for a sector-focussed traineeship

The most common way in which providers and employers recruit young people to their sector-focussed traineeships is **through intermediary organisations**. These include Jobcentre Plus, sector representative bodies, training providers, youth organisations, schools, colleges, social housing providers and public sector services such as youth offending teams and children's services. As a result, many providers and employers have developed strong referral routes to their traineeships for local young people.

Apprenticeship providers and employers also offer places on their sector-focussed traineeships to **young people who apply for their apprenticeship programmes**. In this situation, providers or employers assess applicants who are not quite suitable for their apprenticeship programme to identify those who would be eligible for a traineeship. These applicants are then invited to participate in a competitive process which involves the employer offering the work placement, to ensure that they are suitable for the role.

Some providers and employers also undertake **wider marketing** to raise awareness of their sector-focussed traineeship programmes. This activity includes using social media and professional networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn; sending out letters to young people in the local area; and putting adverts in local newspapers to engage intermediaries such as parents, guardians and friends.

### 2.2.1 Recommendations for practice

- Providers looking to recruit to a sector-focussed traineeship should use a range of methods to engage young people.
- Working with intermediary organisations can be an effective way of identifying appropriate applicants.



- Providers could also present sector-focussed traineeships as a robust recruitment method for employers' existing apprenticeship opportunities.

### 2.3 Delivering a sector-focussed traineeship

A key aspect of sector-focussed traineeships is that the employability skills training and English and maths elements of the programme are also tailored to the needs of the sector. In order to achieve this, many providers **involve employers** who are hosting the work placement element of the programme to shape and input into the training. For example, Sheffield City Council arranged for trainees to attend workshops with Willmott Dixon staff and go on visits to the site where they would be working prior to starting their placement. Similarly, Arch Apprentices asked some of their employers to carry out mock interviews with their trainees, providing them with a realistic experience of participating in a competitive application process that is tailored to entry to employment in the digital and IT sector.

To tailor the initial training elements of the programme to specific sectors, providers **embed employability skills and English and maths in practical activities** or real life examples. As part of their traineeship, Hampshire Futures' trainees have two sessions with a local theatre company when they role play different scenarios drawn from their work experience placements, such as a customer making a complaint. This enables trainees to develop their interpersonal skills and learn effective approaches to dealing with difficult situations. As an employer-provider, emh group delivers all of the elements of their traineeship in their head office, providing a real life business context for the work skills and English and maths elements of the programme.

Some providers have also built **sector specific qualifications or accreditation** into their initial training sessions. This enables trainees to progress straight into their work placement, and where appropriate, into job roles in the sector. For example, Arch Apprentices' trainees can gain a Microsoft Technology Associate certification in Security Fundamentals and a Level 3 Certificate in Website Creation and Optimisation from City and Guilds, both of which are qualifications that many employers in their sector require, even from new entrants. Similarly, Sheffield City Council ensure that all of their trainees gain a Level 1 health and safety qualification which means they can go onto site at the end of the training element of their programme. This qualification also enables trainees to make a smooth and quick progression into employment in the construction sector, following the completion of their traineeship.

Providers also use their sector-focussed traineeships to **demonstrate the range of roles available** within a particular sector. This is done in a range of ways, either during the initial training element of the programme, or during the work experience placement. For example, emh group, Hampshire Futures and TICE all incorporate talks from frontline staff or employers about the different job opportunities within the sector they are focussing on, into the work preparation training element of their programmes. This enables trainees to make an informed decision about the department or type of employer they want to work for in their work placements. In comparison, Arch Apprentices, DCET Training and Sheffield City Council build this into trainees' work experience and rotate them through different placements during the element of their programme. This allows trainees to gain firsthand experience in different setting and shadow colleagues undertaking a range of tasks.

### 2.3.1 Recommendations for practice

- Providers should involve employers in the delivery of all elements of a sector-focussed traineeship, to ensure that the entire programme is tailored to the needs of the sector.
- Tutors and other staff delivering sector-focussed traineeships should embed employability skills and English and maths in practical activities to prepare trainees to work in a specific sector or work environment.
- When developing a traineeship with a sector focus, providers should consider building appropriate sector specific qualifications or accreditation into the programme. This enables trainees to undertake real work tasks during their placement and better demonstrate their abilities to employers.

## 2.4 Successful outcomes of sector-focussed traineeships

Sector-focussed traineeships deliver a range of positive outcomes, both for young people and employers. For trainees, the sector-focussed nature of traineeships equips them with the skills and experience needed to progress onto apprenticeships or other jobs within the same sector. These strong progression routes result in very **high success rates and employment outcomes** for trainees. For example, of the 13 trainees on DCET Training's sector-focussed programme, 12 progressed onto an apprenticeship in the electrical sector and one returned to college to pursue a full-time course.

Conversely, some trainees found that the work was not what they had expected and decided that they wanted to pursue a different career path. These trainees often moved onto a course or role in a different sector. Therefore, participating in a sector-focussed traineeship programme enabled these young people to make **better informed decisions** about their education options and future careers.

For employers, the sector-focussed nature of the traineeship meant that young people were equipped with the core skills, knowledge and qualifications they needed to undertake real work tasks during their placement. This gave trainees the opportunity to **demonstrate their abilities** and the contribution they could make to the organisation, enabling employers to make a more informed decision about whether to take them on as an apprentice or employee.

Employers also commented that a sector-focussed traineeship enabled them to recruit one or more young people who had **the skills, confidence and attitudes to be excellent apprentices**. As a result, they felt that traineeships were a highly effective recruitment method preparing young people to work in their particular sectors.

Finally, employers found that sector-focussed traineeships were an excellent way of supporting unemployed young people to gain valuable work experience and consider a career in their sector. Even where employers were unable to directly offer positions for trainees to progress onto, they felt that the traineeship **raised awareness of the roles available within their sector** not only amongst young people but also in the wider community. As a result, some employers are starting to build sector-focussed traineeships into their Corporate Social Responsibility offers. This approach contributes to developing a future workforce with the skills required by the sector as a whole and the associated businesses within the supply chain.

### 3. CASE STUDIES

The following six case studies demonstrate effective approaches to developing and delivering traineeships which are tailored to meet the requirements of different sectors or labour markets.

#### 3.1 Arch Apprentices (digital)

Arch Apprentices specialises in IT and digital apprenticeships and traineeships. Arch was founded three and a half years ago by the Blenheim Chalcot Group after they identified significant digital and IT skills gaps amongst new entrants to their sector. Arch was created as the vehicle to generate and create the talent needed within their sector by developing and delivering a targeted apprenticeship programme. Initially, Arch developed apprenticeships in the five key areas that the Blenheim Chalcot Group was struggling to recruit in: digital marketing, creative and digital media, IT web development, IT infrastructure and IT sales.

Over the last three years the business has grown substantially and Arch is now a fully independent training provider with a direct contract from the Skills Funding Agency. They have now delivered over 900 digital and IT apprenticeships and worked with over 250 employers, including Google, Facebook, the Guardian, Barclays, Lloyds, Marks and Spencer, Warner Bros., John Lewis and Waitrose, including numerous local SMEs, charities and government bodies.

Each month Arch receives over 600 applications for apprenticeships from candidates under 19 years old, with another 600 applications from those aged 19 and over. However, although they only have around 100 apprenticeship vacancies to fill each month, Arch often struggles to find suitable candidates for these roles and only start between 40 and 50 apprentices each month. A large number of the young people applying to Arch's vacancies lack the pre-requisite knowledge and qualifications that employers in the digital and IT industry expect, or they do not have the soft and generic employability skills needed for an apprenticeship.

When the traineeship programme was launched by government, Arch immediately identified this as a way of tackling this challenge and providing young people with the skills and experience needed for one of their apprenticeships. They worked closely with the employers in the Blenheim Chalcot Group to develop a traineeship programme tailored to the digital and IT sector.

Arch's traineeship starts with a three week classroom-based course, in which trainees are supported to develop their employability skills, interview techniques and CV writing skills. Where needed, trainees also take part in Functional Skills English and maths. For one of these sessions, representatives from Arch's apprenticeship employers carry out mock interviews with the trainees, giving them real experience of an interview situation. During this time, trainees also take part in practical activities, such as stripping computers and building and optimising a website, which develops their technical skills in IT and security fundamentals. This element of the traineeship is accredited and trainees can gain a Microsoft Technology Associate certification in Security Fundamentals and a Level 3

Certificate in Website Creation and Optimisation from City and Guilds. These are qualifications which employers in the sector recognise and value as evidence that a candidate has experience of working with particular technologies.

At the end of the three weeks' classroom-based course, trainees enter a three to four week work placement with one of Arch's apprenticeship employers. This is a chance for trainees to gain a good understanding of the industry, the type of work it involves and the different roles that they could progress into. Of the 15 trainees that Arch engaged on their first programme, four soon realised that the work was very different to what they had expected and decided that they wanted to pursue a different career path. However, this was a positive outcome for them as the traineeship allowed them to try out working in this sector before committing to a much longer course.

Of the 11 trainees who completed the programme, three immediately progressed onto apprenticeship schemes with the employers who hosted their work placements and one has moved onto a full-time college course. Arch is currently working with the other seven candidates to secure apprenticeships in the sector or support them to progress onto further learning.

The employers involved in the traineeship were also very positive about the programme. They felt that it gave both their business and the young person an opportunity to make sure they were a good fit for each other, before committing to a full apprenticeship. Even the employers who did not have opportunities for trainees to progress onto identified it as an excellent way to support young unemployed people to gain valuable work experience, and felt that the programme contributed to their Corporate Social Responsibility objectives and the wider skills gaps within their sector. As a result of this positive feedback, Arch is looking to run their next traineeship programme in January 2016.

Meron, 16, decided that the best way for him to secure himself a great apprenticeship was through a six week Digital and IT Accelerator Course with Arch Apprentices and Kaplan. As part of this traineeship programme, Meron attended three weeks of classroom training and then spent a further three weeks earning valuable work experience with a local employer. On completion of the course Meron was successful in applying for the apprenticeship he aspired to at easyProperty, an online real estate company. He is now a full-time IT Support Apprentice.

*'This course has been the stepping stone to help me reach not only an apprenticeship, but also a great career start in IT.'* (Trainee)

### 3.2 DCET Training (electrical)

For the last 20 years, DCET Training has specialised in delivering electrical training across Devon and Cornwall. DCET, which is now part of the Focus Training (SW) Ltd company, developed their provision in response to feedback from employers that young people did not have the specialist skills and knowledge needed for a career in this sector. Their provision includes continued professional development courses for skilled and experienced workers, apprenticeships and more recently traineeships. In early 2015, DCET opened a new training centre in Bristol, again in response to employers' feedback about the lack of specialist skills in this area.

Bristol has a wide range of electrical companies, from large contractors to SMEs and sole traders. Many of these organisations are constantly bombarded with speculative applications from young people who are keen to work in the electrical sector, and they needed support to implement a rigorous recruitment process. DCET approached these employers and offered to develop and run a traineeship programme as a pilot recruitment model. Three large employers were interested in this idea and agreed to work with DCET to deliver a traineeship for the electrical sector. They passed the applications they had received onto DCET, and staff sifted through all 120 to identify potential candidates to interview. Each interviewee also undertook a Forskills initial assessment, which measured their English and maths skills, and then a staff panel went through the results and selected successful candidates.

In total, 13 trainees aged 16 to 22 participated in the programme. Initially, trainees took part in a five week employability and life skills course which covered job applications, CV writing, appropriate behaviour and attitudes at work, equality and diversity in the workplace, and financial capability topics such as mortgages and bank accounts. The programme was entirely tailored to the electrical sector, with tutors using real life examples to contextualise their teaching and give trainees a good understanding of the types of work they would be undertaking. Alongside this, trainees took part in some basic training in electrical principles and health and safety, which allowed them to achieve their electrical safety cards ready for their work placements.

By the end of their initial training, all of the trainees were ready to enter their work placements. These lasted for three weeks and gave trainees the opportunity to work with each of the three employers involved in the programme. Trainees were rotated between the sites on a weekly basis which gave them real life experience in a range of settings, including a new build housing site, a commercial building which was being refurbished, and an old brewery which was being converted into luxury flats. This gave trainees a taste of the varied and complex nature of the electrical trade.

All of the trainees were asked to keep a diary throughout their work experience so they could reflect on what they had learned and gained from their placement. In addition, trainees' supervisors were asked to score them on their behaviours, attitudes and confidence in the workplace and staff from DCET visited trainees on site to ensure they were monitored and supported effectively.

The employers involved in the programme were thrilled with the level of commitment, competence and professionalism that the trainees demonstrated, both in their initial

employability course and on their work placements. The health and safety training at the beginning of the programme meant that trainees could get involved in practical work on site and their enthusiasm for the work meant they were well received by the colleagues they worked alongside.

Of the thirteen trainees, 12 progressed onto full-time apprenticeships with the employers involved in the programme. The experience of the traineeship led one young person to decide that this was not a career they wanted to pursue, and so instead moved onto a full-time college course. Trainees' reflective diaries also showed that they developed their interpersonal skills, their confidence to engage with different people, and their understanding of the electrical industry.

The success of the programme meant that, even though one employer was only intending to take four trainees on as apprentices, they actually took on the majority of the young people who were on the programme. All of the employers involved have now recruited a group of young people who are trained in basic electrical skills, are confident in working on site and, most importantly, are enthusiastic and motivated apprentices. This has also demonstrated that the traineeship model is a highly effective recruitment method for this sector, and has helped DCET establish themselves as a leading provider of electrical engineering training in a new geographical area.

Francesca, 17, had just finished her AS Levels at sixth form when she joined the traineeship with Jeff Way Electrical Services. She was unhappy at college and wanted to pursue a career as an electrician, but her parents were keen for her to continue at sixth form and gain her full A-Level qualifications. Francesca felt that an eight week traineeship would allow her to try out a role in the electrical industry and demonstrate the value of pursuing this pathway to her parents.

Francesca loved every minute of her traineeship. She shone in the five week employability course and did the best work in the initial practical training. On site, Francesca was enthusiastic and committed to her work, and immediately fitted in with the existing team.

At the end of her traineeship, Jeff Way Electrical Services had no hesitation in offering Francesca a position on their four year electrical apprenticeship. Her achievements and progression on the programme also helped to allay her parents' concerns about her career aspirations and they are now 100 per cent supportive of her decision to work in the electrical trade.



### 3.3 emh group (social housing)

emh group is one of the largest social housing providers in the East Midlands, with around 18,000 homes across the region, 35,000 residents and 1,100 staff. However, the company is “more than just bricks and mortar”; they provide a wide range of care and support services and invest in the communities in which they operate. One of these services is the emh group Academy, which provides learning and training opportunities for both emh group tenants and for residents within the communities in which they operate. Launched in October 2012, the Academy has so far supported 12 trainees and 23 apprentices.

emh group’s reasons for offering traineeships are very pragmatic. As a social housing provider, they need their tenants to be in work so they can pay their rent. This is critical in the current economic environment, yet a number of their tenants lack the skills, experience and confidence to find sustainable employment. By offering opportunities for skills development, emh group supports young people to become economically independent and build and support sustainable communities, ultimately providing cost savings to their organisation and the public purse.

*‘The bottom line business case is that if young adults are in work, they become economically active and contribute to society and the economy. This impacts on the social well being of the communities in which we operate.’* (emh group Academy Learning and Development Manager)

The emh group traineeship was entirely devised, written, delivered and led by emh group staff and mapped into the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This means that every part of the programme is tailored to the social housing sector and supports trainees to develop the skills, competencies and experience they need to progress into an apprenticeship or sustainable employment in this sector.

The entire programme is delivered in emh group offices, providing real business context to the programme delivery, assessments and assignments. Functional Skills English and maths is delivered by Leicester College tutors on the premises, and is also embedded throughout the employability training and work placements by emh group staff. Alongside the core components of the traineeship, emh group’s programme covers a range of different topics and activities which are tailored to the social housing sector. These include employee rights and responsibilities, digital skills, an introduction to the range of roles within the social housing sector, team building workshops and visits to external businesses. Where possible, these elements are mapped to QCF Workskills Level 1 business units. Leicester College also delivers a ‘just imagine’ session, which aims to raise trainees’ career aspirations.

The programme has been a huge success, not only for learners but also for emh group. In their first year of running the scheme, two trainees gained an apprenticeship with emh group. Of the seven trainees in their second cohort, three gained full-time work and one progressed onto an apprenticeship with emh group. The embedded nature of Functional Skills maths and English has so far resulted in a 100% pass rate for trainees on these elements of the programme, and the real business context of the programme has enabled them to quickly develop their employability skills and self-confidence.

*'We employ people everyday so the advice and training that we can offer is straight from the horse's mouth and trainees appreciate and understand it, because it is coming from a real employer and not a series of simulated classroom activities.'*  
(emh group Academy Learning and Development Manager)

For emh group, these outcomes have meant that a group of their young tenants are far more likely to enter sustainable employment and make a positive contribution to their community. The programme has also enabled the group to fill job roles by employing apprentices who already have the basic skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to work in their sector. Their particular model enables emh group to draw down funding for their contribution to the delivery of the programme and they have reinvested this money into the employment of an additional apprentice.

By developing a traineeship programme tailored to the social housing sector, emh group has successfully supported the development of their tenants' skills, employability and confidence to look for sustainable work. emh group's traineeship is now being held up as an exemplar model by both the Department for Work and Pensions and the National Apprenticeship Service, establishing their Academy as a leading provider of both traineeships and apprenticeships in England.

Jamie, 22, joined emh group's traineeship programme in April 2014, after being made redundant. He found it difficult to find another job and signed up to a 12 week Prince's Trust programme to boost his confidence. Jamie had not long completed this when he heard about emh group's traineeship programme from a friend who was also looking for work. They found some information on the emh group Academy Facebook page and decided to apply.

The traineeship gave Jamie the opportunity to take part in a range of different training sessions, achieve some qualifications and gain work experience in the social housing sector. He enjoyed it so much that he did not hesitate in applying for all three of the apprenticeship opportunities at emh group which came up at the end of his programme. Jamie was successful in his application for the housing maintenance apprenticeship.

*'I couldn't thank [emh group] enough for how much they've helped me... they gave me a chance on the traineeship and look where I am now... I think it's a really good scheme and I was glad I took part in it.'* (Trainee)

Jamie is now a National Apprenticeship Service Apprenticeship Ambassador.



### 3.4 Hampshire Futures (local authority)

Hampshire Futures is part of Hampshire County Council Children's Services. It supports vulnerable young people to improve their employability skills and achieve their wider personal development goals. Hampshire Futures has been offering traineeships since they were announced in 2013; their Traineeship Plus programme supports care leavers and other vulnerable young people to develop their skills and secure sustainable employment.

Since its original launch, Traineeship Plus has been rolled out across the council and trainees can undertake their work placements in a range of different departments which cover sectors such as Business Administration, Mechanics, Health and Social Care and IT. Hampshire Futures runs three cohorts a year with an average of ten learners in each cohort.

Hampshire Futures' Traineeship Plus programmes last for up to four months and include all of the core elements of the traineeship model. Trainees take part in a two-week induction programme which prepares them for their work placement. This involves guest speakers from different departments and taster sessions which give trainees the opportunity to try out the different types of roles available in the council. Once their work experience placement has been arranged, each trainee's programme is tailored to the type of role they will be undertaking.

After the two-week induction, trainees start their work experience placement with the Council, which lasts for up to 30 hours per week and continues until the end of their programme. While on placement, trainees return to Hampshire Futures one day a week to reflect on their experience, continue their work preparation training and participate in Functional Skills English and maths sessions if necessary. Each trainee has an individual learning plan and their ongoing training and work placement is tailored to their learning needs and interests. Two of the training sessions are run by a local theatre company who help trainees to develop their interpersonal skills and ways of dealing with difficult situations by acting out different scenarios. All of the scenarios are drawn from trainees' work placements with the aim that they can then take this practice back into their workplace.

Because Traineeship Plus is targeted at vulnerable young people from across the county, additional pastoral and financial support is built into the programme from the beginning. For example, all trainees receive significant pastoral support alongside their two-week induction to help them prepare for work and decide on the department in which they want to do their placement. The council also provides a training bursary which is equivalent to Jobseekers' Allowance to ensure that trainees have the money to pay for their travel and subsistence. In addition, the council offers incentives to trainees who meet their attendance and performance expectations as well as a completion bonus if they complete every element of their programme. These incentives have helped to improve the engagement and retention of these young people and also demonstrate the council's commitment to supporting trainees to succeed.

Traineeship Plus has been hugely successful in helping vulnerable young people across Hampshire to develop their skills and progress into an apprenticeship or other form of employment. All of the 10 trainees in Hampshire Futures' latest cohort completed their programme and trainees progressed onto apprenticeships in Business Administration and

Health and Social Care with Hampshire County Council. If for any reason it is not possible for a trainee to immediately progress onto an apprenticeship, Hampshire Futures supports them to find work elsewhere before returning to take up an opportunity with the council. The traineeship programme helps some young people to recognise the value of further education and they progress onto a full-time course at the local college. Whatever their outcome, the pastoral team at Hampshire Futures continues to support young people for up to a year after their traineeship programme finishes to ensure that they stay in employment, education or training.

Traineeship Plus has also resulted in positive outcomes for Hampshire County Council. In their evaluation of the programme, Hampshire Futures found that trainees had brought new ideas and ways of working to different departments, helping to improve their business practice, ability to meet deadlines and, in some cases, diversify their income streams. In addition, seeing the progress and achievements of trainees has improved staff motivation and morale across the council. The achievements of some trainees have also been showcased at Hampshire Youth Investment Programme's annual awards event, and one trainee who progressed onto an apprenticeship made it to the finals of their Apprentice of the Year award. This has helped to raise the profile of Hampshire Futures and Traineeship Plus across the county.

Prior to joining Traineeship Plus, Harvey, 17, was not in education or employment and was struggling to see a clear pathway for himself. When he learned about Traineeship Plus, he recognised that it could be a valuable route for him to achieve his goals. Harvey's engagement in the programme was outstanding and he often led peer discussions during sessions. The qualification units challenged him to develop his self-esteem and demonstrate his interpersonal skills in different situations. Harvey's work placement with Hampshire Transport Management (HTM) also gave him the opportunity to experience working life in a mechanics setting and he received very good feedback from his placement manager.

Harvey benefitted enormously from the support offered to him on Traineeship Plus and has now been successful in gaining an apprenticeship with HTM, where he can continue to work towards his goals and achieving his English and maths qualifications. In his programme evaluation, Harvey stated that Traineeship Plus had helped him realise his potential to gain an apprenticeship with HTM.

### 3.5 Sheffield City Council (construction)

Sheffield City Council is a local authority provider which offers a range of education and training programmes to learners across five training centres in Sheffield. Their newest training centre, Works 4 Me, is closely aligned to the council's City Deal for Sheffield and offers programmes which focus on supporting learners to move closer to work. The bulk of this provision is targeted at 16-24 year olds and consists of traineeships, offering young people the opportunity to work in different vocational areas with a range of small and medium businesses in Sheffield. The council has a monthly intake of up to 12 new trainees who participate in a work preparation programme (which includes personalised employability, maths and English and vocational profiling) before they progress into their work placements.

More recently, the council has considered how their generic traineeship programme and delivery model can be applied to specific vocational sectors. The council has worked with a number of large employers who have the capacity to contribute to the development of sector specific traineeships. One of these employers, Willmott Dixon, was recently awarded the contract to build South Yorkshire Police's new custody suite in Sheffield. In partnership with South Yorkshire Police, the council approached Willmott Dixon and proposed that they could offer a comprehensive training package for young people as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. Willmott Dixon was keen to pursue this idea, and it was agreed that they would try to engage young people who had previously been involved in the Criminal Justice System onto the scheme.

In order to make the programme a success, the council worked closely with Willmott Dixon to design and deliver the traineeship. As a result, every stage of the course was tailored to the construction sector. The council worked with the youth offending team to identify potential candidates for the traineeship and invited them to participate in an interview with Willmott Dixon. Successful candidates then started the initial work preparation training, which involved basic employability skills, maths and English, workshops with Willmott Dixon staff, and working towards a Level 1 health and safety qualification. Tutors also organised visits to the construction site to ensure that trainees were confident to travel independently and introduce them to the other staff working on the site.

Once they had completed their training, the trainees moved onto a work placement on the site itself. This gave trainees the opportunity to see all of the different roles available on a construction site and shadow workers in different roles undertaking various tasks. Willmott Dixon also set up some secure areas of the worksite with a number of risks in place so the trainees could practise their skills in identifying health and safety issues.

The tailored nature of the traineeship programme resulted in some excellent outcomes for learners. The Level 1 health and safety qualification they achieved on the programme removed a common barrier to progressing onto an apprenticeship or job in the construction sector, as it can be converted into a CSCS card with a simple test. This helped the trainees to see the relevance and importance of the training, and encouraged them to engage in this element of the programme. In addition, having hands on experience of working on a construction site gave trainees a good understanding of the range of roles available and

whether they would like to pursue a career in this sector. One trainee has now progressed onto a construction apprenticeship with one of Willmott Dixon's supply chain partners.

For Sheffield City Council, the traineeship programme not only prepared these young people for work, but also acted as an extended period of guidance which supported trainees to make better informed choices about their future. One of the main reasons for young people being unemployed in Sheffield is a high dropout rate from education and training owing to wrong course choice. The council are therefore hoping that sector specific traineeships can give young people a realistic idea of what different courses and jobs involve, helping them to make better choices and reducing the risk of them being NEET.

Willmott Dixon is highly enthusiastic about the programme and its potential impact for a huge range of vulnerable groups of young people. Following the successful completion of this traineeship programme, it is intended that a similar programme will be run on a second project being delivered by South Yorkshire Police and Willmott Dixon in Barnsley. The company is also showcasing this traineeship model to other regions of the business, which in turn provides an exciting opportunity to replicate the model at a national level.

Josh, 17, joined the construction traineeship to gain some work experience and confidence in applying for jobs. The Construction Manager at Willmott Dixon soon realised that Josh had real potential and he made huge progress in both his work preparation training and his four-week placement. To recognise his achievements on the programme, Josh was invited to South Yorkshire Police headquarters where representatives from the force and Willmott Dixon presented him with an Outstanding Traineeship Award and an Outstanding Work Experience Award.

*'I would definitely recommend the traineeship to others in similar circumstances. The experience of a real-working environment was beneficial; I had lots to do on site and was always busy learning from a number of different trades' people... I really enjoyed the programme and now want a career in building or roofing.'* (Trainee)

By the end of his traineeship, Josh had secured a construction apprenticeship with a local brickwork company he had been working with as part of the programme.

### 3.6 This is Creative Enterprise (fashion)

This is Creative Enterprise (TICE) is a small social enterprise based in the North East. TICE works with educational institutions and partner networks to give young people the opportunity to consider a career in the creative industries. TICE employs four core employees and up to twenty facilitator subcontractors in any given year, depending on the projects they are delivering.

TICE first heard about traineeships after discussions with the skills provider Kaplan, who was looking to develop a fashion traineeship programme with a retail sector focus. Their aim was to incorporate all aspects of a fashion role within the retail sector, including sales, communication and creative design, into a single traineeship programme.

TICE was keen to get involved as they could immediately see that the traineeship model fits with their aims of encouraging young people to consider a creative career. They realised that a traineeship would give young people the opportunity to learn about the different routes into creative industries and to gain real work experience in different areas, whilst also getting support with their English, maths and employability skills. As a result, TICE sees traineeships as a stepping stone for young people to progress onto an apprenticeship or other routes into the creative industry.

TICE worked with Kaplan to develop a traineeship focussed on fashion retail for 16-18 year olds and facilitated their pilot in August 2015. They provide two weeks of specialist training in creative business as part of Kaplan's more generic traineeship programmes. This involves 10 days intensive introduction to creative industries. It includes seminars and lectures, as well as hands on practical tasks and challenges. They organise trips to businesses and guest speakers to talk to the trainees about their specialism within the industry. The aim of the training is to get the young people excited about the creative industries, to gain experience in the sector and to complete projects they can showcase to employers and put on their CVs.

The work experience element of TICE's traineeship runs for four weeks and provides trainees with around 100 hours of experience. Placements are arranged by Kaplan and TICE, who work with local employers to develop and provide opportunities tailored to trainees' interests, but which also meet the employer's needs. Kaplan also provides the employability skills training element of the programme.

TICE advertise their traineeships through schools, jobcentres, youth organisations and business networks and aim to recruit around 10 trainees for each cohort. As there are only a small number trainees within each cohort TICE and Kaplan are able to provide one-to-one support throughout the programme. The trainees are supported by both specialist mentors at TICE and by their employability skills advisor at Kaplan. TICE focuses its advice and guidance on the learner's interests and will discuss the different options available to them in the creative industries. Kaplan provides the trainees with practical advice around finances and student support throughout their work experience placements.

TICE sees traineeships as an excellent opportunity to promote the creative industry to young people. It provides them with a taster and real world experience of the different roles

available to them, and can be used to help young people choose a route into the industry which is right for them. Traineeships have also provided TICE with the opportunity to expand their portfolio and offer to young people. Alongside their fashion retail traineeships, TICE will soon be starting the delivery of a traineeship focussed on the music industry, and is looking to develop a graphics traineeship in 2016.

## 4. CONCLUSION

It is well documented that there are emerging and projected skills gaps in particular regions and sectors of the UK economy. Employers currently report that one in five of their vacancies are difficult to fill as a result of skills shortages and businesses in the Manufacturing, Agriculture and Business Services sectors report particularly high densities of skills-shortage vacancies<sup>4</sup>. Labour market information also suggests that the Skilled Trades, Land Based and Science and Engineering sectors currently face considerable skills shortages<sup>5</sup>. In the future, sectors such as Business Services, Public Administration, Health and Education, and Trade, Accommodation and Transport are likely to face skills shortages as their workforce leaves the labour market through retirement<sup>6</sup>. Employers believe that these skills shortages are already restricting the productivity and growth of their organisations and may start to impact on the UK's ability to compete internationally<sup>7</sup>.

One of the key strengths of the traineeship programme is the flexibility afforded to providers and employers to design individual programmes. As the findings of this report demonstrate, this presents an opportunity to develop tailored programmes that not only meet the needs of individual trainees, but also the skills needs of specific employers and sectors. The case studies in this report highlight that this approach can enable young people to make informed choices about the sector in which they pursue a career and to make linear and accelerated progression along a particular pathway. It can also enable employers to fill job and apprenticeship vacancies that, when unfilled, restrict productivity, profitability and economic growth.

In order to develop and deliver a successful sector-focussed traineeship, it is imperative that the work preparation training and/or English and maths elements of the programme are tailored to the context and skills needs of the work experience placement. This ensures that the traineeship is relevant, engaging and meaningful for the young person and equips them with the skills and experience they need to be a valuable apprentice or employee for employers in their chosen sector.

### 4.1 Recommendations

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and training providers may wish to consider the following should they choose to develop traineeships aligned to a particular sector.

#### 4.1.1 Development

- Providers looking to develop a traineeship aligned to a particular sector should involve employers in the development of the programme. This will ensure that every element of the programme is relevant, engaging and meaningful for the young person and equips them with the skills and experience they need to be a valuable apprentice or employee in their chosen sector.

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<sup>4</sup> UKCES (2014) UK Commission's Employer Skills Survey 2013: UK Results.

<sup>5</sup> National Careers Service (2015) Job market information by sector. Accessed at <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/LMI/Pages/Sector-Index.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> UKCES (2014) The Labour Market Story: Skills For the Future.

<sup>7</sup> The Prince's Trust (2014) The Skills Crunch: Upskilling the workforce of the future.



#### **4.1.2 Recruitment**

- Providers looking to recruit to a sector-focussed traineeship should use a range of methods to engage young people.
- Working with intermediary organisations can be an effective way of identifying appropriate applicants.
- Providers could also present sector-focussed traineeships as a robust recruitment method for employers' existing apprenticeship opportunities.

#### **4.1.3 Delivery**

- Providers should involve employers in the delivery of all elements of a sector-focussed traineeship, to ensure that the entire programme is tailored to the needs of the sector.
- Tutors and other staff delivering sector-focussed traineeships should embed employability skills and English and maths in practical activities to prepare trainees to work in a specific sector or work environment.
- When developing a traineeship with a sector focus, providers should consider building appropriate sector specific qualifications or accreditation into the programme. This enables trainees to undertake real work tasks during their placement and better demonstrate their abilities to employers.