

Traineeships - A Framework for Local Growth:

Executive Summary
July 2017



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning & Work Institute (L&W) was commissioned by the Department for Education to undertake development work to explore how strategic support for traineeships at local level could strengthen delivery and encourage the growth of provision.

This executive summary accompanies a full report, which presents the findings of the development work undertaken between November 2016 and April 2017.

This executive summary will be of interest to Local Enterprise Partnerships, combined authorities and local authorities wishing to optimise the effectiveness of traineeship planning at local level to strengthen the development and delivery of provision.

For more information about L&W's work on traineeships please contact Nicola Aylward at nicola.aylward@learningandwork.org.uk.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, Learning & Work Institute (L&W) was commissioned by the Department for Education to undertake development work to explore how strategic support for traineeships at local level could strengthen delivery and encourage the growth of provision. The work was carried out through pilot activity in five areas, developed and delivered in partnership with local strategic stakeholders and providers.

This report draws on the pilot activity to present a framework for traineeship development at local level. It is intended to provide clear, practical insights and guidance which show how local stakeholders can develop and influence strategic approaches to traineeships. The report highlights how such approaches can drive and strengthen delivery to: ensure that it effectively meets the needs of the labour market and young people; support inclusive growth; and align traineeships with wider local priorities. It will be of interest to Local Enterprise Partnerships, combined authorities and local authorities, as well as learning providers, employers and other stakeholders involved in the design and / or delivery of employment and skills opportunities for young adults. Detailed case studies of the activity undertaken in the five pilot areas are included in the report.

A framework for local traineeship growth

The framework for local traineeship growth is designed to be used by Local Enterprise Partnerships, combined authorities and local authorities wishing to optimise the effectiveness of traineeship planning at local level to strengthen the development and delivery of provision.

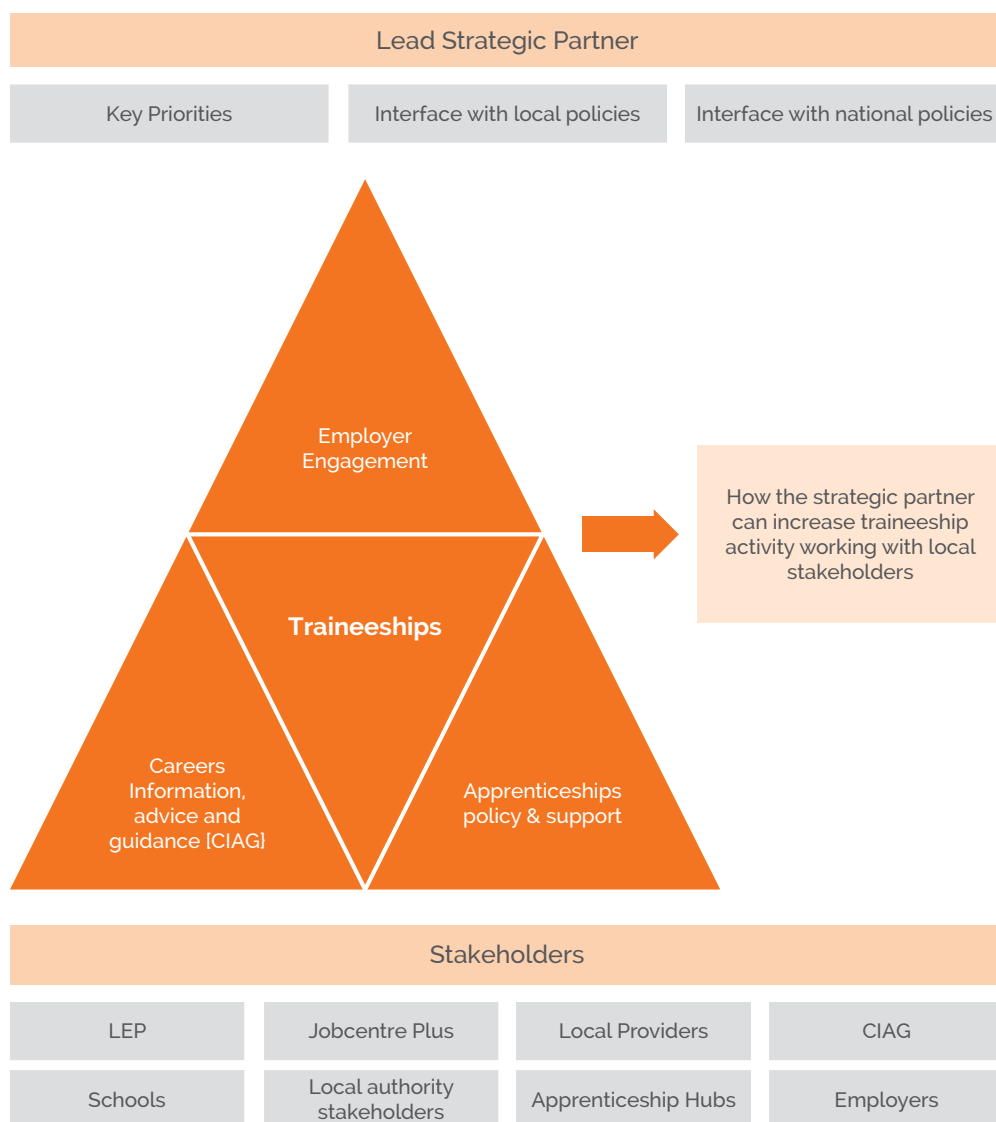
There are two parts to the model:

1. A structure chart showing how key elements of the local education, employment and skills system impact upon the development of local approaches to traineeship activity.
2. A process map setting out the principal stages in the effective local planning of traineeships.



FIGURE 1 - KEY ELEMENTS OF THE APPROACH

What elements underpin the development of localised traineeship provision?

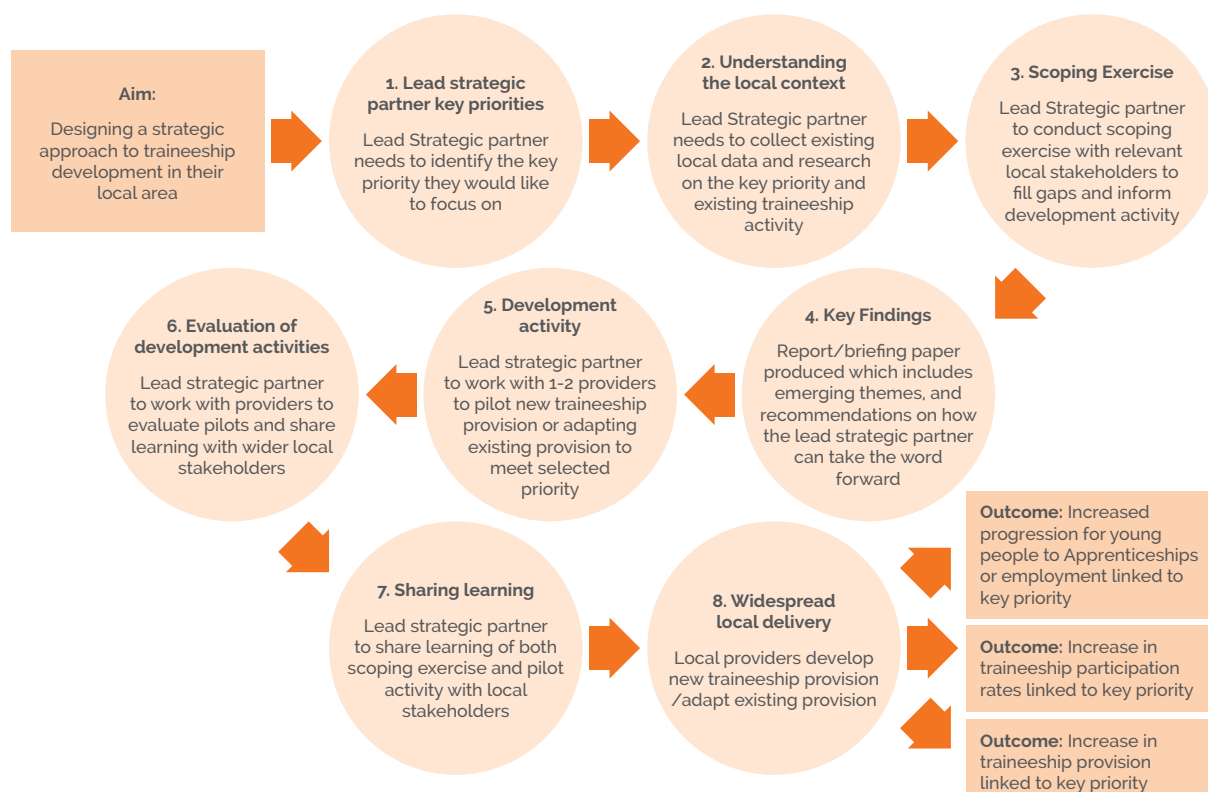


- A range of local stakeholders need to work together to enable traineeships to flourish. Fundamental to driving forward activity locally is the **commitment of an organisation which can take a strategic lead and provide overall direction and co-ordination for the programme**
- **The strategic engagement of providers is critical**, as they effectively "own" local traineeship provision by providing the route through which funding is accessed via the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

- **Employer involvement connects traineeship development to the needs of the local labour market, and helps to identify where skills gaps exist that traineeships could play a role in addressing.**
- Alongside these key groups, **other stakeholders** whom the pilots have identified as important for creating viable traineeship programmes include **Jobcentre Plus, Careers Information Advice and Guidance Services and schools.**
- A key aspect of strengthening traineeship provision and promoting growth is the **integration of programmes with wider local economic and labour market priorities.** This helps to ensure relevance and build support for development among stakeholders.
- Traineeships can offer a potential **route to sustainability for skills and employment-focussed programmes targeted at young people**, currently funded from other sources.
- If traineeship provision is to grow, organisations that take the strategic lead on traineeships must do more to **give providers the confidence to develop and deliver effective programmes.**
- Key areas in which bodies such as LEPs, combined authorities, local authorities and provider networks could work to **create a more conducive environment** for the growth of provision are: **employer engagement; careers information advice and guidance (CIAG); and integration with apprenticeship growth and support activities.**

FIGURE 2.2 - A PROCESS MAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

What elements underpin the development of localised traineeship provision?



● **Scoping**

Having a clear understanding of how traineeships can contribute to local employment and skills activity, the current traineeship landscape, and any factors that may impinge upon prospective development activity, is essential for designing and implementing an effective local programme. If the knowledge base does not already exist, it will be necessary to undertake fact-finding research to collect relevant intelligence on current provision, barriers and enablers, and potential opportunities for growth.

● **Stakeholder engagement and consultation**

Involving key local stakeholders in the development of plans for traineeships is vital not only to secure their support, but also because they are likely to have insights and wider relationships that can help to inform and strengthen the programme. Engagement and consultation can be done through existing channels such as provider network meetings, or through specially commissioned activities. Employer engagement is also vital at this stage, to ensure both that provision meets the needs of the local labour market and that high quality work placements can be provided for trainees.

● **Planning and developing pilot activity**

Pilot activity should address issues which are important locally and therefore are likely to have wider relevance and be transferable and scalable beyond the pilot itself. Detailed planning with delivery partners - providers, employers and other stakeholders such as JCP and CIAG services – ensures that the overall aims and objectives of the new pilot programme are understood and roles, responsibilities and actions agreed.

● **Pilot delivery**

Local strategic support is intended to create a framework within which high-quality traineeship provision can flourish. It connects all those who

need to be involved, and offers a clear focus for activity that addresses local priorities. Providers themselves are responsible for operational delivery, working with employers and other stakeholders to develop and deliver traineeship programmes.

● **Evaluation and review**

Pilot activity should be robustly evaluated and reviewed in light of the findings, so that lessons can be learned and future delivery planned to ensure that it remains responsive to local needs. Evaluation should be planned into the pilot from the outset, follow a staged process, and ideally include a formative element so that that progress can be assessed and learning from the initiative captured in an on-going way.

Conclusion

Much traineeship activity to date has developed in a somewhat piecemeal way, led by individual providers and creating a relatively small number of opportunities for young people. Many of those delivering provision recognise the need and potential to develop traineeships in a more strategic, effective and co-ordinated way, but face a range of issues and challenges in doing so. The work undertaken for this project in five geographical areas suggests that there are benefits to be gained from adopting a more strategic approach to traineeship planning and delivery at local level, which aligns it to social, economic and labour market priorities and objectives. Such an approach has the potential to:

- Target and address skills gaps and recruitment needs in specific sectors of the economy and labour market.
- Target and address the needs of specific learner groups and wider local priorities.
- Link traineeships more effectively to strategies for apprenticeship growth, including public sector apprenticeships and the apprenticeship levy, by positioning them

as pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship preparation training.

- Contribute to key national social inclusion priorities and targets, for example by creating pathways that will increase the proportion of apprentices from BAME backgrounds and apprentices with learning difficulties and disabilities, and tackling gender stereotyping.

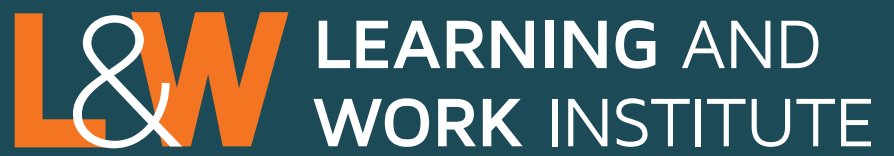
The strategic framework for traineeship development set out in this report is designed to help lead local employment and skills stakeholders to realise this potential. It would do this by:

- Raising the profile and status of traineeships with young people and intermediary and referral organisations, to increase awareness and understanding of what traineeships are and how they can support young people's career development and longer term aspirations. Providing a clear "line of sight" for young people to further learning and desirable jobs is essential to build motivation, and for some young people traineeships can be a key part of that progression pathway.
- Raising employer understanding and awareness of traineeships, to engage them in the provision of high-quality work placements and progression opportunities into apprenticeships and jobs.
- Co-ordinating more effectively work between the different stakeholder organisations required to deliver traineeships, including providers, employers, referral agencies, CIAG services and wider support services.
- Support from LEPs, combined authorities and local authorities for traineeship growth would be of value to all providers, but is likely to be particularly helpful for smaller independent training providers, which appear to be experiencing the greatest challenges with traineeship delivery. The work indicates they

are well-placed to reach into under-exploited sectors and build links with individual local employers which secure high-quality placements with good career potential, so there would be gains for young people and employers if they were better supported to scale up this activity.

- The introduction of the apprenticeship levy and public sector target presents a range of opportunities to harness traineeships more effectively as part of a pathway to apprenticeships. Traineeships can provide employers with a talent pipeline of "apprenticeship-ready" young people, and give young people themselves experience of a sector in which they are interested to assist with career planning and development. The pilots showed how local authorities as employers are exploring the scope for bespoke traineeship programmes to strengthen their apprenticeship activity, and other employers, whether in the public or other sectors, have indicated their interest in doing so.
- With the fall in youth unemployment, providers report that young people being referred to traineeships are often those categorised as not in employment, education, or training (NEET), and often have additional barriers to learning and work. This factor contributes to the delivery challenges experienced by providers, and particularly by smaller organisations which are generally operating without a well-developed infrastructure to provide wider learner support. More effective strategic co-ordination of local provision, and encouragement for providers to build partnerships with organisations that can help to meet learners' wider needs, would better support traineeship delivery and labour market participation for young people who are NEET.





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