

# Traineeships – maximising progressions into apprenticeships and employment:

Full Report  
July 2017



## Acknowledgements

Learning and Work Institute is grateful to staff from the following organisations, who participated in interviews for this research:

Acacia Training and Development	North West Community Services Training Limited
Achievement Training Limited	Petroc College of Further & Higher Education
Basingstoke Youth Action Trust	Qube Learning
Bridgwater and Taunton College	Redcar Adult Learning Services
CM Vocational Skills (WYLP)	Redwood Skills
CT Skills Limited	Release Potential Limited
East Lindsey Information Technology Centre	Smart Training and Recruitment Limited
Hackney College	Strode College
Haddon Training Limited	Northumberland Council
Hampshire County Council	The Source Skills Academy
Heathercroft Training Services Limited	The Training and Recruitment Partnership Limited
Independent Training Services Limited	Yorkshire College of Beauty Limited
Lancaster and Morecambe College	

Thanks also to Lorna Lindsay and Sue Blake for their contribution to the research and this report.

Published by National Learning and Work Institute  
21 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GE  
Company registration no. 2603322 | Charity registration no. 1002775

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**This report has been funded by the Department for Education [DfE],  
but this does not necessarily represent their views.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to identify effective practice that enables young people to progress from a traineeship to an apprenticeship or employment. This report presents the findings of research undertaken between January 2017 and March 2017. An executive summary, summary of key findings and case studies are also available.



## Key Findings

Traineeships are delivered using a range of different models. The key message is that no one size fits all – young people have different barriers to employment, and employers have different needs and demands upon their time. Providers with the highest rates of progression are able to adapt their models to meet the needs of individual trainees and employers.

## Recruitment

**Recruitment** is the first stage of a young person's traineeship journey. Providers interviewed for this research emphasised the importance of effective recruitment processes in enabling them to engage young people who are likely to be able to progress to employment or an apprenticeship. The recruitment process is also important in terms of setting clear objectives around outcomes, from the initial stage of contact with a young person.



### Recommendations for practice, providers should:

- Consider linking with local information, advice and guidance hubs. Staff at such hubs have specialist skills and knowledge of local vacancies, and are able to refer young people who can progress into local employment opportunities.
- Develop links with specialist third sector and local authority services. These organisations can refer young people and provide continuity of support throughout their traineeship, which helps to secure a good progression outcome.
- Be proactive in developing strong partnerships with Jobcentre Plus. Running sessions for JCP staff and claimants, placing promotional material in offices, and inviting staff to see traineeship delivery in action are all effective ways of building relationships.
- Ensure that apprenticeship recruitment teams are actively referring young people who aren't ready to apply for an apprenticeship, or who have been unsuccessful in securing an apprenticeship, to their traineeship programme.
- Ensure that young people, parents and employers clearly understand that progression to employment is the expected outcome of a traineeship. This helps to keep all parties focussed.
- Focus on securing work experience with employers who are committed to having a real apprenticeship or job vacancy available for a young person at the end of the placement. This approach is more likely to lead to a quick employment outcome.
- Develop and widely disseminate clear promotional materials which focus upon the employment outcome that a young person can achieve through a traineeship. Case studies are an effective way of doing this.
- Build a strong local reputation for high quality traineeship delivery that leads to employment. This helps to boost referrals and ensures that young people and employers clearly perceive traineeships as a direct pathway to employment.

## Initial Assessment

All the providers interviewed said that strong **initial assessment** is crucial in ensuring good progression outcomes for trainees. Trainees should be impartially assessed and referred to the most suitable programme that meets their individual needs and aspirations. This could be

onto a study programme, an apprenticeship, traineeship or in some instances referral to a specific college course. Effective initial assessment will help to ensure that a traineeship is the most appropriate option for an individual young person. This in turn reduces the likelihood of early dropout, non-completion or lack of progression to employment or an apprenticeship.



### **Recommendations for practice**, providers should:

- Impartially assess young people and refer them to the most appropriate programme to meet their needs. This reduces the likelihood of early dropout from a traineeship, non-completion or lack of progression to employment or an apprenticeship.
- Consider recruiting staff with IAG qualifications, or upskilling existing staff. This approach enables providers to offer effective information, advice and guidance and to offer strong support to work experience employers, which contributes to good progression outcomes.
- Ensure that initial assessment is comprehensive and focussed around identifying specific barriers to employment. This enables staff to develop tailored programmes designed to support individual young people to overcome barriers and make sustained transitions into employment.
- Use tried and tested tools for assessing a young person's English and maths skills level, and consider an e-portfolio system, as this helps to prepare a young person for an apprenticeship.
- Ensure that young people clearly understand that English and maths is a core part of a traineeship because these skills are essential and relevant to their employment goals, and highly valued by employers.
- Consider how functional skills delivery can be embedded into all aspects of a traineeship. Integrating English and maths staff and traineeship staff can be an effective way of doing this.

## Model of delivery

Providers emphasise the critical importance of **flexible models of delivery** in meeting the needs

of local young people and employers, in securing good rates of progression.



### **Recommendations for practice**, providers should:

- Ensure that their delivery models are flexible and can meet the needs of individual young people and employers. Young people have individual barriers to employment; developing flexible and tailored programmes to address specific barriers will increase progression rates.
- Consider the use of sector specific units, awards or qualifications. This approach is likely to boost the employment prospects of young people who are applying for jobs or apprenticeships in specific sectors.
- Consider running mixed programmes, for young people across the 16-24 age range, with different start dates. This enables new trainees to interact and learn from more established trainees. In addition, seeing their peers progressing into employment reinforces a trainee's expectation that they will be able to achieve this too.
- Ensure that their delivery model involves regular progress reviews, clear goal setting and opportunities for reflection. This enables trainees to remain focussed on their employment goals and see the progress they are making towards a job or apprenticeship.
- Involve employers in developing and delivering traineeships at an early stage. This ensures that employers are committed to the process, understand their responsibilities and the expectation that they will actively support a young person to bridge the gap to employment.
- Consider working with specific employers to develop bespoke traineeship programmes. This can be particularly effective in providing a pipeline of 'apprenticeship-ready' young people for employers who are recruiting for a number of roles.
- Engage local organisations that provide access to a range of employers, for example local Chambers of Commerce, employer federations or Rotary Club. This increases access to work experience placements and other forms of engagement with employers.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to identify effective practice that enables young people to progress from a traineeship to an apprenticeship or employment. This report presents the findings of research undertaken between January 2017 and March 2017.

Twenty-five organisations were interviewed from a number of provider types, to identify key factors that are important in securing good apprenticeship and employment progression rates.

The definition of a successful outcome from a traineeship is that, within six months of leaving/ completing a traineeship, the trainee has:

- Had eight weeks of consecutive employment/ self-employment of 16 hours per week or more, or
- Started on an apprenticeship by passing the qualifying period to count in funding terms, or
- Started on a further learning course at level 2 or level 3 by passing the qualifying period to count in funding terms.

The core policy intent of a traineeship is to get a young person ready for work or an apprenticeship, so whilst progression to further learning is a successful outcome, the scope of this research was to identify provision and key success factors that contribute to progression to apprenticeships and employment.

This report will be of interest to providers who are currently delivering traineeships or planning to deliver the programme. It includes ten case studies that demonstrate effective practice in enabling young people to progress from a traineeship to an apprenticeship or employment. Each case study includes a short vignette of a trainee's experience on the programme.

## 1.1 The traineeship programme

Traineeships were introduced in 2013 and are aimed at young people aged 16-24 years old, or young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments or Education, Health and Care plans up to the age of 25. Traineeships are designed to help young people gain the skills and experience they need to get an apprenticeship or job.

The target group for traineeships are young people who:

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

Traineeships are made up of three core elements:

- A high-quality work experience.
- A focussed period of work preparation training.
- English and maths if required.

More information about traineeships is available on the [\*\*Education and Skills Funding Agency \(Traineeships\) website\*\*](#)

For more information about L&W's work on traineeships please contact Nicola Aylward at [\*\*nicola.aylward@learningandwork.org.uk\*\*](mailto:nicola.aylward@learningandwork.org.uk).



## 1.2 Methodology

The first stage of this research involved data analysis to identify providers who are particularly effective in enabling young people to progress from traineeships into apprenticeships and employment. Learning and Work Institute undertook analysis of traineeship data from 531

providers across the years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16, supplied by the Department for Education.

Based on the data, 25 providers agreed to take part in an interview; a breakdown of their characteristics can be found in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** *The breakdown of provider type and characteristics of the 25 providers interviewed.*

Provider Characteristics		Actual
Provider Size	0 – 49	10
	50 – 99	10
	100 – 199	3
	200 – 349	2
	350+	0
Progression Type	Apprenticeship	12
	Permanent Employment	13
LDD <sup>1</sup> Status	LDD <sup>1</sup>	6
BAME <sup>2</sup> Status	BAME <sup>2</sup>	7
Benefit Status	BENEFIT	6
Age Performance	16-18	18
	19+	7
Provider Type	General FE College including Tertiary	5
	Private Sector Public Funded	17
	Other Public Funded i.e. LA's and HE	3
	Special Colleges	0

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 25 providers. Interviews were structured to enable the project team to understand the providers' delivery model, and, in particular, key aspects of their provision that contribute to above average rates of progression from traineeships to apprenticeships and employment.

Detailed case studies were then developed with ten of these providers, representing a range of provider types, geographical areas, progressions into apprenticeships and employment and success with different learners. The case studies highlight effective delivery and the key factors that providers consider important in contributing to good progression outcomes.

1. LDD status refers to providers with good rates of progressions amongst people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

2. BAME status refers to providers with good rates of progressions amongst people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

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## 2. KEY FINDINGS

Analysis of data from the interviews and case studies identified three stages in the traineeship process, where providers suggest specific approaches, arrangements or forms of delivery are important in maximising progressions from traineeships to apprenticeships and employment. In this section, the key findings are presented under headings that represent the three stages – recruitment, initial assessment and model of delivery.

### 2.1 Recruitment

Recruitment is the first stage of a young person's traineeship journey. Providers interviewed for this research emphasised the importance of effective recruitment processes in enabling them to engage young people who are likely to be able to progress to employment or an apprenticeship. The recruitment process is also important in terms of setting clear objectives around outcomes, from the initial stage of contact with a young person.

Some local areas have an **information, advice and guidance hub for young people**, such as Connexions. Where this type of service exists, providers are able to establish good working partnerships and clear referral pathways to their traineeship programmes. As a result of the specialist skills and knowledge of staff working in these services, and their understanding of the local employment opportunities available for young people, referrals from these types of services tend to result in good progression outcomes.

A range of **specialist third sector and local authority organisations**, such as youth charities, YMCA, youth offending teams, leaving care teams and housing associations play an active part in referring young people to traineeships. When linked to strong progression outcomes, relationships between providers and these agencies have been developed over a period of time. For example, staff at **Redwood Skills**, have a strong and active partnership in place

with the local authority leaving care team. This enables the leaving care team to have a good understanding of the traineeship programme, to identify appropriate young people and to undertake any preparatory work with a young person, to ensure they are really ready to start a traineeship. Through good communication and active partnership arrangements, Redwood is able to ensure that the young people referred to their programme are ready for a traineeship, clear about the purpose and committed to achieving an apprenticeship or employment outcome. In addition, the continuity of support offered by the leaving care team, throughout the duration of the traineeship, enables the young people to deal with difficulties in their wider life, enabling them to remain focussed on the traineeship and their employment goals.

For young people aged 19-24, recruitment is predominantly through local **Jobcentre Plus (JCP)**. Whilst it's important to note that there continues to be local variation in the capacity and willingness of JCP operational staff to refer benefit claimants to a traineeship, where good relationships do exist, this can be an effective referral route that leads to good progressions into apprenticeships and employment. The providers interviewed for this research gave examples of being invited into Jobcentre Plus to brief staff and run sessions for claimants who may be eligible to participate. They also spoke about providing information and promotional material about traineeships for JCP staff and young people. An example of this is **CT Skills**,

who are able to freely display their marketing literature about traineeships in the local JCP offices. Job coaches have reported good employment outcomes from traineeships and therefore continue to promote the programme to their clients. **The Source Skills Academy** in Sheffield takes a different approach, they have developed a strong relationship with JCP staff by inviting them into their centres to see traineeship delivery in action. This has been important in improving work coaches' understanding of traineeships, breaking down misconceptions and helping them to recognise the potential benefits of the programme in securing good long term employment outcomes for claimants.

**Apprenticeship recruitment teams** have a crucial role to play in identifying and referring young people who have not been successful in securing an apprenticeship opportunity. Many of these young people are close to being ready for an apprenticeship, but sometimes need convincing that they require additional

support before being put forward for further apprenticeship vacancies. Apprenticeship recruitment staff are able to do this and highlight how a traineeship can give them the skills and opportunities to develop their careers.

When a young person has been unsuccessful at securing an apprenticeship opportunity, the apprenticeship team at **The Source Skills Academy** refers them to their traineeship programme. In some instances, applicants are very close to securing an apprenticeship, but are just missing out. Traineeship staff are able to work with their apprenticeship recruitment colleagues to determine precisely why that young person was unsuccessful. Often it is because a young person needs to develop in a particular area, such as verbal communication or writing skills. The traineeship team then tailor a programme designed to enable the young person to develop the specific skills and attributes that they need in order to progress to an apprenticeship quickly.



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Providers highlight that **managing expectations of young people, parents and employers, and giving clear and consistent messages** is important to a successful apprenticeship or employment progression outcome. **Qube Learning** see parents and guardians as integral to the support trainees receive and have developed an information leaflet aimed at them that explains the traineeship programme, what young people can gain by participating, the differences between a traineeship and an apprenticeship and the type and level of support available for each trainee. This leaflet, along with one to one discussions with parents and guardians, helps to manage expectations and keeps a young person focussed on an employment outcome, which in turn helps motivate the trainee to complete their traineeship.

**The Source Skills Academy** takes a similar approach by inviting parents in to the centre to attend an information briefing session. This is important in allaying any fears or misunderstandings about the purpose of the programme. It also clearly focusses both trainees' and their parents/guardians' attention on employment progression routes from the outset.

When first deciding to deliver traineeships, **Qube** made a business decision to only work with employers who had a job opportunity or apprenticeship available when taking a trainee on work experience. Qube's aim is to offer traineeships as the first step in a five-year career plan, working with employers to provide not only meaningful work experience but real jobs with on-going development opportunities. Employers are made aware of this and agree to this commitment before the trainee commences work experience. This is important in contributing to good progression outcomes.

Many providers highlight the importance of clear and employment-focussed messaging and marketing materials in recruiting young people

to traineeships. Messaging should clearly focus on traineeships providing a route to employment. One provider that considers this important is **Heathercroft Training**. Heathercroft works in partnership with an organisation called **Project Search**, which produces a monthly newsletter advertising traineeship vacancies. Many local companies use the newsletter to promote their traineeship and apprenticeship vacancies and work alongside Heathercroft to recruit learners. The monthly newsletter is well known in the local area and is an important resource in ensuring that local young people, parents, employers and referral partners are aware of traineeships and the progression opportunities available. **Acacia Training and Development** use a 'from trainee to employee' case study on their website to demonstrate the real employment outcomes that can be achieved through undertaking a traineeship.

Providers emphasised the importance of **building a good local reputation** to effective recruitment. For many of the most successful providers, recruitment is through word of mouth. It comes from successful trainees, their parents and their employers talking positively about the traineeship programme; about how it made the difference in enabling a young person to bridge the gap and gain meaningful and sustained employment. A good example of this is **Petroc College**. As one of only a few providers offering a traineeship programme in the local area, Petroc has built a reputation for delivering high quality traineeships and securing good outcomes. Their programme is recognised and valued by employers and seen by trainees as a route to employment or an apprenticeship. Most of Petroc's trainees are recruited through word of mouth recommendation. They join the programme with a clear understanding that the purpose is to move them into employment.



### **Recommendations for practice, providers should:**

- Consider linking with local information, advice and guidance hubs. Staff at such hubs have specialist skills and knowledge of local vacancies, and are able to refer young people who can progress into local employment opportunities.
- Develop links with specialist third sector and local authority services. These organisations can refer young people and provide continuity of support throughout their traineeship, which helps to secure a good progression outcome.
- Be proactive in developing strong partnerships with Jobcentre Plus. Running sessions for JCP staff and claimants, placing promotional material in offices, and inviting staff to see traineeship delivery in action are all useful ways of building relationships.
- Ensure that apprenticeship recruitment teams are actively referring young people who aren't ready to apply for an apprenticeship, or who have been unsuccessful in securing an apprenticeship, to their traineeship programme.
- Ensure that young people, parents and employers clearly understand that progression to employment is the expected outcome of a traineeship. This helps to keep all parties focussed.
- Focus on securing work experience placements with employers who are committed to having a real apprenticeship or job vacancy available for a young person. This approach is more likely to lead to a quick employment outcome.
- Develop and widely disseminate clear promotional materials which focus upon the employment outcome that a young person can achieve through a traineeship. Case studies are an effective way of doing this.
- Build a strong local reputation for high quality traineeship delivery, that leads to employment. This helps to boost referrals and ensures that young people and employers clearly perceive traineeships as a direct pathway to employment.



## 2.2 Initial Assessment

All the providers interviewed said that strong initial assessment is crucial in ensuring good progression outcomes for trainees. Trainees should be **impartially assessed and referred to the most suitable programme that meets their individual needs and aspirations**. This could be onto a study programme, an apprenticeship, traineeship or in some instances referral to a specific college course. Effective initial assessment will help to ensure that a traineeship is the most appropriate option for an individual young person. This in turn reduces the likelihood of early dropout, non-completion or lack of progression to employment or an apprenticeship.

To ensure that trainees are recruited onto a programme that meets their individual needs, all of **CT Skills'** employment support officers undertake a level 4 information, advice and guidance (IAG) qualification. Their placement officer is also IAG qualified. This enables him to not only offer advice and guidance to trainees, but also to employers about the support and supervision they provide to trainees, and their recruitment activities. CT Skills say that equipping staff with strong IAG skills has been important in enabling them to develop tailored individual plans that prepare trainees to progress to an apprenticeship or employment, at the right time for them.

**Effective initial assessment is also essential in gauging a trainee's starting point and the subsequent support required if they are to secure a successful progression.** It enables a provider to identify a young person's individual learning and wider support needs. By doing this a provider can tailor the traineeship and deliver targeted training and support to overcome any specific barriers that have previously prevented them from progressing to an apprenticeship and/or employment.

Providers use a range of initial assessment methods to identify starting points, interests and aspirations, learning styles, skills gaps, sector and wider support needs. For example, **The Source Skills Academy** uses a structured interview and skills scan to identify trainees' career aspirations, previous experience, skills and their attainment at school. This is crucial in enabling staff to build a personal learning plan for a young person, which includes both short and long term milestone, targets and goals.

Good English and maths skills are valued by employers and are critical if a young person is to progress to an apprenticeship or a job. **All providers assess a young person's English and maths skills levels at the start of their traineeship**, predominantly through the use of computer-based programmes. The most commonly used programmes include SkillsBuilder, BKSb and Guroo, and are used by providers such as **Qube Learning, Heathercroft Training Service Limited and Hackney College**. Programmes such as OneFile and Forskills provide additional resources, such as customised forms, portfolio journals and quality policies and tools. These are most commonly used within apprenticeship provision, but some providers, such as **Redwood Skills and CT Skills**, also use them with their traineeship learners. There are many benefits to using the same systems for trainees and apprentices, the main one being that it gives a young people experience of working in an e-portfolio type of environment, which gives them confidence and continuity when progressing to an apprenticeship.

Technology, particularly SurveyMonkey, is used extensively by **CMS Vocational Training Ltd** throughout both traineeship and apprenticeship delivery. It is used with trainees and employers and enables CMS to collect data and undertake analysis in response to specific questions, for example about prior attainment, safeguarding, and employer support systems/knowledge.

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**Qube Learning** says that positively promoting initial diagnostic testing in English and maths for all learners, as part of the joining process, is important. By taking this approach, young people understand that English and maths is a core part of the programme (unless they've achieved the required standard) and that it's essential and relevant to their employment goals. It also enables tutors to tailor the programme and offer support that meets the individual learner's needs.

Working with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), **Achievement Training** offer a six-month programme, which enables trainees time to not only improve their basic skills but also time to

mature, develop and grow in confidence. After initial assessment discussions have taken place with each learner, a timetable and package is designed to meet the learner's needs to reach their goals. The traineeship and functional skills teams are located within the same department working in an open plan office. At the beginning, success rates a lot lower than anticipated. To address this the two teams worked closely together to prioritise and concentrate the first month of the programme on English and maths. This entwined approach of intense one-to-one support, embedding functional skills into all sessions, has paid off. English and maths success rates have increased from 22% to 72%.







### **Recommendations for practice, providers should:**

- Impartially assess young people and refer them to the most appropriate programme to meet their needs. This reduces the likelihood of early dropout from a traineeship, non-completion or lack of progression to employment or an apprenticeship.
- Consider recruiting staff with IAG qualifications, or upskilling existing staff. This approach enables providers to offer effective information, advice and guidance and to offer strong support to work experience employers, which contributes to good progression outcomes.
- Ensure that initial assessment is comprehensive and focussed around identifying specific barriers to employment. This enables staff to develop tailored programmes designed to support individual young people to overcome barriers and make sustained transitions into employment.
- Use tried and tested tools for assessing a young person's English and maths skills level, and consider an e-portfolio system as this helps to prepare a young person for an apprenticeship.
- Ensure that young people clearly understand that English and maths is a core part of a traineeship because these skills are essential and relevant to their employment goals, and highly valued by employers.
- Consider how functional skills delivery can be embedded into all aspects of a traineeship. Integrating English and maths staff and traineeship staff can be an effective way of doing this.

## 2.3 Model of delivery

The twenty-five interviews conducted with providers highlight that traineeship programmes are delivered in a wide range of ways throughout the country. The number of learners on programmes and the length of programmes varies immensely. Some providers have a pre-determined length of programme, typically 12-20 weeks, but remain flexible if a learner is offered an apprenticeship or employment earlier; whilst others offer a full 26-week programme and learners are able to stay as long as they need to gain the skills and confidence they need to progress.

The key message from providers is that one size does not fit all. **Providers emphasise the critical importance of flexible models of delivery in meeting the needs of local young people and employers**, in securing good rates of progression.

Providers say that referral agencies tend to favour a **roll-on roll-off model** as this enables a young person to start a traineeship at the point at which they are considered ready. Whilst this works for small cohorts of trainees, if provision grows, providers often need to move to fixed start dates. Traineeships are considered staff resource intensive and most of the providers interviewed agreed that trainees need extensive support, on a one-to-one basis, to maximise their chances of progressing to an apprenticeship or job. One-to-one support is challenging with large numbers of young people on a roll-on roll-off model, but if carefully managed and controlled it is possible and secures good outcomes.

Most providers begin their programmes with an initial in-house delivery period of between 2-4 weeks, which is focussed around **work preparation**. This gives staff the opportunity to build a good relationship with the trainee and allows tutors sufficient time to assess

work readiness, time-keeping, appearance and undertake mock interviews. During this initial period trainees generally start working on employability units/qualifications and in some instances, they also receive additional training in sector specific units, awards or qualifications.

**North West Community Services Training Limited** offer additional accredited units, such as safeguarding, that enable trainees to enhance their CV. This is considered important in giving them an advantage when applying for apprenticeships or jobs in the childcare and health and social care sectors.

**Some providers run mixed programmes for young people across the 16-24 age range and with different start dates** and find that younger learners benefit from mixing in older company and learning from their experiences. An example of how this approach has been used successfully is at **Acacia Training**, where staff view mixed age groups and different start dates as a huge advantage. Newer trainees engage and learn from those that are more advanced on the programme and may already be out on placement. Trainees who are established on the programme often act as mentors to those who have started later, showing them the correct workplace behaviours and approaches needed to progress. These relationships enable trainees to build confidence and help them to develop social and team working skills, enhancing their performance in job interviews and in securing apprenticeships. Seeing other trainees on their programme complete a traineeship and successfully progress into an apprenticeship or a job, reinforces a trainees' expectation that they will be able to achieve this too.

All providers agree that traineeships must be flexible, depending on the needs of the trainee and employer. Central to this is the need for **regular reviews – both formal and informal – with clear goal setting and opportunities for**

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**learners to self-review.** Redwood Skills provide all their trainees with a traineeship booklet and a work experience diary. The trainee completes the diary each day to enable them to capture and reflect upon their learning. Workplace mentors support the trainee to do this - recording progress and commenting on additional activities that may be required to achieve the planned learning. The work experience diary can be used at interviews to show the trainee's progress and abilities, enhancing their prospects of securing an apprenticeship or employment.

Many of the providers who took part in this research stated that they **involve employers in developing and delivering their traineeships as early in the process as possible.** This happens in a range of different ways, for example employers may be invited to give a talk about their sector and business, interview young people and start to build up a relationship with them before they go on placement. They also contribute to mock interviews, which helps to build trainees' confidence, and arrange workplace visits to their premises. **New City College London** invites employers into college to meet the trainees and discuss the construction industry and the opportunities available. Trainees are made aware of the job roles, their responsibilities and an employer's expectations. This helps to ensure that trainees understand, from the beginning, that they need to show strong commitment to the training in order to progress into an apprenticeship or employment.

Providers say that **maintaining a strong relationship with employers, and having clear expectations of them, is crucial to their engagement** and in turn contributes to good progression rates. Many providers work with employers to develop a traineeship work experience job description and to agree a skills training plan, which will be delivered in the work place. It is also considered important to have

an employer agreement in place outlining their responsibilities during the work placement.

To reduce early apprenticeship drop out, many **providers are working in partnership with local employers to develop bespoke traineeship programmes,** which has successfully increased the number of trainees progressing into apprenticeships. In the south west, a large employer was concerned about the quality of the apprenticeship applications they were receiving and that a high number of apprentices were dropping out. They worked closely with **Bridgwater and Taunton college** to develop a traineeship programme which would give young people the all-round experience they need to progress to an apprenticeship in the dry lining industry. There were 12 young people in the most recent cohort, nine of whom progressed into an apprenticeship with the company; the remaining three were given support to find alternative apprenticeship opportunities.

In another example, **First College Lincs** have involved local business organisations, such as The Rotary Club, in their traineeship programme. The Rotary Club provides the College with links to local businesses who are willing to conduct mock interviews with trainees. The businesses come from a wide variety of sectors, giving trainees an opportunity to discuss jobs that they may not previously have had any awareness of or considered as a career. This helps young people to make informed decisions about the right sector for them to work in and helps to build their confidence through receiving constructive feedback on their performance.



### **Recommendations for practice, providers should:**

- Ensure that their delivery models are flexible and can meet the needs of individual young people and employers. Young people have individual barriers to employment; developing flexible and tailored programmes to address specific barriers will increase progression rates.
- Consider the use of sector specific units, awards or qualifications. This approach is likely to boost the employment prospects of young people who are applying for jobs or apprenticeships in specific sectors.
- Consider running mixed programmes, for young people across the 16-24 age range, with different start dates. This enables new trainees to interact and learn from more established trainees. In addition, seeing their peers progressing into employment reinforces a trainees' expectation that they will be able to achieve this too.
- Ensure that their delivery model involves regular progress reviews, clear goal setting and opportunities for reflection. This enables trainees to remain focussed on their employment goals and see the progress they are making towards a job or apprenticeship.
- Involve employers in developing and delivering traineeships at an early stage. This ensures that employers are committed to the process, understand their responsibilities and the expectation that they will actively support a young person to bridge the gap to employment.
- Consider working with specific employers to develop bespoke traineeship programmes. This can be particularly effective in providing a pipeline of 'apprenticeship-ready' young people for employers who are recruiting for a number of roles.
- Engage local organisations that provide access to a range of employers, for example local Chambers of Commerce, employer federations or Rotary Club. This increases access to work experience placements and other forms of engagement with employers.

## 2.4 Traineeships - Progressions to Apprenticeships and Employment Top 10 Tips

The aim of a traineeship is to help young people gain the skills and experience they need to get an apprenticeship or job. L&W interviewed a range of providers and asked them to identify key factors that they think are critical to good rates of progression into apprenticeship and employment. Their top ten tips are:

1

Where possible, delivery of traineeship programmes should be undertaken by the same team who deliver apprenticeships

- this enables consistency; learners are familiar with tutors who may also become their apprenticeship assessor/tutor. This approach also explicitly positions traineeships as a clear and linear pathway to apprenticeships. Employers and young people are aware of this from their first point of contact/engagement and therefore perceive traineeships as a natural progression pathway directly to an apprenticeship.



2

Ensure you have a clear communications strategy in place.

This is crucial in recruiting young people who are ready for a traineeship. It also ensures that referral agencies, employers and parents have an accurate understanding of the gap to sustainable employment. Consider holding briefing sessions, publishing newsletters and promoting successful outcomes through case studies and testimonies. Also ensure that your website is up to date and easy to navigate. Employers who benefit from offering traineeships may be willing to be ambassadors, promoting the programme to other employers through business networks, open days and events.



3

Take a holistic approach to initial assessment.

Having a comprehensive process in place for all young people will ensure that only young people who have a reasonable chance of progressing to an apprenticeship or employment undertake a traineeship. Ensure that young people who are not suitable for a traineeship are referred to other pathways that are appropriate for them.



4

Identify a single point of contact for learners, e.g. traineeship tutor,

as this ensures a consistent approach and support for that young person. Trainees will be able to discuss any concerns and build up trust and confidence, enabling them to believe that they can achieve and progress into an apprenticeship or job with the help and support of their tutor.



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5

**Ensure programmes are flexible and supportive.**

Assessing trainees' needs carefully and tailoring support to address specific individual barriers to employment will maximise progression outcomes, particularly for trainees who require additional support.



6

**Set clear expectations about progression outcomes from the beginning.**

The purpose of a traineeship is to enable a young person to get a job or apprenticeship - consistently deliver clear messaging about this, with both trainees and employers, throughout the duration of the traineeship. Trainees need to fully understand what they are aiming for and how they can achieve it, and employers need to be aware of their responsibilities and their role in supporting young people to develop the skills and experience they need for employment.



7

**Set clear goals and monitor progress towards these goals on a regular basis,**

with at least weekly contact. Capture progress through the use of placement plans, diaries, log books, project work and handbooks. Employers often find it beneficial to view their trainee's progress online, and can then be supported to offer further development and training as required. This evidence of progress can be used to show a trainee's aptitude and potential to achieve a positive progression outcome.



8

**Recruit employers who can commit to offering an apprenticeship or job, or are willing to create such opportunities,**

if they are matched with the right trainee who is successful on their placement. Promoting traineeships as an efficient process for recruiting the right young people for roles in employers' companies is often effective as it's likely to reduce early drop out and high turnover of staff, which is costly for businesses.



9

**Ensure a good match between trainees and employers.** It is important that an employer can support a young person's career goals and that a young person is

interested in and motivated by their experience placement. Matching trainees and employers as early as possible helps to develop a good relationship, immediately. Building this relationship early gives the young person confidence and the employer assurance that they have been matched with the right young person, who is interested in their business.



10

**Review your traineeship programme after each cohort has finished, to identify what worked well and what needs to be improved.**

Feedback from trainees and employers is crucial in ensuring that the programme meets the needs of all involved and that young people are effectively supported at each stage of their traineeship to progress into employment.



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## 3. CASE STUDIES

The following ten case studies showcase a number of different provider traineeship models that led to successful progression to an apprenticeship or employment.

### 3.1 Qube Learning

Qube Learning is a national training provider that specialises in vocational qualifications, core skills and short courses. Established in 1999, Qube began their traineeship programme in August 2014 with 45 trainees and have continued to grow their provision. Qube now works with a range of different employers and currently has 190 trainees aged between 16-24.

#### Recruitment

Recruitment is undertaken on an ongoing basis. Young people are sometimes recruited for a work experience placement with a specific employer, but in most cases Qube will meet with traineeship applicants to discuss their needs and aspirations before matching them to a suitable position.

Young people are recruited to traineeships directly through social media advertising and on sites such as Get My First Job, Indeed and through the Recruit an Apprentice service. Qube work with local partners such as Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and local authorities to promote their traineeships, as well as attending events at schools and colleges e.g. careers drop in days.

Qube receives a number of peer-to-peer referrals from young people who have previously engaged with the traineeship programme. Qube also have a team of recruiters working across their wider programme of learning who are able to direct young people into traineeships where appropriate; for example those who could benefit from additional preparation before taking up an apprenticeship.

Tutors are also involved in directly recruiting both employers and trainees in their local area, within a 50-mile radius of where they are based. This is supported by national account managers who work with national employers to secure work experience placements on an ongoing basis.

Qube promote their traineeship programme, as a route to both employment and an apprenticeship depending on employer needs.

#### Initial Assessment

Following an eligibility check, all applicants undertake an informal interview with their tutor to ascertain their career aspirations, interests and any previous work experience. This also provides an opportunity for tutors to talk through trainees' concerns and support needs to overcome any barriers that they face.

Trainees complete an application form and undertake an initial diagnostic test for English and maths using the SkillsBuilder tool, even if they have achieved GSCE grades A\*-C, as they may still struggle with certain aspects. Support to improve English and maths skills is positively promoted as part of the joining process, rather than as extra provision that the trainees have to undertake. This helps the tutor to tailor the programme and to provide the support required to meet individual trainees' needs. It also helps the trainee to understand the relevance of English and maths to their career aspirations.



## Model of Delivery

Qube offer a model of one-to-one delivery that lasts between seven to twelve weeks depending on the age of the trainee. There is no classroom component to Qube's traineeship - all training is delivered in the workplace rather than in a classroom setting. This approach was developed following a review of classroom delivery, which Qube found was not producing the expected job outcomes for young people engaging with the programme. The work-based model allows one-to-one delivery by the tutor, with each trainee, and ensures that all learning is fully contextualised and relevant to the work experience. This change to Qube's delivery model is considered crucial in contributing to significantly improved progression outcomes into apprenticeships and employment.

As part of their traineeship, trainees take part in a mock assessment that is recorded and used as a benchmark to measure progress during the programme. Tutors conduct progress reviews with trainees on a weekly basis, including input from the employer. A traffic light system, across a series of development areas is used by the trainee to score their progress at weeks one, three, six, nine and twelve for 16-18 year olds and at weeks one, three/four and seven for older trainees, so the tutor can track progress throughout the programme. This approach also allows each trainee to see the progress they are making towards their employment goal.

Each trainee is issued with a resource book that contains information and activities to support employability and interview skills, rights and responsibilities in the workplace, CV writing, Prevent and safeguarding information, useful website links and where to go for help and guidance. A logbook recording the signed trainee and employer agreements is also created for every trainee.

While Qube works primarily with employers in health and social care, hospitality and business services, they work to find placements that suit trainees' individual needs and interests and will link with other apprenticeship providers on occasions to offer specific opportunities, e.g. in childcare.

Parents and guardians are seen as an integral part of the support provided to trainees. Qube have developed an information leaflet that details the process, what can be gained from a traineeship, the differences between a traineeship and apprenticeship and the type and level of support available for each trainee. The leaflet, along with one-to-one discussions helps manage expectations, which in turn helps motivate the trainee.

Qube are in the process of developing a bespoke model, working in partnership with the National Autistic Society (NAS), to start working and delivering traineeships for people with autism. In preparation, staff will complete a two-day course on how to deliver the programme to trainees with autism. Employers, who currently work with NAS offering work experience, will be given the opportunity to offer a traineeship, which Qube hope will create a pathway for progression to apprenticeships for young people with autism.

## Progression

Qube aim to position their traineeship programme as the first step in a five-year career plan, working with employers to provide meaningful work experience and development which helps to keep trainees engaged and motivated to progress onto employment or an apprenticeship. A typical progression route is traineeship, apprenticeship, advanced apprenticeship, higher apprenticeship. Both trainee and employer have a well-defined understanding of what can be gained from

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undertaking a traineeship, as the first step in a pathway towards higher-level skills and employment.

83% of trainees secure a job or apprenticeship outcome if they complete their traineeship. Qube continue to support those trainees who are not able to directly progress into a job or apprenticeship, to look for employment or an apprenticeship elsewhere.

Qube views their one-to-one support and work-based delivery, coupled with close employer relationships and parent liaison, as key components in an effective traineeship programme that results in high rates of progression to an apprenticeship or employment. The individual support and care provided by the tutor, working with trainees from start to completion, is also fundamental to the success of the programme.





### Top Tips for traineeships

- Review the effectiveness of your existing delivery model and consider moving to a fully work-based model. A fully work-based model ensures that all learning is contextualised and relevant to the work placement and the young person's employment goals.
- Understand the aspirations of your trainees. This helps to manage their expectations and is a huge benefit when matching the learner to the right work placement employer.
- Develop a good working relationship with your employers so they understand what to expect from a traineeship. When employers are happy with the delivery of the programme they become ambassadors for traineeships, which helps to grow the programme.



### Trainee Experience

**Prior to starting her traineeship, Ravi experienced severe anxiety that prevented her from meeting new people and getting a job. With intensive one-to-one support Ravi started a work experience placement and achieved 100% attendance. During the 12 week placement she showed commitment, hard work and dedication; she grew in confidence day by day and was gradually able to control her anxiety.**

Towards the end of her placement Ravi put together and gave a detailed presentation about her experience. Ravi's employer was so impressed that they offered her a childcare level 2 apprenticeship. She not only has a bright future and great career ahead of her, she has also gained valuable life skills too.

### 3.2 CT Skills Limited

CT Skills has been established for over 20 years in the East Midlands region, working in adult education and supporting young people into work or training. The organisation works across a wide range of sectors including transport, construction, customer service, logistics, education and business, care and childcare, delivering both apprenticeships and traineeships. In September 2016 CT Skills was awarded Good by Ofsted in all aspects of its inspection, including traineeships.

CT Skills works with approximately 250 trainees each year. It employs a range of staff including two traineeship tutors, one based in Derby and one in Nottingham, and two designated functional skills traineeship tutors. There is a placement officer who deals with all aspects of work experience, from finding placements and converting these into apprenticeships or employment opportunities, and a manager who oversees course content, monitoring delivery and outcomes.

CT Skills has recently been awarded a European Social Fund (ESF) Youth Engagement contract within the D2N2 LEP area, in priority sectors across Nottinghamshire, Derby City and Derbyshire.

#### Recruitment

CT Skills use a range of recruitment methods, led by a large external facing team who work directly with referral partners, job centres, work coaches and organisations that work with young people. There is a dedicated member of staff in Nottingham and one in Derby that support recruitment.

The organisation no longer specifically markets traineeships, but instead promotes a whole range of opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds on the basis of "come and talk to us if you're not sure what your next steps are". After initial assessment

young people are then offered the programme that is considered most suitable for them.

**Step Forward** has been created by CT Skills' career guidance team and is a free informal weekly group to help young people decide what they want to do and how they are going to achieve their ambitions. Young people are invited to attend and discuss options, one of which is traineeships. Taking into account a young person's individual needs and the local labour market, work experience opportunities are sourced with local employers.

There is mixed success with 19+ recruitment through local job centres; in part this is due to inconsistent understanding of the traineeship programme and pressures upon staff to meet conflicting targets. However, CT Skills has established good relationships in many offices, where marketing literature is willingly displayed and job coaches have reported good outcomes from traineeships and therefore continue to promote the programme to their claimants.

CT Skills have an excellent relationship with the D2N2 LEP and with employers in both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. They recruit work experience placements with a number of very large organisations, some of whom do not have an apprenticeship/job vacancy, but who are willing to give a young person an opportunity to experience their sector. In some instances, employers have been so impressed with the trainee that an apprenticeship has been offered to them following a successful work experience placement.

#### Initial Assessment

CT Skills has recently changed their initial assessment e-learning provider. The new provider and approach places greater emphasis upon independent study and enables young people to progress their own learning.

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Initial assessment determines the nature of programme delivery for each trainee and trainees are entered onto a system that enables them to gain experience of working on an electronic e-learning platform, as they would on an apprenticeship.

CT Skills say that English and maths skills development is one of the biggest challenges within traineeship provision, but the new e-learning system enables trainees to work independently, whether at home or in a classroom, while the tutor is working with other learners in the group. This is producing good outcomes. In addition, CT Skills' tutors have endeavoured to embed English and maths across their traineeship programme and have developed some innovative ways of engaging young people, for example, creating a large monopoly board to enable trainees to understand the concept of scale.

One tutor has also produced a maths pocket guide which has proved very successful; a learner was asked a question in a class and didn't know the answer, but remembered he had his pocket guide, pulled it out of his bag and worked out the answer.

### **Model of Delivery**

The programme is roll-on roll-off, with an intake every two weeks starting on a Tuesday, comprising an induction, interview and agreeing short and long-term goals. This is followed by a five-week classroom programme, which focusses on CV writing, employability, preparing for work, mock interviews and ensuring that trainees have appropriate work clothing (which may include taking them shopping). If trainees are going into the construction sector they need the right personal protective equipment (PPE), such as safety boots and hard hats.

CT Skills place strong emphasis on ensuring that trainees are ready for their work experience and are not put onto a placement too early. They learn about workplace etiquette and how to communicate within the workplace, which also includes a visit to the potential work placement.

The trainees do not always have an interview with the employer, but more an informal chat so the employer and trainee are confident that this is the right placement/match. It is important that this is not about testing a trainee's ability to do a job, but that it is work experience placement and a first step into the job market.

A typical weekly pattern is Monday in placement; Tuesday in the centre; Wednesday in placement, Thursday in the centre, Friday back in placement. Trainees therefore have constant contact with a member of staff, which means that any issues are identified quickly and they are able to be dealt with straightaway.

There is a mixed approach to matching trainee and employer. In some instances, an employer has already been signed up and a traineeship is tailored to suit their needs, with trainees being specifically recruited to these positions. Where trainees express an interest in working in a specific sector or role, CT Skills will recruit an appropriate employer near to where the trainee lives.

For young people who complete their traineeship but are not successful in securing an apprenticeship or a job, further support is offered and on every second Tuesday, the traineeship tutors invite the trainees back into the centre to update their CVs, support them in making apprenticeship applications and to liaise with the apprenticeship team to source vacancies.



## Progression

The most recent provider data indicates that 25% of trainees who complete their learning aims, progress into an apprenticeship with many more going into employment.

A key factor in securing good progression rates is ensuring that trainees are recruited onto the right programme to suit their individual needs. To support this CT Skills have put their 6 Employment Support Officers through a level 4 information, advice and guidance (IAG) qualification and the placement officer is also IAG qualified, enabling him to not only offer advice and guidance to the young people, but also to the employers.

CT Skills has comprehensive support mechanisms in place and all trainees know all the staff who are involved in the traineeship programme and are able to discuss their needs or difficulties openly, knowing that a solution

can be found. Communication is a key aspect of a successful outcome for trainees. Good communication between staff and parents helps to ensure that trainees are supported from all sides. In addition, regular communication with work experience employers is important in ensuring that a placement is successful.

CT Skills say that each trainee is at the centre of everything that happens within their traineeship; the programme is truly flexible and meets an individual's needs, thus ensuring that all parties are clear on the purpose and intended outcome; the relationship between the trainee and staff is crucial in this.

Depending on the sector, additional qualifications can and are offered to trainees, this could include a BTEC Level 1 in construction, health and safety training and in some instances CT Skills will pay for trainees to achieve their Construction Skills Certification Scheme card.





### Top Tips for traineeships

- Ensure your delivery model allows you to spend sufficient time with a young person prior to them starting their traineeship. This is important in understanding their needs, their strengths and weaknesses, and in building up trust. It will also enable you to plan an effective programme for each young person, from the very beginning.
- Consider encouraging staff who are involved with assessing and delivering to gain an information, advice and guidance (IAG) qualification. This helps to ensure that the right learners are on the right programmes. It also improves the support you can offer to employers, which builds positive relationships.
- Consider new and different ways of promoting traineeships. For example, traineeship ambassadors (who are either current or ex-trainees) are a great way of showcasing the programme. They can attend meetings and events, contribute to induction days and talk to new trainees.



### Trainee Experience

**Jack, 16, is from Nottingham and is a young adult carer for his mum. Jack came to CT Skills for two main reasons, firstly to respect his mum's wishes – she wanted him to pursue his own career and interests, rather than simply to care for her. Secondly, because he was unsure what career he wished to take up and recognised that he needed advice and experience.**

Jack attended the 'Step Forward' career information sessions. It was immediately clear that he had two real passions. His first was for construction, demonstrating a real flair for design and for solving practical problems. The second, was the enjoyment he gained from making different dishes for his mum, therefore cooking was an option.

In the first week of his traineeship, Jack decided that he wanted to try and follow the construction path and we agreed to let him join one of our adult courses. After 2 long weeks, Jack had achieved a level 1 Health and Safety at work qualification, a level 1 in Construction and also gained his CSCS card. Jack then re-joined his traineeship group and did really well by completing all his Work Preparation training and passing both English and maths Functional Skills at level 2.

Jack was then selected to undertake work experience at a local construction company who specialise in social housing renovation. Jack loved this despite the hard work and even asked if he could stay longer. This commitment really impressed the employer, who decided that he wanted Jack to work in his company. Jack was delighted to be offered an apprenticeship.



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### 3.3 Petroc College of Further & Higher Education

Petroc is a college of further and higher education based in Devon that predominately serves businesses, communities and individuals across mid and north Devon. The college has delivered traineeships for the past four years to a small cohort of up to 15 trainees at a time, aged between 16-18 years, to a total of between 45-50 trainees per academic year.

#### Recruitment

Petroc's traineeship programme is promoted in the college's prospectus, which results in frequent referrals internally from other departments, enabling learners who are not suited to a main college course to take up an alternative work-based route. Employers known to the college also refer young people that they feel would be suitable for a traineeship programme.

Petroc advertise their traineeship programme as a route to employment or an apprenticeship, though young people who aspire to return to learning are also accepted. The college is only one of a few providers offering a traineeship programme in the local area and has a reputation for delivering high quality learning, which is recognised and valued by employers.

#### Initial Assessment

All potential trainees receive initial assessment and guidance, followed by a one-to-one interview with the Programme Manager to discuss previous experience, employability skills, their preferred sector placement and career aspirations. This is followed by a BKSB assessment with a tutor to establish levels of functional skills and to build an overall picture of the trainee's support needs and suitability for the programme.

#### Model of Delivery

The Petroc traineeship is a 'roll-on, roll-off' programme tailored to the individual needs of the trainee and employer. The programme can last from between ten to fourteen weeks, depending on the young person's needs. During the first two weeks of the programme, following an induction, intensive work skills sessions are delivered in college. These sessions focus on developing trainees' interview skills, CV preparation, supporting statements and employment protocols to prepare the learner for a work placement.

Each work placement is 240 hours, usually over an eight-week period, however, employer needs vary - some may require the trainee to be with them for two days per week, whilst others may require four days per week, which in turn would reduce the length of stay on the programme. The Petroc traineeship team conducts workplace support visits with the trainee and employer every two weeks to review progress and set goals for the following weeks. In-between reviews, trainees are encouraged to use text messages to communicate with the college team, who are able to respond immediately to any questions or concerns. Social media, in the form of Facebook and Messenger, is also used by the college to keep in constant contact with trainees. By week seven, the employer is required to confirm whether they intend to offer the trainee an apprenticeship or employment. If a positive outcome cannot be secured, the trainee is transferred to a work placement with another employer.

Functional skills, where appropriate, is delivered every Wednesday in college. Although some trainees may have achieved GCSE English and maths they often still need support to be confident with certain elements. In addition to functional skills qualifications, Petroc also offer certificated courses in Customer Service, First Aid, Health and Safety, and Moving and Handling.

### Progression

In 2015/16 Petroc had a progression rate of 87% of trainees achieving a positive outcome, with 60% of these young people moving into an apprenticeship. The majority of trainees who progressed to an apprenticeship stayed with the college. Only 5% of trainees moved to an apprenticeship with another training provider – mainly because the college did not offer the occupational area they wished to work in.

Last year the traineeship team was incorporated into the wider apprenticeship department. This has enabled closer day-to-day working relationships with the curriculum teams, which has resulted in a greater understanding of the benefits of the traineeship programme as a progression pathway to apprenticeships. Referrals between the two programmes have increased, enabling the college to meet the needs of the trainees and providing a pipeline of 'apprenticeship-ready' young people.





### Top Tips for traineeships

- In addition to formal reviews, consider using social media to keep in touch with trainees. This helps to build the relationship and trust between the college traineeship staff and the trainee, and enables the trainee to know that they will get a quick response to questions and concerns.
- From the outset, be clear with employers about what is required from them in providing a positive work placement and expectations in terms of identifying an apprenticeship or employment opportunity for each trainee. Employers are far more likely to buy into the concept of traineeships if they understand their role and the possible outcomes and benefits for their business.
- Consider integrating your traineeship and apprenticeship delivery teams. This provides coherence and joined-up working. It also positions traineeships as a clear and linear pathway to apprenticeships, which benefits young people, employers and you as a provider.



### Trainee Experience

**Madison enrolled on a travel and tourism course at Petroc, however, after a few weeks she decided it was not for her. Shortly after she saw a hairdressing vacancy advertised in her local area. Madison made contact with the apprenticeship Programme Manager at the college, who arranged an interview. Madison was successful and was taken on as an apprentice.**

As time went by Madison decided she was not suited to the hair and beauty environment, so left her position. However, Madison's dream was to complete an apprenticeship so she contacted the Programme Manager again, who then arranged an in depth IAG session to discuss her aspirations and options. It became apparent that Madison needed additional support as she struggled in classroom and workplace settings, as she was very shy, lacked self-confidence and was unable to ask questions whilst in a group.

Madison was told about Petroc's traineeship programme and how it could help her to overcome the challenges she faced and make a successful transition into employment. Since starting the traineeship Madison has grown in confidence. She has achieved qualifications in Health and Safety and Moving and Handling. She now has a clear understanding of workplace expectations and the type of role that would suit her and, having gained experience of working in a nursery, has decided that she wants to pursue a career in the childcare sector. Madison has completed five short courses and is enjoying her new role as an apprentice in childcare.

Madison commented that the Programme Manager always 'made me feel at ease, listened to what I had to say and wanted to achieve. She made me feel I was worth it'.

### 3.4 Acacia Training and Development

Acacia is an independent training provider, that has been established for over 20 years. Acacia predominately delivers in the south west and works in partnership with Somerset Care. At the Taunton adult training centre Acacia offers a traineeship programme, which lasts for up to 16 weeks, aimed at local young people aged 16-24.

The Taunton based traineeship programme was established in 2015 and attracts young people from Taunton, Bridgewater, Minehead and surrounding rural areas, with a typical travel to work journey for many of 1-1.5 hours. A small traineeship team, supported by a functional skills tutor, delivers the programme with up to 12 trainees at any one time.

#### Recruitment

Acacia use a variety of recruitment methods, beginning with a strong working relationship with three local Jobcentre Plus offices based in Bridgewater, Taunton and Minehead who refer potential trainees on a regular basis. In partnership with other local organisations such as YMCA, Aspire and Dimensions, Acacia works with trainees from a range of backgrounds, including homeless young people and young people with health and social barriers to learning and employment.

Internally, tutors that run other programmes for Acacia also refer potential trainees to the programme. This is predominantly young people who tutors think may be better suited to undertaking a traineeship before progressing to an apprenticeship, employment or further education.

Acacia has developed a leaflet about traineeships, aimed at young people, that explains the core elements of the programme and how it can help them to progress towards employment or an apprenticeship.

#### Initial Assessment

Offering a roll-on roll-off programme, Acacia holds group inductions every Monday for new trainees. During this session tutors explain what a traineeship entails, what is expected from participants, followed by a more in-depth one-to-one discussion with each trainee. Partners and referral organisations favour this 'quick start' opportunity - being able to refer someone who can commence a programme within a few days.

Individual action plans are developed to capture each young person's career aspirations, potential barriers to progression and how to overcome them. Short and long term goals are agreed along with any additional support activity required. Most young people that come to Acacia need to improve their communication, team working and problem solving skills. In the transition from school to employment they also need to understand what a positive work ethic is and how they can develop the skills to put this into practice.

#### Model of Delivery

Following induction and initial assessment, the programme features a month of intensive employability job coaching over 2 days a week. This includes applying for live job vacancies, developing CVs, completing application forms, developing a profile and interview techniques. A session entitled the 'hidden job market' explains how and where to look for employment that is not advertised on the Internet e.g. word of mouth opportunities, local newspapers and direct contact with employers. Trainees also study and take relevant practical qualifications during this time, such as First Aid and Health and Safety.

The first month of the traineeship is very focussed. It enable trainees to concentrate on their employment goals and develop their soft skills, such as being on time, having a good attitude to learning and working with others, as well as taking responsibility for themselves and their actions.

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Functional Skills, is delivered every Thursday afternoon. Many Acacia traineeship learners struggled to achieve in English and maths whilst at school. The small group sessions therefore boost trainees' motivation and confidence and promote a 'can do' attitude.

Work placements usually begin after the first month following an interview with an employer from the trainee's chosen sector. Placements typically last for six to twelve weeks depending on the individual's progress and the employer's willingness to offer employment or an apprenticeship on completion. Trainees with no previous work experience often undertake more than one work placement to help them decide and choose the occupational sector they would be best suited to work in. Trainees regularly undertake projects and attend workshops to reinforce their learning throughout the traineeship. A recent example of this is a film project that was used to enhance and reinforce the trainees' experience. The young people interviewed and filmed ex-trainees who had secured a job outcome, to show to future groups entering the programme. In addition, a workshop was organised to look at interview techniques. It involved working with managers from different companies to offer mock interview situations before attending a live interview with an employer. Trainees reflected on their performance then discussed their experiences with other members of the group.

All trainees are allocated work mentors to support them whilst on placement. Acacia's

placement liaison adviser visits each trainee on a weekly basis to discuss progress. A review is conducted at the midway point, which involves the employer. Employers also conduct a final exit interview, which focusses on what the learner can now do, and provide statements that can be used as a reference and included in a CV.

### **Progression**

In 2014/15, 100% of young people who completed Acacia's traineeship progressed into a job. Although Acacia primarily focus on supporting their trainees to get jobs, they are increasingly focussing upon progression to apprenticeships. Many apprenticeship opportunities come from Somerset Care and other local businesses. If a trainee is not offered a job or apprenticeship with an employer with whom they undertook work experience, they return to the 'traineeship job club' to apply for other vacancies. Acacia's traineeship delivery team regularly reviews the programme offer, taking into account trainee and employer feedback, adjusting delivery where appropriate.

Mixing different trainee groups and ages is viewed as a huge advantage by Acacia as the newer trainees can engage and learn from those that are more advanced on the programme and may already be out on placement. Young people from the leading groups often act as mentors to those who have started later, showing them the correct workplace behaviours and approaches needed to progress. These relationships enable trainees to build confidence and help them to develop social and team working skills.



### Top Tips for traineeships

- Review your programme on a regular basis, listening to employer and learner feedback. This will help you to develop flexible and effective programmes.
- Communication, communication, communication! Acacia strongly believe in sharing experiences about what works and what doesn't work. This enables all stakeholders to understand how the programme can be used effectively and continuously improved.
- Frequent and one-to-one support for trainees on work placement is essential. It builds motivation, helps to overcome difficulties and enables young people to see the progress they are making.



### Trainee Experience

Through the traineeships programme, Eliza has gained confidence in working with other people. Whilst on placement with Go Outdoors, she has established good relationships with staff and has developed excellent customer service skills. With the support of her manager and workplace mentor, Eliza now understands the importance of good time keeping and an upbeat attitude. As a result of her hard work, determination and willingness to learn, Eliza has now been offered a full time job with Go Outdoors.

As one of Go Outdoors' first trainees, her work experience manager describes her as a real trailblazer! Eliza is delighted to have her first job and has big aspirations for her future career.



### 3.5 Hackney College

New City College London, a merged college between Tower Hamlets College and Hackney Community College and soon to be merged with Redbridge College, will be the second largest further education college in London and the eighth largest in the country.

Hackney Community College is situated in one of the fifth most deprived and diverse areas in England. Trainees are recruited from all backgrounds and provision is developed in response to the needs of the local community. With a large number of young people engaged in further education and apprenticeships, the college successfully delivers traineeships and a range of short course programmes.

As a result of a number of new builds in the local area, the college has access to employers who are recruiting for both apprenticeships and traineeships. There is already a well-established construction facility at the college, which supports a large number of apprentices.

#### Recruitment

Traineeship vacancies are advertised with local charities, including The Prince's Trust, Catch 22, the Passion Project and the St James's Trust. In addition, the college has a very good working relationship with Jobcentre Plus in Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Tottenham and Wood Green and the newly merged college has strengthened these links. There is a need to constantly refresh and remind JCP Advisers of the traineeship opportunities offered by the college.

Hackney Council has negotiated with construction companies building in the local area an agreement to recruit 52 apprenticeship starts over a two-year period and traineeships were identified as a way of recruiting young people.

The programme is considered an effective means of enabling young people to improve their employability and ensure they are committed and ready for an apprenticeship.

Each cohort of trainees is recruited based on employer needs, as and when employers are ready to accommodate young people on work experience placements, and is subject to the stage of the construction build and occupational sectors in which the placement will take place.

#### Initial Assessment

Recruitment is over a 3-4 week period. During this time, and prior to starting the traineeship, all trainees undertake a BKS assessment and receive information, advice and guidance to identify any barriers to joining the programme, for example the need for financial support, help to manage home circumstances or one-to-one support.

Employers attend and meet the trainees to explain about the sector, the job and the apprenticeship opportunities available, and to discuss the training options within their company. The aim is to ensure that trainees are committed to the traineeship programme, have understood their responsibilities, the employers' expectations and the progression opportunities that will be available to them if their traineeship is successful.

#### Model of Delivery

The traineeship programme is led by employers' needs and local priorities. Employers meet trainees prior to the programme commencing and have already identified job and apprenticeship positions that are available. Relationships between employer and learner are being built from the start of the programme.



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Some young people move into work experience placements earlier than others and in the case of construction, the trainees undertake extensive health and safety training and are supported to achieve their CSCS card prior to starting work experience.

Employers train each young person in multi-trade occupations to provide them with experience and insight into a range of options, e.g. carpentry, painting and decorating and plumbing, and once the trainee has gained sufficient experience to be able to decide on the occupation most suitable for them, they are supported to apply for a job/apprenticeship vacancy with the company.

The College's employability skills tutor provides advice and guidance on skills development, on-site behaviour, communication, the various on-site trades and works with each individual trainee to build their confidence. The trainees also attend functional skills classes, which are adapted to suit trainees' individual needs and learning styles. A range of enrichment activities are also delivered to complement classroom and work experience learning. For example, a groups of trainees were taken to the Victoria & Albert museum to learn about architecture and materials.

Trainees attend their work experience placement for one week, then return to the college centre for two weeks, to continue with functional skills and employability training, before returning to work experience. On average the traineeship programme lasts for 12 weeks, but in some cases, if a young person requires more time, they are given the opportunity to continue until the tutor, employer and trainee feel that they are ready to start work as an apprentice.

### **Progression**

Employers are put at the forefront of the programme, identifying opportunities and taking an active part in developing the training. They conduct informal discussions with the trainee to explain the industry, their company and the opportunities available.

Employers arrange 'round robin' trade tasters whereby trainees move around the different trades to gain an understanding of the various jobs. To aid this experience the college has excellent facilities in its construction department and is able to use these resources to introduce trainees to the various on-site trades and to reinforce work experience learning.

Trainees are recruited at specific times of the year that coincide with the build stage of employers' projects. As employers have already identified the vacancies that will be available in the various trades, trainees are aware of the opportunities from the outset and the areas they can try out. Employers support the trainees throughout their programme, providing a clear pathway to a real vacancy at the end of the programme.

In 2014/15, 80 young people completed a traineeship with Hackney Community College, of these 62% progressed into an apprenticeship and 25% into a job.



### Top Tips for traineeships

- Invest time in understanding the diverse needs of the local community and the opportunities available with local employers, and develop a flexible and adaptable programme to meet all stakeholders' needs. This will help to ensure a successful outcome for young people and employers.
- Fully involve employers in the development and delivery of traineeship programmes from the start. This will demonstrate to the trainees that there is a commitment to provide valuable work experience and a real opportunity to progress to an apprenticeship or job outcome.
- Develop a flexible and supportive programme that meets the needs of individual young people. This will enable them to develop specific job skills and overcome their barriers to achievement.



### Trainee Experience

**Mark had been attending college for a year, but was making limited progress and becoming frustrated. He was referred to the College's traineeship programme and met with the Project Skills Contractor at Higgins Construction. Mark quickly decided that a traineeship was the right option for him.**

Mark completed and passed the Construction Skills Certification Scheme test, which enabled him to work on site. He started his work experience placement in November 2016. Mark carries out a range of tasks alongside the staff working on site and enjoys keeping busy and active. He is more confident and open with people and is improving his communication skills every day. Feedback from his employer has been very positive.

When asked if he would recommend the programme to others he says "yes definitely, I've been recommending this to my friends too and they have asked me how they can join. I like that the company employ local people as I think it is better than travelling around and waking up early, I feel more comfortable and it is only a 10 minute walk from my home."

### 3.6 Heathercroft Training Services Limited

Heathercroft is a medium sized work-based learning provider, established for 25 years, that has been delivering traineeships for four years. Heathercroft operates across a variety of sectors offering apprenticeships and work-based learning in childcare, customer service, health and social care, information technology, business administration, cleaning and environmental support services. The care sector represents a large proportion of employment in the local area of Eastbourne; in response to this Heathercroft is working closely with local employers to create pathways to jobs, via traineeships, for local young people.

#### Recruitment

Heathercroft work with 16-18 year olds and some 19+ trainees in partnership with a range of local employers. They also work closely with both the local Youth Employment Service (which produces a monthly newsletter advertising traineeship vacancies) and The Prince's Trust. Heathercroft has successfully worked with one local school during GCSE results day to recruit trainees who had not achieved the required grades to enter the sixth form. Job Fairs at the local Jobcentre Plus have also been used as a way of recruiting young people.

Heathercroft also works in partnership with an organisation called Project Search; an organisation which produces a newsletter promoting traineeship and apprenticeship vacancies. The monthly newsletter is well known in the local area and is an important resource in ensuring that young people, parents, employers and referral partners are aware of Heathercroft's traineeships and the opportunities available.

#### Initial Assessment

All potential trainees are informally interviewed and complete an initial assessment before commencing on the programme. The initial assessment highlights the level of English and maths achieved by the trainee and also identifies the personalised support that will be needed to help the trainee succeed.

Career and job aspirations are discussed to help match the trainee to a suitable employer. Heathercroft, where possible, will provide each trainee with a placement that is relevant to the sector that they feel is most suited to them. To achieve this Heathercroft works closely with local businesses to source high quality and relevant work experience.

#### Model of Delivery

The programme lasts for a maximum of six months with two cohorts of up to 8 trainees on each. The trainees do 21 hours out on placement each week and eight hours in the training centre in a classroom environment. Trainees have an informal interview with their prospective employer within the first three weeks of the traineeship; in some instances trainees find placements themselves and are then referred to Heathercroft by the employer. The trainee completes an initial assessment prior to the commencement of the traineeship. At the time of this initial assessment, and during the first one to two weeks of the programme, the trainee works on interview preparation skills.

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All sessions delivered at the training centre are designed to promote transferable employability skills. Tutors focus on enabling trainees to develop and understand how to apply these skills to the sectors they want to work in. On occasions additional sessions that are subject specific are provided for a trainee, for example for child care placements, Heathercroft offers an additional session to cover 'Confidentiality in Early Years' and 'How to effectively communicate in an Early Years setting'.

The placement is the most important aspect of the traineeship offer. All trainees and employers sign a Learner Agreement that sets out the roles and responsibilities of all involved. The employer will agree the level of training and support that they will give the trainee. Trainees are reviewed by a monitoring officer visit every 2-6 weeks depending on progress being made, with new aims and targets being set for the young person to work towards before the next visit.

Heathercroft work hard to effectively match the young person to the right employer to achieve their career aspirations. This often requires Heathercroft to access new employers and recruit additional placements. This practice ensures that the trainee is aware of what the sector requirements are, allowing them to make more informed choices for their progression. Heathercroft often visits local employers to raise awareness of the traineeship programme and what it entails. In some cases the employer cannot offer a progression route, however, Heathercroft feel that the experience that can be gained from a work experience placement is extremely valuable to the trainee's future decision-making.

Traineeship and apprenticeship delivery teams are located in the same building, which allows for continuity and synergy between teams and positions a coherent pathway for progression. Frequently the apprenticeship team are able to source effective work placements for the traineeship programme via their employer base in the same curriculum area e.g. health and social care. Employers are more open to the idea of offering a work experience placement when they feel confident and have an on-going relationship with the training provider. The trainee benefits from continuity of practice and training delivered through the Heathercroft assessor already associated and working with the employer.

### **Progression**

Most recent data shows that 80% of trainees who complete the full six-month traineeship progress into employment. Those who are not offered an apprenticeship or employment are given the opportunity to return to the classroom with Heathercroft to focus more on employability skills, looking for jobs, updating their CV and preparing job applications.

Should a trainee wish to progress to an apprenticeship or employment in an occupational area not offered by Heathercroft, the staff work with other local providers to find a suitable employer or work placement provider.

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All trainees receive one to one support from a tutor and specialist English and maths teachers each week throughout their traineeship. This personalised support is tailored to the young person's individual needs and is contextualised to match the needs of the work placement. This approach is viewed as a key contributor to successful progression to employment or an apprenticeship for a young person, coupled with clear communication between all parties including parents and employers. A short informative leaflet, a copy of the Learning

Agreement, risk assessment information and details of the work placement are given to all parents of young people who participate in the programme. An employer leaflet highlighting what to expect when offering a traineeship programme is also given to the employer before the trainee commences their work placement. With the provider, this triad of support gives the trainee a secure and safe environment to develop their skills and secure employment or an apprenticeship.







### Top Tips for traineeships

- Make sure you put a formal Learning Agreement in place that both employers and trainees sign up to. This will help all parties to value the work experience placement and makes sure expectations are clear from the beginning.
- Visit trainees regularly throughout their work placement and set new goals each time. This ensures that trainees feel well supported, that they know what they're aiming for and can see the small steps of progress that they are making.
- Take into account the career aspirations of trainees when placing them. In our experience, when trainees are motivated by their placement it makes a huge difference to success rates.



### Trainee Experience

**Simran was referred to Heathercroft's traineeship programme by The Prince's Trust. Lack of confidence, work experience and poor social skills were identified as key barriers to employment for Simran. Whilst at Heathercroft Simran continued to receive support from her Prince's Trust mentor, who worked closely with her traineeship tutor to develop a programme that would meet her individual needs.**

Simran undertook a retail work experience placement at Scope, which gave her the opportunity to meet different people and understand the expectations of working in a shop. At first Simran was very nervous, but as time progressed she grew in confidence and greatly enjoyed her placement, to the extent that she now volunteers for Scope on a regular basis.

Another challenge for Simran was improving her maths and English skills. From a low starting point, Simran has made great progress. Her work experience placement at Scope has enabled her to put her new maths skills into practice and she now has a strong determination to succeed.

Simran has completed her traineeship. She continues to volunteer at Scope and is receiving further support from The Prince's Trust, in addition to receiving ongoing support from Heathercroft to complete her functional skills.

### 3.7 Redcar Adult Learning Services

The Borough of Redcar and Cleveland is a unitary authority in the Tees Valley region, in the North East of England. As part of Redcar Council, Redcar Adult Learning Service (ALS) has previously delivered traineeships for the Council's 'cleaner and greener' department, last year running three cohorts of ten trainees each. Traineeships are now offered more widely across all council departments and are aimed at local young people aged 16-24.

#### Recruitment

Trainees are recruited through the dedicated Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Routes to Employment teams within the council, working in partnership with departmental managers and some council operated care homes. Redcar ALS has a small traineeship team that sits within a wider apprenticeship department, comprised of a manager, two coordinators, two maths and two English tutors, and a further tutor who delivers employability skills to the trainees.

#### Initial Assessment

Small groups of trainees are taken through a paper based OCR initial assessment to ascertain their level of functional skills and any additional support requirements. This is followed by an informal discussion with each trainee to explore his or her background, work experience and sector interest. During these initial discussions 'ground rules' are outlined and agreed in terms of attendance, behaviour, time keeping, attitude, respect for others and group work. These are then reinforced during the classroom-based activities throughout the programme.

This initial information is used to build up an individual learning plan for each trainee, which includes career aspirations and short and long term goals.

#### Model of Delivery

Redcar ALS offers a flexible programme ranging from 6-12 weeks depending on the requirements of the trainee and the work experience placement offered by the employer. The six-week programme is more intense and is aimed at trainees who might already have their level 2 English and maths qualifications and just require more work experience and help with their employability skills. Trainees who need to do English and maths, and require more intensive employability skills support, usually follow the longer programme.

Trainees typically spend three days each week in the classroom, which is usually Monday to Wednesday, and one to two days in their allocated work experience placement for the remaining part of the week. The classroom-based activities are varied and delivered by a variety of tutors to enable trainees to experience change and to become comfortable working on different topics with different groups. Shift patterns and the needs of the employer are also taken into consideration, so the weekly timetable can be flexible and tailored to the trainee's needs and the employer's business requirements.

The traineeship tutors have a close working relationship with each other and are able to quickly pick up on and resolve any issues that occur during the time spent in the classroom or whilst the trainee is on work experience placement.

Vocational, IT and equality and diversity units are offered to all trainees depending on their needs and the type of sector and apprenticeship they want to work in.

### Progression

In 2014/15, 30 young people completed an traineeship with Redcar ALS, of these 67% progressed into an apprenticeship.

Redcar ALS predominantly offers apprenticeships in business administration, customer service and health and social care at levels 2 and 3 and also environmental services at level 2. The majority of trainees progress into these apprenticeship opportunities following completion of their traineeship programme. Trainees who are interested in an apprenticeship pathway not offered by Redcar ALS are referred to another suitable provider in the local area.

At the end of the last traineeship programme for the Council's 'cleaner and greener' department, twenty of the thirty trainees progressed to an apprenticeship within the Council; one went into further education, one to university and

the remaining eight to an apprenticeship with another provider.

Redcar ALS has also recently started working with a local retailer that had two apprenticeship vacancies. The retailer provided work experience placements to ten trainees, from whom two were selected for the apprenticeships. At the end of the traineeship programme the remaining eight who were unsuccessful were given additional support around interview skills, applying for jobs and developing a CV, and also attended a briefing from the National Careers Service.

The key to success for Redcar ALS lies in short intense programmes tailored to trainees' needs, tutors that deliver engaging contextualised learning sessions and strong relationships with departmental managers within the Council who offer work experience opportunities.





### Top Tips for traineeships

- Develop robust initial assessment and IAG processes to enable you to effectively match trainees to the right employer and sector. This helps to keep trainees motivated by their placement and increases the likelihood of progression.
- Consider a combined traineeship and apprenticeship delivery team. This allows flexible delivery options for core elements such as English and maths and enables trainees to build up trust and a relationship with tutors across both programmes.
- Work closely with employers/departmental managers to ensure they fully understand what is required when offering a work experience placement. This benefits the trainee, as they will have the opportunity to develop suitable and relevant skills within an informed and supportive setting.



### Trainee Experience

**Stuart began a traineeship with Redcar Adult Learning Service in October 2015. By the end of his 10-week programme he had successfully passed English and maths functional skills at level 1 and had gained a vocational qualification in horticulture.**

On completion of his traineeship Stuart was offered an apprenticeship with the waste services department of Redcar Council. Growing in confidence he completed his level 2 local environmental services apprenticeship in one year, and at the beginning of February 2017 was offered full time employment with the team he worked alongside during his apprenticeship.

Stuart's journey demonstrates a clear career pathway. From being unable to secure an apprenticeship, he was able to progress from a traineeship, through an apprenticeship to full time employment with the Council.

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### 3.8 Redwood Skills

Redwood Skills was established in 2008. It employs over 60 staff across London and the South East and delivers recruitment and training services across four sites in London. Redwood Skills offer a range of services including business, customer services and other office related apprenticeships, pre-employment training and recruitment services for employers.

Traineeships are delivered from the company's Ealing centre, with an average cohort size of 12 trainees, and a total of 30-40 trainees during each academic year.

#### Recruitment

Trainees are recruited in the sector areas that Redwood Skills specialises in for their apprenticeship provision; this gives them an opportunity to recruit work experience placements with existing apprenticeship employers.

Redwood Skills have a clear trainee information leaflet that concisely outlines the purpose of a traineeship, the benefits to the young person and expectations of them. Their website also provides a range of information about traineeships and is simple to navigate. There is a separate section for schools and parents, with printable downloads available.

Redwood Skills' trainees come from a range of different backgrounds. Many are disadvantaged and/or not in education, employment or training (NEET). Redwood undertakes a wide range of outreach and community based activity, working with over 200 local partners who refer young people to their traineeship programme, including Connexions, local youth offending teams, YMCA and local authority leaving care teams. The development of strong relationships with these local partners is essential in providing a pathway for young people who are NEET.

Redwood Skills have decided not to actively recruit trainees through Jobcentre Plus, as there are sufficient other organisations from which they can get referrals to their traineeship programme.

#### Initial Assessment

When trainees are referred to Redwood Skills they undergo a comprehensive initial advice and guidance interview to assess their suitability for either a traineeship, study programme or apprenticeship. The assessment takes into account their academic level and achievements, aspirations and confidence. Trainees are given a range of information that allows them to make an informed decision on the best route for them.

Trainees complete an initial test using Forskills and must be at entry level 3 or above in English and maths to be accepted on to the programme.

#### Model of Delivery

Young people may be on Redwood Skills' traineeship programme for up to six months and will undertake employability skills training two days each week and functional skills training one day each week. After the second week of the programme they are placed on work experience. However, the number of hours or days they attend each week is dependent on the needs of the trainee. Many start with a relatively low number of hours, which is gradually increased over a number of weeks.

Employers interview potential trainees before accepting them on work experience. Some small and medium size employers (SMEs) require guidance and support in effective recruitment methods, for example in interview techniques. A work experience agreement and a job description is agreed with each employer, outlining the skills training that each trainee will receive whilst on work experience placement. This is important in ensuring that all parties have a clear understanding of the intended learning and progression that a trainee will make.



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All trainees are provided with a traineeship booklet and a work experience diary. The trainees complete the diary each day to enable them to capture and reflect upon their learning. Workplace mentors support the trainee in completing the diary, recording progress and commenting on additional activities that may be required to achieve the planned learning and outcomes.

The diary also includes useful information for the trainee including a code of conduct, advice on interview techniques, and feedback opportunities. The trainee will also reflect on their diary entries at work skills workshops with tutors, where additional support is identified and provided if required.

Employers and trainees are contacted on a weekly basis, usually by telephone, to monitor progress during the work experience placement and to ensure that the planned learning is taking place. A formal written review is undertaken with the trainee and employer every 3-4 weeks to assess the learning and training and is recorded in the trainee's diary. Depending on the needs and progress of the trainee, this may take place more frequently.

### **Progression**

Over 60% of trainees progress into an apprenticeship, usually with Redwood Skills, and are often taken on by the employer offering the work experience placement. Trainees are placed with employers in a geographical area near to where they live as this reduces barriers to travelling in and around London. All employers pay a minimum of £5 or a gift voucher towards daily travel, as well as lunch expenses on production of receipts.

To give trainees insight into a wide range of career options and pathways, Redwood Skills involves other organisations in preparing trainees for work experience. An example of this is the Heathrow Academy, whose staff have given presentations to trainees on the plethora of job opportunities available at Heathrow Airport.

Redwood Skills are currently in discussion with a number of NHS Trusts to develop a traineeship programme as a route to apprenticeships. The driver for this is to enable the Trusts to meet their new public-sector apprenticeship targets and to ensure a strong supply of apprenticeship-ready young people who can fill the vacancies that are being created through their Apprenticeship Levy investments.



### Top Tips for traineeships

- Take time and be realistic with each young person at initial interview stage. This will enable them to make an informed decision about the best option for them and will help to ensure that they are committed to their traineeship and achieve a successful outcome.
- Give smaller employers advice on developing the content of their work experience placement to ensure that each trainee is receiving appropriate and relevant support to develop their skills. Building a supportive environment benefits both the trainee and employer and often leads to a positive experience.
- Ensure weekly contact with the trainee and employer, either by telephone, email, or face to face, to identify issues at an early stage. This will help to reduce early drop out and aid progression.



### Trainee Experience

**Martin is 19 years old. He participated in a traineeship to develop his interpersonal and employability skills, as well as to boost his confidence when communicating and speaking in public, as this had been identified as a barrier to employment during his initial assessment. Martin attended a work experience placement at Connexions in West Ealing, which was close to his home, for two days per week.**

Martin completed his English and maths functional skills level 1. Although he struggled at the beginning, with the support of his trainer Martin was able to achieve these qualifications.

Martin particularly valued the support and help provided by the tutors at Redwood Skills. They were able to work on a one-to-one basis with him to improve his communications skills, which had previously prevented him from gaining an apprenticeship.

Martin has now progressed to an apprenticeship at Ealing Council in the insurance team.

### 3.9 The Source Skills Academy

The Source Skills Academy is the trading name of Meadowhall Training Ltd, an independent training provider which has been in operation for 14 years. It was originally set up with funding from Sheffield City Council, British Land (who at that time owned Meadowhall Shopping Centre) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The aim of The Source is to provide accessible skills and training for people from the local community and to support local businesses (including the retailers at Meadowhall) to recruit new staff and upskill existing employees.

During the 2015/16 academic year The Source had 40 young people on their traineeship programme and approximately 800 apprentices across a variety of sectors including retail, business administration, warehousing and distribution, and sales and marketing.

#### Recruitment

The Source works with local schools and regularly attends careers events to promote traineeships. There is a dedicated apprenticeship team who lead learner recruitment and where they have been unsuccessful in securing an apprenticeship for a young person, they will consider whether a traineeship is a more suitable option. In some instances, the apprenticeship team will also identify young people who are not ready for an apprenticeship and refer them directly to traineeships.

The Source has a good reputation locally and an excellent relationship with Sheffield Futures, who regularly refer young people directly from their careers team. The Source also has good partnership arrangement in place with Jobcentre Plus, who regularly refer clients onto traineeships. JCP staff value The Source's traineeship programme as staff have been able to demonstrate a good track record of

progressing young people into employment with sustainable outcomes.

Advisers from the Sheffield JCP were invited to The Source to observe traineeship delivery. This enabled them to gain a more in-depth understanding of the programme. As a result JCP Advisers are now more informed about the programme and are able to identify suitable clients and give them an accurate overview of traineeships and the benefits of participating before making a referral.

The Source produces a monthly traineeship newsletter to update their teams and account managers, who provide business support to employers. The newsletter contains case studies of young people who have been successful and is used to promote traineeships and source work placements. By giving real examples, an employer who is unsure whether they want to commit to recruiting an apprentice may be willing to take a trainee on a work experience placement, later converting into an apprenticeship if the trainee is able to prove their value.

#### Initial Assessment

The Source's traineeship is a roll-on roll-off programme with no set start dates; trainees who are eligible can start a traineeship at any time. The first interaction with a young person is a one to one informal meeting to ensure that the young person understands the purpose of a traineeship. Parents are also invited at this stage to give them confidence that the programme is a suitable option and to enable them to ask questions about the programme.

This informal meeting gives the traineeship tutors an opportunity to assess a young person's suitability for the traineeship. Once a young person is accepted onto the traineeship, they return to the centre and meet the tutor on a one-to-one basis and undertake an initial assessment, using the Guroo or BKSb assessment tools. The

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trainee also undertakes a structured interview to identify their career aspirations, previous experience and their attainment at school. This interview, initial assessment and skills scan helps the team to build a personal learning plan for the young person, which includes both short and long term milestone targets and goals. Regular reviews are also factored into the plan to ensure the young person remains on track and receives the training as agreed with the employer.

### **Model of Delivery**

The Source has a flexible offer and agrees with employers the work experience days; delivery of the other core elements of the programme is arranged around these days.

Trainees are on programme for an average of four weeks before they go onto a work placement, although some may secure their work experience earlier. The usual length of the traineeship is four months, though in some instances employers have converted the traineeship into an apprenticeship within a couple of weeks of the trainee starting their placement, as they were so impressed with the young person's ability and performance.

For some trainees, sector specific background training is often provided on a one-to-one basis if they have limited knowledge of the occupation, for example if they are going into a retail or customer service placement, they may require some additional information and guidance about the job role.

This approach is effective for small groups of trainees, however as the traineeship programme grows, the Source will review its delivery model to ensure the structure works for larger groups of young people without compromising the flexible elements of the programme.

### **Progression**

In 2015/16 40 young people started a traineeship and 32 completed their programme, of the 8 that left early 4 progressed into employment. The progression rate is 81%, with the majority of trainees moving into an apprenticeship with The Source, although a small number of trainees found apprenticeships with other providers who were better placed to provide an opportunity in the young person's sector of choice.

A key factor in the success of the programme is the pastoral support and care that trainees receive on a one-to-one basis. Trainees regularly return after leaving the programme to keep in touch with their tutors and report on their progress.

The Source ensure that all employers, for both apprenticeships and traineeships, have real, good job opportunities and have the infrastructure in place to support learners. It is also important that employers provide an appropriate job description and are aware of their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and Prevent. The Source staff have weekly contact with each trainee whilst on placement and undertake visits to monitor progress and identify any potential issues.

The Source is currently helping a large local employer to recruit 75 apprentices per year and is planning to develop a new traineeship programme which will provide a pipeline of young people for their apprenticeship programme.

When a trainee progresses onto an apprenticeship with The Source, there is a 'warm' handover to the work based learning tutor. During the early stages of an apprenticeship, the traineeship tutor is still involved in supporting the young person. This enables the trainee to make a smooth and supported transition to an apprenticeship.



### Top Tips for traineeships

- Invite local referral agencies to your centre, to gain an understanding of your traineeship. This ensures that key agencies have good insight into the programme and demonstrates successful progression into apprenticeships or jobs.
- Take time to understand and be responsive to the needs of the local community, employers, trainees and partners. This will enable you to become the provider of choice when they are recruiting and upskilling.
- Build trust and rapport with trainees who may be vulnerable or come from difficult backgrounds. Providing additional support at the right level is key to a successful traineeship programme.
- Produce a regular newsletter for employers, trainees, referral partners and internal staff to promote your traineeship programme. Case studies are a good way of highlighting the effectiveness of traineeships in supporting local young people into employment.



### Trainee Experience

**Shafika started her journey at The Source by participating in The Prince's Trust's "Get into Customer Service" programme, as she wanted to learn new skills in the retail and business sectors. As part of the programme she undertook work experience with Marks & Spencer at Meadowhall and on completing this programme she progressed onto a traineeship. Her traineeship work experience placement was with the Sheffield Kitchen Outlet, a local business based in Hillsborough.**

Shafika was nervous at first, but with the support of her tutors she was excited about the traineeship opportunity and enjoyed the work experience placement. She learnt new skills in administration and soon became an established part of the team and felt very welcome.

After two weeks into her placement Shafika was overjoyed to be offered an apprenticeship with the Sheffield Kitchen Outlet and is now working towards her Level 2 Apprenticeship in Business Administration, including Functional Skills in English and maths.

Shafika is continuing her journey with The Source and benefits from the support of a Work Based Learning Tutor. Shafika said, "People should come to The Source to get more experience and skills, everyone is really nice. I am glad I came and found The Source!"



### 3.10 The Training and Recruitment Partnership Limited

Training & Recruitment Partnership Ltd (TRP) is an independent learning provider established in 1988 and originally based in Wimbledon, now based in Merton. TRP offers a wide range of traineeships in health and social care, engineering, construction, retail and business.

TRP sub-contract with a supply chain of up to 8 providers, to support the delivery of their traineeship programme across London. This sub-contracting arrangement enables TRP to engage a wide range of employers including the London Borough of Waltham Forest, McDonald's restaurant and construction companies who are committed to offering work placements and apprenticeship vacancies through local commissioning arrangements.

One of TRP's sub-contractors has supported St Bart's NHS Trust to develop a range of traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities in Newham, an area with a large black and minority ethnic population. St Barts has taken part in a video promoting the programme and explaining how it enabled them to take on young people from diverse backgrounds.

TRP also works in partnership with United Living. Whilst undertaking a large scale regeneration of a local housing estate, United Living developed a traineeship programme with TRP. The purpose of the programme was to provide opportunities for local young people to undertake work experience and develop skills in construction before committing to work in the sector.

#### Recruitment

TRP have an open-door policy on recruitment and integrate 16-18 year olds with 19+ trainees, which ensures that they offer a viable group in terms of trainee numbers. Approximately one-

third of trainees are typically aged 16-18 and two-thirds are 19+.

Recruitment is undertaken through a variety of sources including Jobcentre Plus, local authority services for young people and voluntary sector partners. TRP also work with Grenfell Housing, in Merton, who are locally based and were formerly a YMCA foyer project that supported young people who had lost their housing or needed somewhere to live. Part of the housing condition is that residents develop skills for work, as a result many are referred to TRP's traineeship programme.

TRP had good relationships with JCP but there have been a number of staff changes recently. This has caused some problems as new advisers don't always have good levels of understanding of traineeships. In addition, in the Merton and Sutton area, Universal Credit has been introduced, which appears to have resulted in a reduced number of 18-24 year olds being referred to the programme.

Following their inspection in November 2016, TRP were graded as good by Ofsted, including their traineeship provision, which has enhanced their reputation in the local area and resulted in an increase in word of mouth referrals from partners and employers.

Prior to starting the programme all trainees take part in an initial advice and guidance interview. As part of this they identify the sectors they are interested in working in. Tutors also explain what is expected from a trainee whilst on the programme in terms of commitment, behaviour and attitude. These expectations are confirmed in learner agreements.

During their induction day trainees undergo an initial assessment using Guroo and BKSB to establish their functional skills levels. In

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some instances, this assessment identifies that even though a young person has achieved a reasonably high level qualification, they require additional support in particular areas. Tutors then develop a plan for each trainee and begin to match them to existing work placement vacancies that are appropriate or source new vacancies to match their needs and interests.

### **Model of Delivery**

TRP's traineeship programme lasts for an average of 8 weeks, but can be adapted depending upon an individual's needs and the needs of the employer. Trainees come into the centre for the first four weeks of the programme and work on pre-employment training, building CVs, functional skills and mock interviews. They also receive CSCS (construction) training and testing (where relevant). This enables trainees who are interested in the construction sector to apply for their CSCS card. Trainees also undertake risk assessment training, alongside attending a mind-set workshop and team building sessions. Employers regularly come to TRP's training centre to talk to the trainees about work placement opportunities and their expectations. An example of this is McDonald's who come in to talk to trainees about job roles and to bust myths associated with working in a fast food chain by explaining the progression opportunities available.

Trainees are typically on work placement for between 100 and 200 hours. They spend four days each week in placement and one day in the centre working on functional skills. One of TRP's sub-contractors offers a drop-in session on a Saturday morning, where trainees can access additional support for functional skills if required. This drop in session is also open to apprentices;

it gives trainees the opportunity to interact with peers who have recent experience of progressing from a traineeship to an apprenticeship.

Trainees' progress is reviewed continuously during the first four weeks of their traineeship, and then weekly whilst on work placement to discuss progress and set objectives for the following week.

TRP also offer opportunities for trainees to complete employability units and to gain both First Aid and Health and Safety certificates if appropriate, as part of their traineeship programme.

### **Progression**

In 2015/16 TRP recruited 102 16-18 year olds and 217 young people aged 19+. Achievement rates are 86% for 16-18 year olds and 89% for 19+ learners.

Overall progression rates are 63% for 16-19 year olds and 60% for 19+ year olds. For 16-19 year olds progression into an apprenticeship is 25%, with a further 39% going into employment. For 19+ learners, 19% go on to an apprenticeship and 39% into employment.

The majority of trainees who progress to apprenticeships do so with TRP or their supply chain sub-contractors. TRP hold regular meetings with their sub-contractors and undertake teaching and learning observations to ensure a high standard of delivery. Good practice and key messages about what works well and not so well is shared with all sub-contractors and TRP staff.





### Top Tips for traineeships

- Focus on employing staff who can empathise with trainees and build strong relationships. Their passion, and the fact that they are committed to helping young people, is crucial in securing good progression outcomes.
- Work with employers where there is a real vacancy at the end of the placement and involve employers in the programme, through visits or mock interviews with the trainees. This enables young people to see a real progression opportunity.
- Develop strong relationships with local delivery partners, particularly sub-contractors and referral agencies. Sub-contractors will enable you to engage a diverse range of employers who you may not otherwise have access to. In addition to signposting young people, referral agencies often provide ongoing holistic support which helps a young person to stay focussed on their traineeship.



### Trainee Experience

**Sasha is a young single mother who had been claiming income support and was moved on to Job Seekers Allowance, which meant she needed to look for employment.**

She had spent a considerable amount of time looking for a part time job that would fit around her daughter's schooling, and childcare was important. Sasha lacked confidence and self-belief and had some health problems.

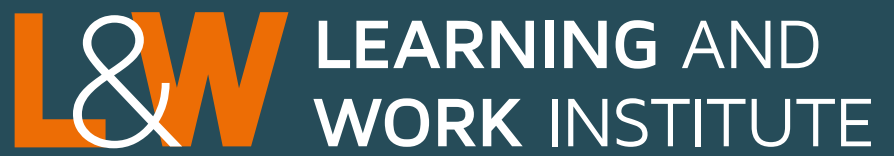
Sasha had previously achieved a level 2 in childcare and her functional skills initial assessment identified that she had low skills levels in English and maths. She successfully completed maths at entry level 3 and ICT at level 3. This gave Sasha a good confidence boost, which enabled her to progress to maths level 1 and English level 1. Sasha started a work experience placement with a local retail employer, however she struggled to balance this with the demands of childcare and her ongoing health problems. As a result Sasha's work placement and classroom attendance wasn't always good. TRP provided additional learning support, extra sessions and learning materials in written and online formats, to help her catch up.

Sasha passed her English level 1 and has now successfully gained employment on a part time basis, where the hours fit perfectly with her daughter going to school. She has grown in confidence and has even become a mentor for another young person on the TRP traineeship programme.









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