

City of London case study

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Learning and Work Institute

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City of London case study

1. Local Context and Strategic Positioning

Due to its locality, City of London has a small cohort of care experienced young people (CEYP), but they do have a number of specialist leaving care hubs in East London. These provide a range of support services to care leavers and are partially funded by Jobcentre Plus (JCP), so support includes careers advice and budgeting. Through Full Potential, City of London aimed to build on the offer of these specialist hubs and provide tailored support which links care leavers with their extensive adult learning, apprenticeship and work experience programmes.

2. Overview of delivery model

The focus of City of London's delivery has been on tailored, intensive one-to-one support for CEYP. The borough initially planned to create a group programme which young people could progress through together, but they soon realised this would not work due to the complex and unique needs of each young person.

"...we also realised that we couldn't just do a one-stop shop of like, 'right, this is it, you're coming on our course, this is the date, this is what you're doing'. So our offer has been a bit more bespoke to the learners."
(Borough delivery staff)

3. Targeting, referral and early engagement

The main route to engagement for young people was via the City of London's partnership with Hackney JCP. The borough lead based themselves at the JCP site on Wednesdays, to meet young people as they came in for their appointments with the lead work coach for care leavers. This meant that young people did not have to travel for their initial meeting about Full Potential, and the borough lead sometimes had multiple opportunities to meet a young person and engage them.

At these meetings, the borough lead would talk through their Full Potential offer, what support young people could access and explore their career interests and goals. This would then be followed up in more detail in their onboarding meeting with the Employment Officer, who would delve deeper into their interests and reasons behind these. This would inform their individual action plan and support, with all activities tailored to the sector or roles of interest to the young person.

4. Partnership model and roles

City of London's main partnership has been with Hackney JCP, supporting referrals to the programme. This has been very positive; the work coach team leader explained that the support offered through Full Potential complemented rather than duplicated their team's support.

"Our work coaches, we're chock-a-block with the diaries. Once we've seen them, we trust you're going to do it and we'll see you in a week or two weeks. But [borough lead] obviously can just keep engaged with them, keep trying to push them." *(Stakeholder)*

The Employment Officer has also delivered some activities with employers. They took a very individual approach to this, targeting employers which matched young people's career aspirations, for example, contacting Goldman Sachs about opportunities for a young person interested in banking. They also engaged with large employers known to offer good support for care leavers, such as John Lewis and Channel 4.

5. Support during and after participation

The borough took an almost entirely young person-led approach to delivery. This involved regular one-to-one meetings with the Employment Officer, exploring their career aspirations and interests, developing their soft skills and confidence, creating a LinkedIn profile and CV, doing mock interviews and applying for jobs. The Employment Officer also created a live jobs board on Padlet to share with young people.

Borough staff were just starting to deliver group activities with young people who were interested in construction, taking them on site visits with companies such as Peabody and Mace. The Employment Officer reflected that it took time to build relationships and confidence of young people to engage on more than a one-to-one level.

6. What's working: early successes and emerging strengths

The partnership with Hackney Jobcentre has been very successful. Key to this has been the clear communication between borough staff and the JCP team leader, the borough lead's regular attendance at the centre and benefits to the young people.

"The relationship with City of London... is probably the best relationship I have with any provider coming to the job centre... in terms of how frequently she's here, the way she engages, how she speaks to the claimants, how she speaks to the colleagues on the floor, the level of communication she has with myself and [colleague], I can't knock it at all. It's been really, really valuable." *(Stakeholder)*

The proactive approach of the Employment Officer worked well in encouraging young people to engage . They felt that the tailored, embedded way in which they delivered activities—for example, running mock interviews based on industry roles CEYP were interested in—built and maintained young people's motivation to engage. Utilising some of the larger employers in their area also boosted engagement.

"I'm putting some big names out there and suddenly they're, oh, this isn't just a job to get me off of benefits. This is a career. This is a future."
(Borough delivery staff)

The Employment Officer also referred to young people on the programme as "Trailblazers", starting messages to them with "Hello, Trailblazers". Their manager reflected that this was effective in building a connection with the programme.

"...they feel like they're part of something and you hear them, actually, when I'm in and around the job centre, and they'll be like, 'I'm already on a trailblazer with City of London'... It's formed a nice bit of a community." *(Borough delivery staff)*

7. Challenges and barriers

Engagement from young people has been a challenge. While the co-location approach with Hackney JCP increased numbers, only about one in 10 initial conversations turned into sign ups. The Employment Officer reflected that around a third of their caseload was highly engaged, a third would engage at a push, and the final third were very difficult to engage. This was another reason the borough adopted the individual, young person-led approach to delivery.

The borough lead reflected that part of the challenge around engagement was convincing young people that work would pay, as many were worried about coming off of benefits and being able to afford to live. The team had a lot of exciting offers from employers but so far have struggled to deliver on these due to lack of engagement from young people. To overcome this, staff focused on getting young people onto courses relevant to their career interests to give them structure to their day and start them on the route to work.

8. Innovations and promising practice

Taking a youth-led approach to delivery was viewed as an innovative approach by staff. This created a very flexible, responsive programme, tailored to CEYP's needs. The co-location with the local JCP to build referral pathways onto the programme was also an innovation, and resulted in a very positive partnership for both parties.

9. Learning and implications for broader rollout

Key learnings and practice that could be replicated elsewhere included:

- **Co-location with the local Jobcentre** was effective in strengthening referral pathways onto the programme
- A **proactive, young person-led approach** to delivery, tailoring activities and employer engagement to their interests and goals boosts engagement
- Building **young people's identity with the programme** by calling them "Trailblazers" develops a sense of pride and community amongst participants