

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE
AND EMPLOYEES****WORK READINESS OFFER FOR LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE AND
CARE LEAVERS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Personnel Committee of the work of the Human Resources, Workforce & Organisational Development team (HRWOD) in the support offered to NCC Looked after Children (LAC) and Care Leavers in relation to work readiness and apprenticeships.
2. Approve the transfer of up to 25% of unallocated Apprenticeship Levy payments to an Apprenticeship Training Agency to support this work.

Information**Background**

3. At the November 2018 Personnel Committee, members approved the ongoing involvement of the HRWOD team in the development of a work readiness programme to support LAC and Care Leavers. As corporate parent, the Council has a responsibility to ensure that not only do Looked after Children have a safe and stable home life, but that they also have the necessary support needed to make the move from school into further education, training or work.
4. The Councils Partnership Strategy for LAC and Care Leavers 2018-21 which was approved by the Children and Young People's Committee in January 2018 outlines the commitment to:
 - *Offer work experience and work placements, within an appropriate bespoke curriculum pathway plan, that supports children and young people, as far as they are able, to aspire to access the most appropriate route into future education, employment or training from Year 9 onwards;*
 - *Provide initial work experience from Year 9, leading into work placements and employment from 16 years. This is to ensure that all LAC and care leavers have opportunities for learning and developing the appropriate skills that will support them in their future careers.*

5. The HRWOD team continue to work with colleagues in the Children and Families department to ensure that relevant and appropriate opportunities are provided across the Council in line with other work experience opportunities provided more universally.

Progress to Date

6. The action plan presented to Personnel Committee in November 2018 outlined the activity required to assist the Council with its responsibilities as a corporate parent and to increase the accessibility of apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for Care Leavers and Looked after Children.
7. HRW&OD team members continue to engage with managers across the Council to identify work experience opportunities and possible apprenticeships for Care Leavers and Looked after Children.
8. The Apprenticeship budget held by the HRWOD team has been prioritised to support the employment costs of Care Leavers seeking to undertake an apprenticeship at the Council. Through this support, the Council currently has 5 Care Leavers undertaking apprenticeships to a level 3 standard.
9. The recently published Care Leavers Strategy publicises the Council's commitment to guaranteeing all Care Leavers an interview for any apprenticeship vacancy where they meet the essential requirements.
10. The Council, along with the seven District and Borough Councils has also launched a Local Offer for Care Leavers and recently held a very successful breakfast event for local businesses. This event was supported by Sir John Peace, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire and was attended by over 50 local businesses including Boots, Experian and East Midlands Airport. The aim of this event was to ask businesses to pledge their support to care leavers by offering opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience. Work is ongoing to translate these commitments into actual opportunities for young people leaving care.

Next Steps

11. The HRWOD team will continue to monitor progress via the Action Plan (Appendix 1) to ensure that the commitments made in the Care Leavers strategy are accomplished within the timescales identified.
12. The transfer of up to 25% of apprenticeship levy funds to an Apprentice Training Agency, such as Futures, would enable more Care Leavers to access a wider variety of apprenticeships not applicable to, or available in, the public sector.
13. A further programme of work experience in the summer term 2019 will be provided to the previous Year 8 group as they are now Year 9 students. A further group of Year 8's will be invited to attend the Induction to the programme. These young people will continue to be supported with work experience opportunities and careers advice until they leave school.
14. Promotional materials will be produced to promote Apprenticeships as a positive career choice and promote the offer of work experience opportunities for NCC LAC/Care Leavers.

This information will be circulated to those schools with LAC and support will be offered to schools to encourage the take up of opportunities.

15. The HRWOD team will continue to work with local Higher Education Institutions to develop a pathway to higher degree level apprenticeships for Care Leavers.

Other Options Considered

16. The Council has considered a wide range of options and working with partners, identified those which can be delivered and will provide the best outcome for care leavers and looked after young people.

Reason for Recommendations

17. To support the Council to deliver its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of Looked after Children and to act as a good corporate parent.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

19. Transfer of up to 25% of the apprenticeship levy to an apprentice training agency would not impact on the financial resources of the Council as the levy is taken at source by HMRC. This figure fluctuates depending on the monthly deduction made by HMRC which varies according to the monthly headcount. For illustrative purpose the 25% figure for March 2019 equates to £32,378.

Human Resource Implications

20. As a key part of its overall approach to workforce planning and underpinning its commitment to being an Employer of Choice, the County Council supports the use of Apprenticeships as a means of offering jobs, work based learning and career opportunities to a diverse range of new recruits, looked after young people and care leavers and existing employees.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

21. This additional support enables the Council to support care leavers to achieve their full potential and improve their social mobility prospects through working in partnership with other organisations and supporting the care leavers with their chosen career pathway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

- 1) Approve the ongoing engagement of the HRWOD team in the delivery of a work readiness programme for Care Leavers and Looked after Children.
- 2) Approve the transfer of up to 25% of unallocated apprenticeship levy payments to an Apprenticeship Training Agency to support Care Leavers seeking to undertake apprenticeships.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 02/05/19)

22. The proposals in this report are within the remit of Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 09/05/19)

23. The report proposes the transfer of up to 25% of the apprenticeship levy incurred by the council to an apprenticeship training agency to enable more Care Leavers to access a wider variety of apprenticeships not applicable to, or available in, the public sector. The apprenticeship levy paid by the council is approximately £120,000 per month, 25% of this levy would be around £30,000 per month.

Human Resources Comments (JP 09/05/19)

24. The initiatives outlined in this report and provided by the HRWOD team ensure the Council is meeting its responsibility as corporate parent and ensure that the Council has a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience in its workforce by being an inclusive employer and employer of choice.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Care Leavers Local Offer
- Chief Executives blog

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All