

REPORT EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE Apprenticeships Review

Workforce Planning, Adult Social Care and Health

The main objective of the Workforce Planning Team is to ensure that the workforce, delivering care to service users within Adult Social Care and Health, is competent to meet the needs of service users both now and in the future. To achieve this, the workforce strategy document 2008-2010, which currently being revised, sets out the vision for the provision of services by the Authority, taking into account national strategies and policies, the transformation agenda and the demographics of the region including the population working within social care.

There are major and ongoing concerns over the availability of workforce in rural areas and the development of the workforce generally to meet the skills, knowledge and understanding at the required level. The Workforce Planning Team are working to address this situation and encourage diversity, reflecting the backgrounds of service users and to promote social care to school and college leavers as a career of choice.

This paper sets out the projects that the Workforce Planning Team have been working on over the last two years that aim to encourage more people into the social care workforce, both within the department of Adult Social Care and Health and the independent sector. The first two projects outlined are aimed at the general workforce and the following five concentrate on schemes that focus on opportunities for younger workers who may wish to enter social care as a career.

1. Dare to Care

A course developed by the Workforce Planning Team at County Hall, dedicated to increasing the number of males going in to social care and aimed at addressing the current imbalance. This has been particularly timely given the current economic climate as places have been taken up by men who have recently become unemployed and provided them with an opportunity to learn about careers available within social care. The course started on 18th February 2010 with an initial cohort of 11.

2. Independent Sector Workforce Development Grant

A sum of money has been made available through the Workforce Development Grant and offered up to applications from the independent sector to fulfil their training and development needs. The objective is to support providers of care and enable them to create a skilled and competent social care workforce, which will in turn benefit the service user and improve quality of life.

Schemes aimed specifically at younger workers include:

3. Future Jobs Fund

This project applies to 18-24 year olds who have been on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) for approaching a year and can live anywhere in the County.

Other eligible beneficiaries are those aged 25+ who have been claiming benefit (eg Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, ie not just JSA) for 1 year+ and who live in an 'unemployment hotspot' area (ie where the rate of

unemployment on the JSA measure is more than 1.5% above the national average). In Nottinghamshire, these are currently:

- Mansfield: Ravensdale, Portland
- Gedling: Killisick
- Bassetlaw: Worksop South East
- Ashfield: Hucknall East, Kirkby in Ashfield East

This funding has gone to an independent provider, 'Enable', and the Workforce Planning Team are working with them to develop links and consider ways in which the initiative can be promoted to providers

4. Exhibiting at Careers Fairs

The team takes the opportunity, several times a year, to promote careers in social care at career fairs around Nottinghamshire. Information packs have been developed to encourage individuals to consider the wide range of careers available within both the public and independent sector, including social work, social care, administration and management roles.

5. Work Experience Scheme

This scheme is aimed at promoting social care as a career and increasing the number of younger people (16-24 year olds) entering the social care workforce.

Currently a database of potential work placements has been set up and placements are organised on request. A manager's toolkit to support the process of work placements has been developed by the Workforce Planning Team and is made available as required.

During 2010 it is planned to establish a procedure for logging placement opportunities and recording placements that have taken place. The scheme will then be promoted to schools and colleges across Nottinghamshire who deliver Health and Social Care qualifications. The toolkit will also be updated and aligned to similar schemes within health whilst ensuring that it complies with guidelines set by Skills for Care.

6. Young Apprenticeships

This initiative is designed to encourage younger people, aged 16 to 24 years, to enter the social care workforce.

During the current financial year, the Workforce Planning Team has supported Young Apprenticeships by sourcing placements for them. This has been achieved by developing a database of independent providers and managers who have expressed an interest in providing placements. Meetings have taken place with training providers who could run the programme, but no formal scheme is currently in place. Internally, within the Authority, a barrier to providing an apprenticeship scheme has been funding.

During 2010 opportunities for funding a Young Apprenticeship scheme through the workforce development grant will be explored. The Grant is not to be used for funding salaries and so alternatives will be considered, including a bursary option. The Workforce Planning Team intends to liaise with the Learning and Development Unit who could organise the training side of the initiative.

The Young Apprentice programme that is currently being considered would consist of running training sessions for managers interested in providing work placements, recruiting apprentices and matching individuals up to placements. Ongoing support would be

provided to managers and the scheme would be evaluated half way through the year, with more cohorts being taken on if required.

There is also a plan to consider ways in which such a scheme may be developed to provide apprenticeship placements for job seekers with learning disabilities.

7. Care Ambassador Scheme

This is another initiative designed to encourage more younger people (16 – 24 yrs) to enter the social care workforce. It requires individuals with experience of working within social care to be trained up to become Care Ambassadors. Care Ambassadors then go into schools and colleges to raise awareness of the different types of careers available and to ensure that expectations are realistic. It is often due to unrealistic expectations of new recruits to social care that can lead to higher than average levels of staff turnover.

The Care Ambassador Scheme within Nottinghamshire is supported by Skills for Care and the Nottinghamshire Partnership. Records of individuals who have expressed an interest in becoming Care Ambassadors have been maintained, but the scheme has not been widely promoted during 2009.

During 2010 it is intended to relaunch the scheme in conjunction with Nottingham City, by arranging a recruitment drive and induction process for those who wish to become Care Ambassadors to ensure that all those recruited put forward a consistent message and approach. Schools and colleges would also be targeted to raise awareness of the scheme so that Care Ambassadors could provide a 'real life' perspective to their students.

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