

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES**

**WORK PLACEMENTS AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE –
KICKSTART PROGRAMME AND GRADUATE TRAINEE SCHEME**

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform elected members of the details of the Government's Kickstart Programme and to seek approval as to how the Council can utilise this funding to develop employment opportunities for younger people.
2. To provide elected members with the opportunity to meet with some of the Graduate Trainees as requested at November's Personnel Committee.

Information

3. This report covers two aspects of the Council's approach to providing employment opportunities for younger people: the new Kickstart Programme, the other our developing in-house graduate trainee programme which is now in its third year.
4. As part of the Financial Statement on 8 July 2020, the Chancellor announced the intention to provide funding to employers to create six-month job placements for young people aged 16-24 years, who are claiming Universal Credit and who are at risk of long-term unemployment. The aim of the scheme is to help get them into the job market.
5. Figures from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) show that the number of 16 – 24 year olds claiming Universal Credit in Nottinghamshire has increased significantly in the last 12 months:

1st September 2019	3491
1st September 2020	9757

6. The Kickstart Scheme is about creating new jobs of any defined role but should not replace any existing or planned vacancies or cause existing employees or contractors to lose or reduce their employment. The jobs should not require people to undertake extensive training prior to starting and should be able to demonstrate a clear employability benefit to the young person.
7. The funding from the Government will cover 100% of the relevant Age Related Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week, plus the associated employer National Insurance contributions and

employer minimum automatic enrolment pension contributions. There is also £1,500 per job placement for set up costs and to support the young person to develop their employability skills.

8. In order for the placements to be successful, the young person should be able to access appropriate training and support within the role to best enable them to gain employment at the end of their placement. Initial discussions with local training providers indicate that there are existing funding streams in place to support additional training under a partnership arrangement that will ensure those young people on a placement with the Council can access the following training where appropriate:
 - Employability skills and careers advice (funded through the £1,500 grant)
 - Functional Skills – English, Maths and IT to level 2 (GCSE)
 - Industry related training – eg NVQ/diploma.
9. Ideally at the end of the six-month placement, the young person will be able to progress into an apprenticeship or a job role with the employer, although there is no requirement to guarantee this.
10. For organisations applying for Kickstart funding, there is a requirement that they offer a minimum of 30 job placements. For organisations not able to offer the minimum number of placements, a scheme has been set up for organisations to act as a Gateway Organisation and represent other employers who want to get involved. There is an additional payment available to Gateway Organisations of £300 per placement to support with the associated administration costs. Employers can spread the start dates of the job placements up until the end of December 2021.
11. Once an organisation has registered for the scheme, the DWP require job descriptions and details of the application process and will refer applicants to the vacancies through Job Centre Work Coaches. This process ensures that candidates meet the eligibility criteria, are a good fit for the placement and are ready for work.
12. The new scheme provides a further opportunity for the Council to extend its offer of employment opportunities to younger people and add to the existing provisions of work experience, graduate traineeships, supported internships and apprenticeships.
13. Members will already be aware that an important element of providing employment opportunities for younger people has been the introduction of the Council's in-house Graduate Development Programme (GDP). At November 2020 Personnel Committee, Members were updated on the progress of the current graduate trainees including the recent recruitment of new trainees to the GDP due to start in mid-January 2021.
14. Members expressed an interest in meeting representatives from each of the three cohorts, to hear first hand about their experiences of being a trainee on the GDP and how the scheme provides appropriate development and career opportunities. We are pleased to confirm that representatives from each of the cohorts are present at this Committee to talk about their experiences and to answer Members' questions.
 - Graduate Trainee presentation and Q&A session.

Other Options Considered

15. With regard to the Kickstart Programme, there are a number of options to consider:

- Should the Council create 30 or more placements and register directly with DWP
- Create less than 30 placements and register with a Gateway Organisation
- Register as a Gateway Organisation and act on behalf of other employers
- Not offer the Kickstart Scheme within the Council.

Register as a Gateway Organisation and act on behalf of other employers

16. This is the recommended option and would enable the Council to take a leadership role across Nottinghamshire in creating new opportunities for young people and would sit with the wider agenda of supporting local business to increase the number of jobs within the economy.

17. There are requirements in place for organisations wanting to become Gateway Organisation that include:

- Experience of managing partnership arrangements with third parties
 - Robust financial and governance processes to manage applications
- The DWP will perform due diligence checks prior to approving any application the Council makes.

18. If this option is selected, consideration needs to be given to the resources required to undertake the function effectively and identify where responsibility and capacity for this most appropriately sits. A number of Gateway Organisations are utilising the additional £300 payment per placement to fund an administrator for the scheme.

Create over 30 placements and register directly with DWP

19. There is interest across the authority in the Kickstart Scheme with teams in all departments keen to offer placements. Initial figures suggest that the required 30 placements would be achievable.

20. Consideration needs to be given to the current capacity of existing staff and the amount of work required to liaise with managers across all departments to identify the opportunities, develop job descriptions, liaise with DWP, conduct recruitment activities, ensure the package of support is suitable for the role and the individual and liaise with local training providers.

Create less than 30 placements and register with a Gateway Organisation

21. There are a number of Gateway Organisations registered locally that include:

- East Midlands Chamber which already has over 400 companies registered with them
- East Midlands Council who offered to act for a number of Local Authorities
- Nottingham City Council.

22. The level of support that Gateway Organisations offer varies widely, with some acting solely to register placements and others offer dedicated staff to support the recruitment and referral process. Careful consideration needs to be given to what level of support may be required if this is the option chosen. Initial exploratory discussions would favour registering with East Midlands Chamber as they offer the most comprehensive package of support to employers.

Not to offer the Kickstart Scheme within the Council

23. It remains open to the Council not to develop the Kickstart Programme for delivery within the authority but this would appear to be a missed opportunity to take a lead in providing employment opportunities for young people at a time where unemployment within this cohort is likely to increase in the coming months.

Reasons for Recommendations

24. The development of a Kickstart Programme within the Council fits with Nottinghamshire's wider Economic Development strategy and supports the Government initiative to create employment opportunities for young people. There is a recognised lack of young people currently employed by the Council and the development of this scheme will potentially encourage young people to consider a career in local authority.

25. The challenges of finding work are likely to increase and are known to be particularly acute for young people aged 16 to 25 as evidenced by the numbers claiming universal credit which has increased by over 6000 in the last 12 months. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by increasing numbers of people facing redundancy from the industries and services most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. In developing the Kickstart Programme, the Council seeks to support its younger residents develop work experience and entry level employment on which to build successful future careers.

Statutory and Policy Implications

26. 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.

Data Protection and Information Governance

27. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees or local businesses.

Financial Implications

28. Funding received from the Government will cover all associated costs of the Kickstart Scheme and there appears to be little risk to the authority in supporting the Kickstart Programme.

Human Resources Implications

29. The Kickstart Programme will offer opportunities to diversify the Council's workforce age profile and will encourage younger people into employment with the Local Authority.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

30. The proposals in this report seek to meet the Council's existing commitment to maintain and develop a diverse and engaged workforce, where possible exceeding the minimum statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The recommendation to develop the Kickstart Programme to unemployed, under-represented and vulnerable groups of young people in Nottinghamshire supports the Council's aspirations to be an "employer of choice" as well as assisting in meeting any statutory obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1) Elected Members agree to the Workforce and Organisational Development team developing a Kickstart Programme for delivery across the Council.
- 2) Elected Members agree to Nottinghamshire County Council becoming a registered Gateway Organisation for other local employers.
- 3) Agree to receive an update report on the Kickstart Scheme in six months' time and that this update be added to the Work Programme.

Marjorie Toward

**Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees
Chief Executives Department**

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Constitutional Comments (KK 16/12/20)

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

Financial Comments (SES 18/12/20)

32. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report. Funding received from the Government will cover all associated costs of the Kickstart Scheme and there appears to be little risk to the authority in supporting the Kickstart Programme.

HR Comments (JP 23/12/20)

33. Details of the programme and Gateway status in respect of HR implications are within the body of the report.

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.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All