



Grantham College

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Traineeship Staff

Support Programme

Case Studies July 2014

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Overview and context

This suite of case studies is part of a set of resources developed for the Traineeship Staff Support Programme (TSSP).

The TSSP has been commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and managed by the Association of Learning Providers (AELP). The aim of the programme is to design and deliver innovation and high quality professional development support, resources and material which can be accessed by, and will benefit, the wider education and training workforce to improve outcomes from the traineeship programme for both learners and employers.

The case studies and associated resources have been produced by Grantham College in partnership with the following organisations:

- Derby Adult Community Education
- EMFEC Group
- First College
- Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
- North Warwickshire and Hinckley College
- Skills Solutions
- TaylorITEX
- Weston College
- Young People's Learning Provision

The case studies are intended to identify practical areas of help to all those already delivering traineeships or to those who are about to start or are thinking of starting. The case studies identify emerging good practice developed specifically in response to the needs of learners and/or the traineeship programme or where practice put into place for other programmes/needs have been adapted to support the delivery of traineeships.

2.0

▼ Introducing
traineeships

Weston College

Overview of organisation

Weston College is a general further education college situated in Weston-super-Mare. The college has 7,500 students taught at facilities in Weston-super-Mare and Nailsea. The college creates courses for industry and has a pupil referral unit, which provides education for students aged 15 to 16 excluded from mainstream secondary schools in the area. The main college building is situated close to the town centre and beach. There are a number of other sites including sixth form facilities, a university campus and a conference centre.

Issues

The main question we asked ourselves when planning for introducing traineeships and recruiting onto the programme was “Why are they here?” They all have a reason for needing to be on a traineeship and we felt our job was to peel back the layers, find the reason and work with the learners to resolve their issues.

Is there a typical learner who is attracted to traineeships? We soon found there is no such thing. However, there has been a difference between the intakes, in terms of background, previous learning experience, attainment and their reason for being with us.

Is there a typical learner...attracted to traineeships?

The first group were fresh from school and were all very motivated to learn and progress. The challenge with this first cohort was finding their placements and ensuring that their needs were met. The second cohort had more challenging behaviour and had spent a long time not in employment, education or training (NEET). They had been referred by Jobcentre Plus or dropped out of other courses and been referred to us. However this group had a clearer idea of what they wanted to do and how they wanted to progress. They were also more likely to have

attained a level one or above in their functional skills.

Both groups presented with low self-esteem, low confidence levels and a lack of work experience. This coupled with poor CVs and unsuccessful application processes had made applying for jobs difficult. Both groups needed ‘soft skills’ development and had limited understanding of how these skills could significantly improve their chances of gaining and keeping a job or Apprenticeship.

Solutions

We identified some basic tenets on which we developed the curriculum on offer to the learners.

We wanted to develop well-rounded learners who had an increased chance of gaining employment

These included making sure that what we offered was appropriate for the learners and supported them in making the next steps in moving toward a job or Apprenticeship. We gathered enough information about them to ensure that this was the case and using this information, we made sure we were fully aware of their needs and wishes. We wanted to develop well-rounded learners who had both an increased chance of gaining employment and of keeping their job because of their experiences on the programme and particularly their use and development of soft skills.

We used research from our lead employers to deliver content that they highlighted as essential in the current job market. We also needed to ensure that what we offered met the framework criteria for traineeships.

The four week pre-traineeship allowed us to assess the suitability of the learners for the

course. Due to the limited duration of the course and the funding, we had to be sure these learners would progress. We utilised this time to match learners to traineeship placements and develop the learners individualised programmes. Our initial assessment allowed us to assess the needs and wishes of the learner and put in place the correct level of support to enable them to progress during or after the course. During this period, the focus was on soft skills and learners taking ownership of their own learning.

The programme was based upon a traffic light triage system. Greens spent more time with employers and less time in college coming in for tutorials and employability lessons. With the help of a sector specific tutor, they focussed on progression, worked with the Apprenticeship team and were made aware of suitable vacancies. The Apprenticeship team marketed the CVs and covering letters for them.

Ambers were out on work placement, initially, for one day a week but this time was planned to rise progressively until they reached three to four days with employers, depending on progress in their functional skills lessons.

The programme was based upon a traffic light triage system

They were placed with sector tutors and met once every two weeks with their work being split between personal, social development (PSD) and progression. The content of their lessons increasingly changed to focus more on progression.

Reds spent time in class working on soft skills, PSD, employability and functional skills until tutors identified them as ready to progress to amber. Learners were placed with experienced pastoral tutors and met once a week. Learners also met with tutors and the work placement tutor and were triaged at this point.

Learners were also triaged after two weeks of the pre-traineeship and every four weeks from this point on. During the pre-traineeship, learners completed a series of activities used by staff to match them to an appropriate tutor. Criteria utilised included, PSD needs, behavioural needs, placement and career plans and their characteristics.

Learners were able to access the full pastoral support offered by the college. Feedback from staff, placement tutor and employers

was delivered to learners via the tutor. The placement tutor worked with the personal tutor and learner to locate work placements with appropriate employers. This information was used to set and monitor targets relating to PSD and employment.

Summary of lessons learnt

The tutorial system was the core component of the programme and the level of support we provided was greater than in mainstream courses. In practice, learners could have one to one's every week, once a month or one per half term depending on their level of need. The placement tutor was an essential component in the work placement arrangements. They gathered information from learners and their personal tutors to ascertain their career goals and areas of need.

Ambers and reds were visited more than greens to ensure that placements were going as planned and learning was taking place.

The placement tutor had sole responsibility in ensuring that the placements were safe for the learners, met the learners' career aims and were of high quality. They also from time to time, acted as a buffer between the Apprenticeship recruitment team and the learners so that learners or employers were not rushed into a decision. Having one individual responsible for placements ensured effective running and a consistently outstanding outcome for both learners and employers. Learners agreed that this was a good system to use.

Feedback from the learners was excellent with some of them saying that this was the best educational experience they had ever received.

The placement tutor made regular visits to placements to check learning and to monitor the relationship with the employer. They also became very skilled at getting employers to take on learners as employees or apprentices. It became very apparent that this area had to work well and seamlessly in order for the traineeships to succeed.

The feedback from the learners was excellent with some of them saying that this was the best educational experience they had ever received.

2.2

Young People's Learning Provision (YPLP)

Overview of organisation

YPLP is a training provider for 16-19 year olds and delivers study programmes and traineeships. YPLP delivered the E2E programme when it was launched in 2003. We are based in Grantham and funded through Lincolnshire County Councils' Children's Services and work with a variety of agencies and organisations including CAHMS, Addaction, Youth Offending Services and the Terrence Higgins Trust. We also work closely with Barnados and Welfare to Work in delivering supported work experience and traineeships. We work with over 150 learners per year. Many learners progress onto further education and/or work.

YPLP started delivering traineeships in October 2013. We attended information meetings and sourced information from the DfE and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website. We found that traineeships fitted in well with the core study programme that we delivered. YPLP is currently delivering traineeships with the following organisations:

- Positive Futures (Sports Coaching)
- Moy Park (Food Industry)
- Bakkavor Fresh Cook (Food Industry)
- Winfield Engineering/Red Rhino Crushers (Engineering)
- Little Jack's Farm (Family Farm)
- Thera Trust (Learning Disabilities support).

We currently have twelve learners on the traineeship programme. Areas include animal care, accounting, engineering, mechanics and the beauty industry.

Issues

There were a number of challenges in preparing for traineeship delivery. We felt that there was a lack of guidance about the programme and confusion amongst Jobcentre Plus staff.

We found that traineeships fitted in well with the core study programme

For example, claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) whilst completing a traineeship could have had a seriously negative effect on the programme. The lack of promotion of traineeships meant that employers only had knowledge of Apprenticeships and as many young people have not heard of traineeships, it made recruiting difficult. There were a number of technical problems with the NAS website. We felt that a single website purely for traineeships would have been helpful. The website itself is incompatible with new browsers and there are still bugs and problems, which can make the inputting of adverts and progressing/completing applications a slow process. This means that employers have to wait too long for the adverts to go on.

Solutions

Our key approach was to work together as a team to project manage the delivery of traineeships. We produced a process flowchart and marketing materials so that staff were able to go out to local employers to promote traineeships and what they offered.

Our key approach was to work together as a team to project manage the delivery of traineeships

Our work in promotion went very well and we have been able to identify a good number of employers and learners to source traineeship opportunities.

We also identified a number of positive solutions to the other difficulties we faced. We produced checklists and identified essential procedures that needed to be in place for the whole traineeship process. Any updates to

policies and procedures relating to hours etc for traineeships needed to be updated in the promotional information as soon as possible and disseminated to staff who deal with information relating to traineeships.

We produced a process flowchart and marketing materials so that staff were able to go out to local employers to promote traineeships

We networked with other traineeship providers to find out their tips and best practice. We utilised every opportunity to promote the programme. We attended business club meetings, community meetings, CEIAG network meetings; had stands at fun days, e.g. Grantham Carnival; promoted vacancies to Jobcentre Plus and local providers, such as A4e and took every opportunity to promote the programme within our own organisation.

We found that we needed to sort out ERN numbers well in advance. This is a confusing process and can cause delays of two days or longer in putting adverts on the Apprenticeship Vacancy (AV) system.

We developed a positive marketing approach to new learners coming into the centre. They are given the option of joining the core programme (study programme) or going on to a traineeship. The decision is based upon an in depth discussion with the young person and an initial Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance session. We made the decision that at YPLP traineeships can last from six weeks up to five months. At the core are elements of work preparation training, English and maths and a high quality work experience placement.

Summary of lessons learnt

From our experience, we found that the biggest problems were the glitches on the AV system and making sure that all paperwork was signed and clear defined targets were identified for the work experience.

One important lesson we learnt related to the length of time it takes to get Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance. Following the recruitment process, Sean was appointed to the role of learner sports coach at Positive Futures. There was a delay in starting his work experience as his DBS clearance took longer than expected to come through. The length of time this took may have resulted in Sean losing the placement or becoming disillusioned. Fortunately, this did not happen. We learned that other organisation's time scales needed to be taken into account in our planning.

We learned that it was important to input adverts correctly onto the AV system. If it was incorrect, the advert could be referred back more than once.

One important lesson we learnt related to the length of time it takes to get Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance

We found this to be a learning process as it is not a straightforward system. We felt that The National Apprenticeship Service need to consider problems associated with this.

However, we felt our recruitment process generally went very well particularly for the traineeship with Positive Futures. We also found that promoting the traineeship programme helped to market our provision as a whole.

2.3

Derbyshire Adult Community Education

Overview of organisation

Derbyshire Adult Community Education has 23 centres in the county, with an administration base in Matlock. We offer Apprenticeships, traineeships, 16-18 NEET provision and adult and community learning. We have enrolled a small number of learners in childcare, customer service and ICT.

Issues

As we are part of Derbyshire County Council, we have access to the database of employers who already offer work placements for year 10 and 11 school pupils. Our approach to introducing traineeships to employers was to initially mail shot our existing employer contacts. We approached employers who we felt could provide quality work placements and outlined the programme to them. There was a great deal of interest from them, but the placements offered did not always match the needs of the learner. We identified that potential learners, because of a wide range of needs, required a great deal of support to get them onto the programme and Jobcentre Plus referrals were slow in some districts, even after the extension of the maximum amount of training hours from 16 to 30.

We identified that potential learners, because of a wide range of needs, required a great deal of support to get them onto the programme

We felt that more national publicity would have created greater demand and would have helped us significantly in introducing our traineeship programme.

Solutions

We produced bright, colourful publicity materials that included information on Apprenticeships, traineeships and 'Being your own boss' courses that we offer free for unemployed people. By putting these different programmes together, we hoped that learners would see a coherent package and be supported into the most appropriate programme for their needs. We also placed information for potential learners and employers on our website.

We have a number of Work Ready Programmes running in our centres. These include the delivery of English, maths and employability skills so we offered the opportunity for learners to enrol on these courses, but have the additional advantage of an added work placement. We also considered recruiting existing learners who were in the required age groups as potential learners. We already had a process for health and safety and other essential workplace checks for our Apprenticeship programme so we adapted this. We also had work placement learning logs that we adapted for our learners.

The Careers Service... have been very good contacts and have the potential for making a more significant contribution to enrolment onto the programme

We met with a number of partners including Jobcentre Plus and the Careers Service, who could refer learners to our programmes. The Careers Service and multi-agency teams have been very good contacts and have the potential for making a more significant contribution to enrolment onto the programme.

Summary of lessons learnt

We are confident that our traineeship programme will develop over time, but we have identified a number of issues that have contributed to a slow start. It took us time to decide on and develop the best enrolment process. The recruitment of the young people who qualified for the programme proved much more difficult than initially anticipated and we needed appropriate publicity materials to promote the programme. The matching process between learner and employer was also more complicated than originally anticipated.

3.0

▼ Employer
engagement

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

Overview of organisation

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College is a general further education college that has sites in and around Hinckley and Nuneaton in the Midlands. The college offers traineeships in hair, beauty and barbering, as well as in the creative cultural sector and the motor vehicle industry.

Issues

We selected the hairdressing and beauty therapy sector for our first set of traineeships as we already have extremely good and positive working relationships with many employers in the area. This made it a little easier when initially approaching employers with the prospect of them taking on a learner.

We approached an employer to be part of the traineeship programme who had not had an apprentice in place for four years. The employer was unsure about 'taking the plunge' into an Apprenticeship, but was interested in 'trying' a learner to see how it might work in their business.

We selected the hairdressing and beauty therapy sector for our first set of traineeships as we already have extremely good and positive working relationships with many employers in the area

One of the reasons that we have excellent working relationships with employers is that we deal with their concerns with respect and make decisions that always consider the best interests of the employer as well as those of the learner, so we took this employer's initial concerns very seriously.

Solutions

We contacted the employer and explained the traineeship in detail. We interviewed the learner and the initial assessments were completed. In addition, the learner's expectations, their goals and learning objectives were reviewed.

We matched a learner to this employer by geographical preference, the learners preferred ways of learning and their placement preference. We ascertained during the interview process and the learner's initial assessments that the placement would be mutually beneficial for both the employer and learner and we made it clear to the learner what those benefits were, the expectations of the college and the expectations that the learner should have of the placement.

We confirmed the initial details with the employer, and through a tri-party agreement, we arranged a face-to-face meeting for all concerned. We arranged for a visit to the salon to introduce the traineeship coordinator and the learner. To reassure the employer that we took their interests seriously, an assessor, who had previously assessed an apprentice at the salon and had a very good working relationship with the employer, also attended.

During the visit the details of the traineeship were confirmed i.e. length of programme, the work placement hours, the role that the traineeship coordinator plays within the traineeship programme and the type and number of visits that would be undertaken to assess progress on learner goals and objectives and general performance levels. We thought that it was very important that the employer understood the traineeship coordinator's role and that the role included hands on support for them in the same way that support was available for the learner.

During the visit, we also carried out health and safety and insurance checks in the salon. The traineeship coordinator introduced the learner and the employer to the work placement log book that the learner needed to complete whilst

on the programme. They explained how it would be used, what needed to go in it and its use to the learner, the employer and the college.

We thought that it was very important that the employer understood the traineeship coordinator's role and that the role included hands on support for them in the same way that support was available for the learner.

The traineeship coordinator checked through appropriate questioning and explanation that all parties were sure about the role they were to play in the completion of the traineeship.

Summary of lessons learnt

We learned that by making all parties' expectations clear at the start, there was little room for misunderstandings in relation to the traineeship or the roles and functions of all colleagues involved in the arrangement. We learned that by treating the employer with respect and considering their concerns, not only did we get an excellent placement for our learner, but also we now have engaged another very positive employer that we can work with in the future and develop other mutually beneficial arrangements including the placement of more learners or apprentices. A benefit for the employer is that they understand the requirements of the programme and on successful completion will feel more confident in taking another learner or apprentice. The employer was very happy to continue and was looking forward to beginning their first journey on the traineeship programme.

Skills Solutions

Overview of organisation

Skills Solutions specialises in assisting people with training programmes and career development opportunities across a wide range of sectors and industries. We are the largest work-based learning provider in Greater Manchester and the largest provider of Apprenticeships in the North West. We work with over 1,200 employers directly generating Apprenticeship vacancies and currently look after over 2,500 learners on a variety of Apprenticeship programmes. Our traineeship programme complements our work on Apprenticeships and provides opportunities for young people who are not quite ready for them.

Issues

We identified that the involvement of real employers and real workplace settings are pivotal to the success of the work placement and to the value placed on the experience by the learner. To give young people an experience of the working environment, we arranged work experience tasters for both study programme learners and traineeships.

Solutions

Work experience tasters were arranged for Skills Solutions learners who had yet to decide on a career pathway or had limited awareness of the world of work.

Real workplace settings are pivotal to the success of the work placement

Arrangements were made for these learners to meet a variety of employers and visit a number of workplaces. An example of one of these visits was to Rochdale Council.

The business administration tutor and the placement consultant from Skills Solutions Rochdale SkillCentre both felt that it was important to build strong relationships with employers. They arranged for the business administration learners to go on a visit to Rochdale Council's new offices in the town centre to experience a working office environment and see the variety of administrative roles that are undertaken within their own local Council.

Arrangements were made for... learners to meet a variety of employers and visit a number of workplaces

The learners were taken on a guided tour around the Council offices. The role of each department and their administration procedures were explained. The Council staff set up an informal meeting in their specially designed "meeting pods" where they had an informal question and answer session.

Summary of lessons learnt

We found that the learners gained a great deal from the visit and it generated positive ideas about what they would like to do within the business and administration sector. It focussed the thinking for the learners and following the visit two of the learners started work placements at the Council. They have both decided that they would like a career within the Council as either an HR officer or a legal secretary.

The visit was a very positive and fruitful experience, which gave the learners a deeper insight into a real workplace setting and the wider administrative job roles that are available. Rochdale Council was very helpful, friendly and accommodating and this gives us an opportunity

4.0

▼ **Learner
assessment**

First College

Overview of organisation

First College are a medium sized private training organisation with premises in Louth and Skegness, Lincolnshire. In our recent Ofsted Inspection, we achieved a grade 2. This has made First College eligible to deliver traineeship programmes and we have been working with a variety of partners including East Lindsey District Council, the TUC and their employer network to establish traineeship provision. Employers taking part include Abbey Converters, Town and Country Kiddies, Desire Change, Riverside Playgroup, Spinning Tops, La Bella Napoli and First College. A number of other employers have also expressed an interest in taking part in this new programme.

Issues

We identified a number of issues within the group of learners. Some were not comfortable in going straight from school into the nine to five working environment. They lacked confidence, their personal presentation did not help them in job interviews and their numeracy and literacy skills needed to be improved. Some had been trying for a considerable period of time to get an Apprenticeship, without success and others felt intimidated in going back into a large educational organisation such as a college to gain further qualifications or improve on what they already had.

Solutions

Applicants for the programme are invited to interview and advised that there is no specific dress code. The interview is conducted in a private setting and in a relaxed atmosphere. It consists of a comprehensive discussion conducted by a recruitment adviser who is CEIAG qualified and tuned in to the needs of a learner. In the interview, the learner and the adviser explore the need for additional support from the various support agencies that the

college work with. At the end of the interview the recruitment adviser helps the learner to complete the application forms and other associated paperwork.

Following the interview the learner undertakes functional skills screening. This screening also helps to identify additional support needs and assists the college's delivery staff to tailor the subsequent traineeship programme to the learner's individual needs. The learner also has a learning styles check that is used to contextualise their training programme.

Employers who are best suited to meeting the diverse and often complex learner needs are selected from the college's employer network and are chosen based on their previous track record of support for...vocational programmes

The learner joins a small group of between four and six learners to complete the remainder of their induction and initial assessment. This in-house phase lasts three weeks with the classes being supported by two members of staff for each session. This includes CV writing, basic health and safety awareness training, equality and diversity, interview skills and information relating to entrepreneurship and self-employment. They also take part in a 'Dragon's Den' activity that supports their presentation and team working skills.

During the induction and initial assessment programme, the learner is matched to an employer for the work experience input that will follow.

The skills of the recruitment adviser were crucial in the effective delivery of the learner assessment phase of the programme

Employers who are best suited to meeting the diverse and often complex learner needs are selected from the college's employer network and are chosen based on their previous track record of support for the college's vocational programmes. Employers selected are very supportive of the traineeship provision. During the work placement, the employer assists the learner in the completion of their learner logbook.

Whilst on work placement the learners are contacted each week by their recruitment adviser and are invited to come in to the college's premises to discuss their progress with their adviser.

First college have two traineeship groups running successfully from both Louth and Skegness. All of the learners are now in their chosen workplace gaining valuable work skills to support their progression to an Apprenticeship or employment. The learners still come into

the College each week to see their recruitment adviser and to work towards their functional skills, if required. The feedback from the first group of learners has been excellent and in fact, they wanted the 'in-house' sessions to be for more than three weeks!

Summary of lessons learnt

The college considers that the success of the traineeship programme is attributable to the quality of the learner assessment phase of the programme.

We identified that the skills of the recruitment adviser were crucial in the effective delivery of the learner assessment phase of the programme. The key skills of high quality, active listening, mentoring, feedback and influencing skills, with the ability to explore options and sensitively challenge thinking helped to support the learners onto their traineeships. New advisers now shadow the college's team leader for recruitment and training when she is carrying out the adviser role. In addition to developing staff this also helps to quality assure the provision.

The traineeship programme at First College has only recently been established but there have been no withdrawals. Hence, from an initial cohort of 16 learners there is a 100% retention rate.

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

Overview of organisation

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College is a general further education college that has sites in and around Hinckley and Nuneaton in the Midlands. The college offers traineeships in hair, beauty and barbering, as well as in the creative cultural sector and the motor vehicle industry.

Issues

All of our learners need help with understanding the world of work. Many lack motivation and confidence and do not have, or feel they do not have, the skills and experience that employers look for when interviewing for full time work or an Apprenticeship.

Solutions

All our learners take part in an induction. This introduces them to the college and all the facilities that are designed to help and support them whilst studying with us. As part of this induction, they complete a range of activities. These activities help them to become familiar with college life, what they can expect from us, and what we expect from them. It also covers what employers will expect during their work placement.

We deliver this induction to the learners as a group to help build on motivational skills and confidence. We also take a coaching approach, providing the group with information on work ethics, equal opportunities, diversity and positive behaviour within the workplace and at college.

We deliver....induction to the learners as a group to help build on motivational skills and confidence

We give learners self-assessment tasks. These tasks help us to gauge their confidence levels and preferred ways of learning. We ask them

to complete a job/self-comparison chart. This covers skills the learners currently have, where they need improving and what skills they would like to gain during their placement. This helps them to understand their existing skills and knowledge and helps them to work toward their desired outcomes.

To get the learners more work placement ready they also chart what they think employers may expect from them as a learner. This includes identifying what barriers, problems and issues they think they may face in relation to these expectations.

To get the learners more work placement ready they also chart what they think employers may expect from them

Learners are helped to understand what reasonable expectations are, why employers may have these expectations and whether they may need support in satisfying these expectations. Learners are well briefed about general principles of employment and employability and the reasonable expectations of employers before they go on work experience.

Other self-assessment tasks include two tick box worksheets where learners identify “what sort of person” they think they are. Have they, for instance, positive and employability attributes such as being helpful and friendly or would they classify themselves with more negative attitudes such as unwilling to recognise the needs of others, or lacking in patience? This helps the learner to understand their support needs and to react positively to their teachers and employers. The learners also develop an understanding of the sort of placement that may suit them; do they want to work in a busy environment with other people or in a quieter less people focussed workplace?

A continual theme throughout the induction is health and safety within the workplace. We

adapt the content to fit in with every aspect of the induction so that health and safety is embedded in everything they do and they understand its importance. The learners complete a health and safety assessment form for the college site. This helps them to recognise what is required when they complete it within the workplace. With support and guidance, we ensure the learner is ready to identify and locate issues that will need to be recorded on their health and safety assessment form.

During the interview process and as part of their initial assessment, candidates complete a test to identify the level they are working at in functional skills. Learners understand the importance of maths, English and IT and we provide them with stretching and challenging activities in functional skills to help them understand their relevance to the workplace.

In these initial stages, it is vital that we get a good match between employers and learners so that the traineeship is mutually beneficial. This ensures commitment from the employer and supports the training needs of the learner. We interview learners as soon as possible to allow us to complete this matching process in a timely fashion. Employers need to feel supported throughout the programme.

It is vital that we get a good match between employers and learner so that the traineeship is mutually beneficial

We recognise this need, especially if this is a new placement. The induction process is also an opportunity for us to help new employers to understand the college and what we do to support the learner and themselves. It also helps us to cement existing relationships with employers. We expect the relationship to last and it is vital for us to keep employers engaged for future traineeships and Apprenticeships.

In the initial meeting with the learner and employer, we outline an evaluation strategy that helps the college, the learner and the employer to evaluate the learner's progress throughout the programme. The strategy triangulates a

progress assessment from the employer, a review of progress from the learner and a watching brief from the college to ensure that the mutual benefit to both the learner and the employer is met. This also provides the opportunity for the college and the employer to constantly reflect on progress and create challenge for the learner to increase their knowledge and skills as well as providing greater value to the employer.

Summary of lessons learnt

We realised that we needed to have a comprehensive learner assessment process for all of our learners that fulfilled a number of objectives. We understood that the experience that learners had during the transition process into the traineeship programme was crucial in ensuring that they stayed on the programme.

By having an effective learner assessment process for our learners, we have enabled our learners to become more work-ready and to understand their skills, abilities and their needs

They needed to understand more about themselves and the world of work. We were also aware that the match with the employer and learner was a vital element in providing the appropriate learning and training experience for our learners.

By having an effective learner assessment process for our learners, we have enabled them to become more work-ready and to understand their skills, abilities and their needs. We have also learned a lot about them and this has helped us in identifying successful specific placements for individual learners.

5.0

▼ Employability
skills

Young People's Learning Provision (YPLP)

Overview of organisation

YPLP is a training provider for 16-19 year olds and delivers study programmes and traineeships. YPLP delivered the E2E programme when it was launched in 2003. We are based in Grantham and funded through Lincolnshire County Councils' Children's Services and work with a variety of agencies and organisations including CAHMS, Addaction, Youth Offending Services and the Terrence Higgins Trust. We also work closely with Barnados and Welfare to Work in delivering supported work experience and traineeships. We work with over 150 learners per year. Many learners progress onto further education and/or work.

Issues

Many of the young people on our traineeship programme had been out of education, training or work for some time and were lacking in confidence.

An issue for us was the structuring of employability training as learners joined the programme at different times.

They needed to develop a wide range of employability skills. These included time keeping, work ethics, working as part of a team, CV writing, job searching, help with application forms, interview skills and improving interpersonal skills and self-confidence. An issue for us was the structuring of employability training as learners joined the programme at different times.

Our challenge was to help the learners to develop appropriate employability skills to allow them to progress and enter into work.

Solutions

We offered the following package to our learners: an initial meeting with a discussion around their areas of interest; an induction, CEIAG session and diagnostics for maths and English; support in working through OCR Employability skills workbooks including Unit 8: Preparing for and learning from a job search, Unit 9: Assessing myself for a job and Unit 12: Providing personal information for the workplace.

All learners worked successfully through the employability units, with varying degrees of support.

Friday morning sessions, where we required learners to attend was a good opportunity for them to meet other learners ...whilst developing their employability skills. These sessions helped boost confidence and improve communication skills

The units helped boost confidence, particularly the unit involving making a telephone call. Our Friday morning sessions that all learners were required to attend were a good opportunity for them to meet other learners on the same programme whilst developing their employability skills. These sessions helped boost confidence and improve communication skills.

We helped the learners to produce CVs if they did not have one or if what they had needed improvement. Some learners had little or no experience of interviews. We gave much information, help and support on interviewing skills and learners found the constructive

feedback that they received as part of this process to be very valuable.

Learners were able to job search whilst on the programme. We gave suggestions and advice on websites, useful job apps, how to use speculative letters and CVs and other ways to search for jobs such as visiting employers directly. As part of the confidence building we helped learners develop deep breathing techniques to help them relax and prepare for interviews.

Learners also developed an understanding that being able to work at Level 2 in English and maths were also important employability skills. Some learners were so unsure of themselves that they found attendance at our centre very difficult. We resolved these difficulties by providing coaching sessions to help identify the source of the problem.

**Employability
also means wearing
appropriate clothing
and learners developed
an understanding of the
need to look right**

The issue of learners joining the programme at different times was solved by adapting our way of working and using the model of our core programme where learners are able to work individually and independently on different pieces of work.

Employability also means wearing appropriate clothing and learners developed an understanding of the need to look right. In some cases we provided clothing as the inability to afford appropriate clothing was a barrier to learning and potential employability. We found that personal and emotional issues also hindered the learners initially in developing their employability skills and we needed to provide focussed pastoral support.

Summary of lessons learnt

We learned a number of important lessons regarding employability skills from delivering our first traineeship programme.

- The OCR Level 1 Employability skills units fitted in well with the traineeship programme
- We identified one key person to lead the work, but there was support available from other tutors experienced in delivering employability skills
- Employers were positive and supportive of the employability package that we offered learners
- We provided a structured programme, but we needed to be flexible in our delivery so that if there was an identified need in a particular area, for example improving self-confidence, then we fitted this into the programme and tailored it to an individual or group approach dependant on need
- We made the learning as engaging and enjoyable as possible as some learners had negative views of learning, particularly regarding employability skills. Practical, active learning approaches were necessary.

We found that the action of creating a CV was empowering as it helped learners to realise that they had worthwhile skills and experience worth promoting, even if they were not work related.

The most important lesson is that there is no one size fits all, prescriptive method for delivering traineeships and employability skills.

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The advantage of a traineeship is that it can be tailored to the employer and learners' individual needs and can be flexible where necessary. This has been recognised in the changes to the traineeship framework, which has helped us provide an effective and relevant programme.

Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education

Overview of organisation

The Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education is a large college, which has seven main sites across Lincolnshire, including the Yorkshire Coast College in Scarborough, with which it merged in 2010. We serve the coastal communities of Lincolnshire, the South Humber and North Yorkshire. Low levels of job mobility and seasonal employment characterise much of the region. Economic activity rates are below regional and national averages. The number of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) is high. The proportion of the population with qualifications at advanced and undergraduate level is well below the national average. We recruit many of our learners from feeder schools that have considerably lower attainment levels than those in the rest of the region.

Issues

We developed the traineeship programme based on our knowledge of the local area, the client group and our employers. We also used the findings of the University and College Union (UCU) survey, commissioned as part of the Union's Knowledge Economy Campaign.

We developed the traineeship programme based on our knowledge of the local area, the client group and our employers

The survey found that nine out of ten young people out of work wanted a job but a third feared they would never get one. Other findings of the survey identified isolation, lack of confidence, depression and stress as significant negative factors of being out of work. 40 percent felt they were not part of society and almost the same percentage did not go out of the house.

Solutions

We developed a flexible traineeship programme delivered over 26 weeks, culminating in a celebration of achievement at the end of the programme. We wanted to develop the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of learning for our learners and address the issues from the UCU survey.

The traineeship offered a wide variety of experiences and activities ranging from team building through outdoor adventure activities including, camp craft and survival skills, fieldwork and residential experiences

We wanted to develop a range of competencies to support them in developing personal and social skills and helping them to link these into employability skills. We mapped the programme against 14 specific standards:

- Respond positively to change
- Be creative and innovative
- Understand risk and reward
- Be able to solve problems
- Communicate effectively
- Work as a team
- Use own initiative
- Take the lead as the occasional lead
- Be confident
- Develop self-management skills
- Have business and consumer awareness
- Be able to apply numeracy and IT
- Acquire knowledge about chosen career path
- Develop positive attitudes to work.

The traineeship offered a wide variety of experiences and activities ranging from team building through outdoor adventure activities including camp craft and survival skills, fieldwork and residential experiences. We also delivered functional skills and all learners had group and individual tutorials. Delivery of the

functional skills element of the programme was bespoke and tailored to the learner's individual needs.

These needs were determined through initial assessment and a tutorial with the course tutor. Learners were set a series of tasks through elearning, paper-based, workshop and one-to-one sessions. We used this model of delivery that we have found to accelerate learning, but most importantly allowed learners to progress at a pace suitable for them.

Learners undertook trips and other outdoor activities. They planned and costed these activities as part of their functional maths and English. Activities such as orienteering also helped to develop their functional skills. Learners were required to keep a work experience logbook containing a diary of events and achievements and their updated CVs also helped their literacy development and their preparation for work.

Summary of lessons learnt

We learnt that our philosophy of: right tutor - right programme; right learner - right course, was very important in this programme.

Learners undertook trips and other outdoor activities. They planned and costed these activities as part of their functional maths and English

The qualities of the programme leader were paramount to the programme's success. The team of teaching staff involved teachers who had youth worker qualifications and experience of working with disengaged learners and our National Diversity Award winner, Mike Burton, who received the Positive Role Model Award, comes from a disadvantaged background and is a skills motivator.

We used the delivery model for the programme from our Grimsby Learning Shop. This provides flexible learning opportunities with no 'classroom' teaching, but facilitated learning for learners working at their own pace. Online maths and English was also provided with the support of an experienced facilitator.

Our focus was on personal development throughout the activity programme and there was substantial evidence that organising and engaging in these activities and carrying out the associated physical exercise had a positive effect on depression, motivation and self-esteem.

Other important elements of success were, a very personalised programme with weekly one to one meetings with the programme leader and good links with community learning groups: we provide a progression route for hard to reach learners, for example, those from troubled families who have engaged with other agencies like The Prince's Trust.

Other important elements of success were, a very personalised programme with weekly one to one meetings with the programme leader and good links with community learning groups

Alongside the traineeship programme, we also ran a 'scaffolded' 'KickStart Your Career' programme for learners who were motivated by the prospect of work but who could not meet the entry requirements for the traineeship. Progression to a traineeship was able to take place after 10 weeks (award), 24 weeks (certificate) or 36 weeks (diploma). KickStart learners worked towards a vocational skills qualification alongside maths, English and employability. We found that this was a very useful way of building a progression route for learners who needed more initial support.

By running this programme, we have been able to develop further our thinking and the 2014/15 traineeship programme will offer a second personal development route. Learners will be able to choose an activity-based personal development day or a community-based personal development day, both mapped to core employability skills. Learners will still be able to engage in activities, as outlined in our pilot, but will focus on the Third Sector through volunteering and fundraising.

6.0

▼ Vulnerable and
excluded groups

6.1

Skills

Solution

Overview of organisation

Skills Solutions specialises in assisting people with training programmes and career development opportunities across a wide range of sectors and industries. We are the largest work based learning provider in Greater Manchester and the largest provider of Apprenticeships in the North West. We work with over 1,200 employers directly generating Apprenticeship vacancies and currently look after over 2,500 learners on a variety of Apprenticeship programmes. Our traineeship programme complements our work on Apprenticeships and provides opportunities for young people who are not quite ready for them.

Issues

Evie Rushton from Trafford started her traineeship at Skills Solutions Sale Training Centre. Evie needed to improve her maths, English and ICT grades. She wanted to study for a customer service qualification and to gain work experience in the health and social care sector.

Evie had a distinct lack of confidence. She did not communicate with her peers and very rarely spoke at all.

She had studied a BTEC in Health and Social Care at college but lacked the experience to secure an Apprenticeship or a job. When she joined the programme, Evie had a distinct lack of confidence. She did not communicate with her peers and very rarely spoke at all. This was a huge barrier for her as she was eager to embark on a career in health and social care where good communication skills are paramount.

Solutions

After joining the programme, Evie was given the opportunity to attend an interview at Fitzroy and

was successful in securing a work experience placement with them. Fitzroy is a national charity, which provides tailored, flexible support services to people with learning and physical disabilities.

It took some time for Evie to engage well with the staff team, however she did display encouraging communication skills with the service users on a one to one basis. Eventually, with targeted support from staff at Skills Solutions, her confidence grew and the staff at Fitzroy witnessed a massive change in Evie. She became very talkative within the centre and the staff at Fitzroy reported a dramatic improvement in her communication skills.

“Evie has told us she’d like to continue coming along to help on Fridays when her exams are over, which is great. And I think she’s really come out of her shell in the last month, even since her last review” said Ramsey Bayati, the Regional Volunteering Adviser at Fitzroy.

**With targeted support....
her confidence grew
and...staff...witnessed a
massive change in Evie**

Evie has taken her maths and English GCSEs and is currently awaiting the results. She has also successfully completed a functional skills ICT qualification and a Level 1 Award in Customer Service. Having really progressed on her work experience at Fitzroy, Evie was referred to the health and social care Apprenticeships team and invited to attend an interview at Stand Walk, a residential setting for people with learning disabilities.

Deirdre Hughes, Recruitment and Sales Team Leader at Skills Solutions reported, following the interview: “Evie really smashed it at the interview. She has been offered and has accepted a full time position and is now on a Health and Social Care Apprenticeship. The company is paying her £7 per hour as opposed to the minimum apprentice wage so as you can imagine she is delighted.”

Summary of lessons learnt

The training centre's placement consultant helped Evie find a placement that she really enjoyed and in an occupation she wanted to follow as a career. Choosing the right placement was crucial for Evie's progress.

Evie really smashed it at the interview and has been offered and has accepted a full time position

Every month the training centre's placement consultant went to see Evie on her work placement and carried out reviews with Evie and her manager. She checked to see how much progress had been made, particularly in relation to her communication skills and supported her with any problems she encountered. Having a joint review with Evie's manager made sure everyone was clear about expectations regarding the placement and continuing support needs.

Evie needed careful scaffolded support to ensure that she was able to develop her confidence, so that too much was not expected of her too quickly. She also needed to feel safe and secure in her studies and her placement. She was helped to identify the link between both. Good

collaboration between Skills Solutions and the placement was very important in giving her a personalised experience.

Evie said, "Since I started working at Fitzroy my confidence has risen to a much higher level and I am now interacting with different people at all times. I have learnt how to speak to people in all kinds of different situations. My placement has helped my progress because I now have a lot of experience of working with people with learning disabilities, which is something I always wanted to do as a career."

"I am very pleased that this programme has helped me progress to an Apprenticeship. It will help me with my future because I am getting the qualifications that I need, and also the experiences I need to get on in my life."

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

Overview of organisation

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College is a general further education college that has sites in and around Hinckley and Nuneaton in the Midlands. The college offers traineeships in hair, beauty and barbering, as well as in the creative cultural sector and the motor vehicle industry.

Issues

Susan wished to pursue a career in hairdressing. However, due to having a young child it had been very difficult for her to gain any work experience or to attend college to improve her skills. She felt very nervous at the prospect of going back to college at the age of 23, having what she considered few skills and very little work experience.

The biggest challenge for Susan and the college was how she was to complete the 12 week traineeship with her difficulties in obtaining childcare.

Susan had hoped to enrol on to an Apprenticeship in September, but wanted to see how the programme would fit in to her family commitments.

The biggest challenge for Susan and the college was how she was to complete the 12 week traineeship with her difficulties in obtaining childcare

She was unable to afford childcare and her partner worked long hours. However, her parents and her partner's parents agreed to help with childcare on a limited basis.

Solutions

Because of Susan's problems with childcare, the college worked with the employer who agreed

to have a flexible approach to her placement timetable. The learner coordinator had a face-to-face meeting with Susan and the employer where her goals and objectives and the employer and Susan's expectations of the programme were discussed and understood by all parties. The meeting was successful and the employer was happy to be flexible with Susan's working week. The college tailored a personalised traineeship for Susan that ran over three days per week, but extended the delivery of the programme to 15 weeks as opposed to the 12 week programme. This ensured that Susan was able to cover all necessary aspects of the traineeship delivery and complete the hours required for the workplace experience.

The college tailored a personalised traineeship for Susan that ran over three days per week

We offered Susan a range of positive opportunities in order for her to feel work ready. During the induction the learner coordinator concentrated on coaching and confidence building and the college chaplain worked with Susan to help her understand work ethics, which have become embedded in her approach to her placement.

The traineeship has given Susan the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in a hair salon. It has also helped her to begin studying a hairdressing unit, which gives her a flavour of how an Apprenticeship will work.

An effective induction programme and one to one support and guidance from the learner coordinator helped Susan become more confident in entering a traineeship. Time was spent mentoring and coaching Susan to help her become aware of skills she already had and provided her with information on working practices and guidance and feedback on her initial assessments. Susan became much more prepared to enter the workplace and became more aware of employer expectations of her.

An effective induction programme and one to one support and guidance from the learner coordinator helped Susan become more confident in entering a traineeship.

She also understood the units she needed to complete whilst at college. Her confidence increased markedly in the weeks during which she was being mentored and coached before her work placement began.

Summary of lessons learnt

We realised that we needed to be very flexible to meet the needs of Susan while ensuring that the timing of the traineeship still met her long-term aspirations. Because of our excellent working relationships with the employer, we were able to arrange for the employer to be flexible in their approach to Susan's traineeship as well.

We made use of a range of existing staff within the college who had expertise in coaching, confidence building and understanding work to deliver these elements of the traineeship. Their flexible approach in providing personalised support ensured that Susan was able to have a realistic understanding of the workplace and of her own abilities and she was able to access the opportunities that the traineeship offered and maintain her attendance on it.

Because of her experiences on the traineeship, Susan now feels capable of progressing on to an Apprenticeship in September or October.

6.3

Young People's Learning Provision (YPLP)

Overview of organisation

YPLP is a training provider for 16-19 year olds and delivers study programmes and traineeships. YPLP delivered the E2E programme when it was launched in 2003. We are based in Grantham and funded through Lincolnshire County Councils' Children's Services and work with a variety of agencies and organisations including CAHMS, Addaction, Youth Offending Services and the Terrence Higgins Trust. We also work closely with Barnados and Welfare to Work in delivering supported work experience and traineeships. We work with over 150 learners per year. Many learners progress onto further education and/or work.

Issues

A good example of the benefits of a traineeship is Alfie. Alfie started at the Thera Trust in May. Prior to his work placement he had struggled at college. He needed a safe learning environment due to mental health issues. His main interest was in becoming a tattoo or graffiti artist. We arranged for Alfie to meet a tattoo artist.

Alfie started at the Thera Trust in May.... his main interest was in becoming a tattoo or graffiti artist.

He realised that it was not as straightforward as he first thought and that he would have to work for free as an apprentice for a number of years.

Solutions

We thought that a short taster of an office environment might suit Alfie. He was not keen to go. However, once he got there he was pleasantly surprised. He could wear his baseball cap, he did not have to go in smart office wear, and most of all he 'could have a laugh'. Alfie now goes to work experience on a Wednesday for a full day for a period of 12 weeks. On reviewing his work experience Alfie said, "I really like it here... it's well good".

He could wear his baseball cap, he did not have to go in smart office wear, and most of all he 'could have a laugh'.

"Everybody is always smiling and I like the work. It's explained to me really well". Alfie's supervisor and other members of staff have nothing but praise for him. They say that he has settled in really well. He completes all the tasks they ask of him and just gets on with his work. He also has a good working relationship with the other employees and shares his sense of humour. The Payroll and Systems Manager at Thera said of Alfie, "He's very accurate and methodical in his approach to work. He has good acumen for office type work. We would like Alfie to come in on another day to help us scan all our personnel data and we would like to pay him for this."

Summary of lessons learnt

We feel that the impact of the traineeship programme on learners and employers has been significant. Learners have developed new skills, increased confidence and received real experience of working. In addition, obtaining a positive reference at the end of the work experience is an important stepping-stone to paid employment. Employers have developed mentoring skills within their own workforce by having a learner and traineeships have supported the business needs of employers by bridging gaps and helping them to manage busy periods.

Overall Alfie appears to be so much more confident than when he joined the programme. He was beaming when he was given the news of working another (paid) day at the Thera Trust. He is promoting the benefits of work experience to his peers on the programme explaining how it has made him feel so much more confident and boosted his self-esteem.

Weston College

Overview of organisation

Weston College is a general further education college situated in Weston-super-Mare. The college has 7,500 students who are taught at facilities in Weston-super-Mare and Nailsea. The college creates courses for industry and has a pupil referral unit, which provides education for students aged 15 - 16 who have been excluded from mainstream secondary schools in the area. The main college building is situated close to the town centre and beach. There are a number of other sites including sixth form facilities, a university campus and a conference centre.

Issues

My name is Ross Gribble, I would like to take you through my traineeship journey at Weston College. Making the decision to take a traineeship was a relatively easy decision, as all other routes had seemed blocked by grade boundaries. I had applied for lots of positions, but had not been successful because of my grades.

Being on a traineeship was very different from being at school

I wanted to get C's for my maths and English as I left school without gaining good grades. A levels did not interest me because I did not enjoy being in a classroom environment as I have always enjoyed being active, plus, I did not know what they would lead to. I also wanted a course with a placement already in place and needed support to gain qualifications.

Solutions

Being on a traineeship was very different from being at school. We had functional skills classes and they have been really good because I had more support. I built better professional relationships with staff, because we were treated as adults and I learned by doing rather than

listening. The more active lessons focused on us as individuals.

I built better professional relationships with staff, because we were treated as adults

There was a strong tutorial and support network and we developed personal and social skills. I actually had no idea what soft skills were until I built a chair out of balloons and traded oil!

The one to one tutorials helped me to consider my plans for the future and discuss any problems I had. I was helped to set and work towards targets that will help me achieve my goals. It was during a tutorial that I first mentioned that I wished to become a teacher. During the following tutorials, we planned the path I would need to follow in order to become a teacher. My placement was in an aluminium systems fabrication company who manufactured windows, doors and curtain walls. My roles and responsibilities included: sweeping and tiding, being concerned about health and safety and fitting gaskets. This is where the functional skills lessons, customer service and the tutorial and support networks have been really good because I have been able to use them in a work setting.

Summary of lessons learnt

My interview with Sainsburys was really testing. The interview was pretty formal and the questions were probing and I had never been for a job interview before. My tutors gave me a lot of help in preparing for this. When I was accepted, it felt like I had achieved. This was massive considering that I had been refused interviews before so many times due to my grades.

My work placement has helped me with my health and safety skills. I also now know what the social boundaries are in a working environment. I expected the banter but as my

confidence grew so did my ability to interact and build relationships with colleagues in the work environment.

The traineeship gave me a massive boost in my confidence especially being able to speak in front of people. I actually became a leader within my peer group. I learned a lot from being in the college, but also from being in a placement. I discovered that employers are looking for more than just certificates. They want to know that you have the ability to work within a team and motivate yourself and that you have employability skills.

The traineeship gave me a massive boost in my confidence especially being able to speak in front of people.

In the traineeship employability skills focussed on gaining employment and personal and social development has focused on skills that will help keep me in employment. The traineeship has helped me improve the skills relating to gaining employment or becoming an apprentice. I now enjoy education!!

