

An Action Research approach to “Traineeships”

Green Paper Project



As part of their work on the Green Paper project the York cluster are extending their current vocational offer at Entry Level and Level 1. They are planning to utilise the new 16-19 Programmes of Study Guidance to design a flexible programme of study for each learner. The programme being developed is based on the DfE / BIS discussion paper, “Traineeships – Supporting young people to develop the skills for Apprenticeships and other sustainable employment” <http://www.education.gov.uk> . The delivery structure described in the discussion paper forms a model for the development of Entry / Level 1 provision.

“Our aim is to establish Traineeships as the preferred route for young people who aspire to Apprenticeships or other jobs and who need additional training to reach their goals” (Traineeships – Supporting young people to develop the skills for Apprenticeships and other sustained employment. Jan 2013).

This new programme for Entry and Level 1 is designed for young people aged 16 and above. It brings together the City of York Council’s education and training service (which holds both Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency contracts) and Blueberry Academy, a supported employment organisation which, importantly, has expertise in advice and guidance.

The programme will include essential vocational skills, continued study of English and Maths, personal development and a significant proportion of time spent at York City Council undertaking experience of work in Office Skills, Hotel and Catering services. The programme will also incorporate a flexible support structure which will be put in place for each learner.

The programme will be launched in Sept 2013. However, as part of the Green Paper project a small pilot group (6 – 8 trainees) will be trialled after Easter 2013 and will be developed using an action research model, i.e. 1) Identify, 2) Plan, 3) Collect, 4) Analyse, 5) Revise and Reflect/Review. The outcomes from this pilot will inform the Traineeship Programme to be launched in September 2013.

It is anticipated that the new programme will eventually take learners from a broad range of previous settings, for example - direct from secondary school or special schools, FE, NEET learners, and returners from residential specialist colleges. In the first instance the pilot group for the action research project will be drawn from “higher needs” trainees (higher needs is a term used by Social Care). In reality, several different types of learner fit the term higher needs. It encompasses trainees with moderate learning disability or trainees who have been identified along the Autism Spectrum. The trainees’ work placements will operate within the York City Council setting. A vocational offer at Entry / Level 1 will be made in Catering, Hospitality and

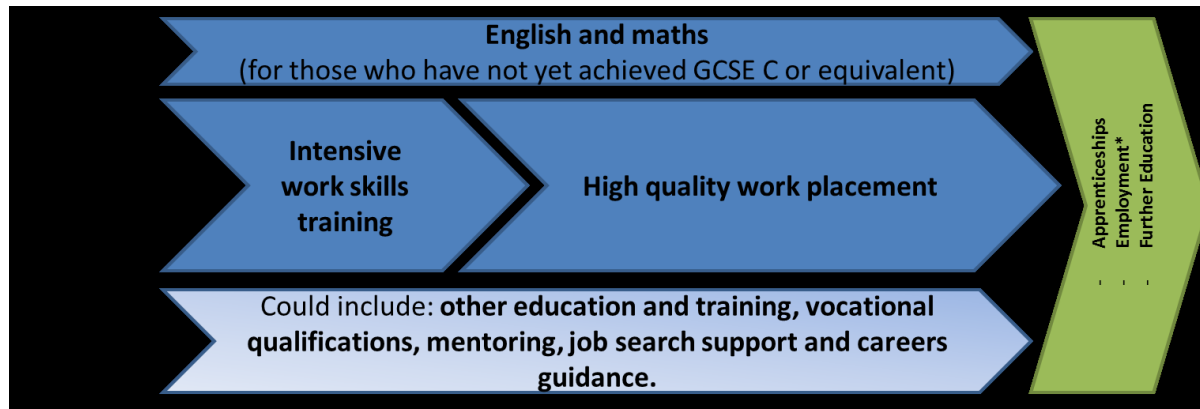
Customer Service. This provision will then be evaluated and adapted in the light of feedback from learners and an independent third party, e.g. Youth Support Service.

“For 16-19 year olds, Traineeships will be part of Study Programmes. For 19-24 year olds, providers will be able to make use of the flexibilities of the Adult Skills Budget” (Traineeships – Supporting young people to develop the skills for Apprenticeships and other sustained employment. Jan 2013).

As the programme will be promoted as Entry / Level 1, it will attract a broader referral group, therefore it is envisaged that realistically 15% - 25% of learners may progress onto the Apprenticeships programme, but the majority (75% - 85% of Entry / Level 1 trainees) will progress to the **“other sustainable employment”** route as mentioned in the Traineeship Discussion Paper. Whilst not clearly defined yet in the discussion paper, for the purposes of the Action Research project, “sustainable employment” will mean individualised programmes of work and supported employment, augmented by further education input as required by individual trainees. The proportion of work, supported employment and education will, by necessity, vary from learner to learner.

The Action Research Traineeship programme will develop employability skills for trainees who may not achieve English and Maths at the appropriate level to progress onto an Apprenticeship (particularly those learners who have learning difficulties and / or disabilities); these trainees will have the job skills to potentially gain employment after completing the programme. Crucial to the progression of students, particularly those achieving at Entry level, will be the ability of the Council to identify and establish real jobs at this level through “job carving”.

The potential model for Traineeships given by DfE / BIS is illustrated below. The Action Research project team will base their model of delivery on this structure.



The Traineeship discussion is a very new area of development which fits well with the overall aims and objectives of this strand of work as part of the overall York Cluster’s project. The partnership-working with York City County Council regarding the provision of work placements will provide a good local role model for other employers in the area.

The intent is that the Council and its partners will be able to engage with other employers by using the Council scheme as an “active reference”. Thus employers will be able to see the **real** business benefits of young people doing **real** jobs at Entry and Level 1.