

11 November 2014		ITEM: 7
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Work Experience – Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Michele Lucas, Learning and Skills Manager		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Work experience has undergone significant change over the last four years. With a change of central government the statutory duty to provide work experience was removed and schools were given the opportunity to decide whether to continue with work experience or remove it from the timetable for young people aged 14-19.

The decision to remove the duty to provide work experience was based to a certain extent on an independent review carried out by Professor Alison Wolf (2011). The review identified that there was little evidence of work experience (for 14-16 year olds) having a positive impact in supporting the progression of young people into employment. However, the report did conclude that "genuine work experience" for 16-19 year olds had significant benefits in preparing young people for the challenges of work and enabled employers to identify young people with talent for their organisations.

Thurrock, like many other Local Authorities, saw a very mixed picture emerge, with some schools continuing to offer work experience and others offering alternative work related activities – some of which included placing a charge on parents who requested a work experience placement to pay for the mandatory health and safety checks for any work experience placement a young person undertakes.

In September 2013, the provider of work experience opportunities in Thurrock went into receivership. The Learning and Skills team in the Council were approached by the Principal of The Ockendon Academy to offer work experience opportunities as part of an emerging traded offer to schools which includes impartial information advice and guidance and support to recruit apprenticeships and other work related activities.

In response to this request, Thurrock Council has provided Health and Safety assurance for students to participate in work experience placements for the past

year. This activity provides a source of income to Thurrock Council and enhances the school curriculum to prepare local young people for employment. Eleven institutions commissioned the work experience service in its first year (13/14). It is anticipated that 14 institutions will be utilising the service from September 2014.

The latest guidance released around work related activities states

“Work experience is vital for young people and employers. It bridges the gap between school, college and work, helps young people make decisions about their future and develop new skills, and gives employers the chance to spot good new recruits”.

Skills Minister, Matthew Hancock October 2013

This support for work experience has been welcomed and echoed by local employers who have stated that they identify potential apprentices from the young people who undertake work experience within their companies.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the work already undertaken and the achievements over the last year in the development of a traded offer, supporting both employers and educational institutions, be noted.**
- 1.2 That a Task and Finish group be established to identify further opportunities to support pathways into work for young people – with a view to addressing some of the sector specific opportunities locally.**
- 1.3 That the number of Members of the Task and Finish group be agreed, following which Group Leaders will be requested to make nominations in accordance with political proportionality.**
- 1.4 That the scope and terms of reference of the Task and Finish group be agreed, as outlined in draft in appendix 1.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** In August 2013, the Hertfordshire Careers Service went into administration. The Learning and Skills team created a work experience service that includes Health and Service assurance, and the identification of placements, which complemented the impartial information advice and guidance offered to local schools and colleges.
- 2.2** Competitive rates for two types of service: student sourced placement or Local Authority sourced placement; a set of documents to enable Ofsted to measure the impact of the young peoples’ experiences and a simple Service Level Agreement. As a result eleven institutions have chosen to provide work experience placements through Thurrock Council.

- 2.3 The Learning and Skills Team created a work experience placement service, in partnership with the 11-19 Strategy Group. This included the identification of placements and Health and Safety assurance for young people. Competitive rates for two types of service were negotiated, these include student sourced placement or LA sourced placement. We have also developed a set of documents to enable Ofsted to measure the impact of the young peoples' experiences and a Service Level Agreement has resulted in eleven institutions choosing to arrange work experience through Thurrock Council.

Take up to date

Institutions	No. of students placed (or to be placed)
Ormiston Park Academy	22
The Ockendon Academy	180
Ockendon Studio School	38
William Edwards School	9
St Clare's School	190
Princes Trust	42
Pupil Support Service	7
Gable Hall School	6
Stanford and Corringham 6 th Form	14
Total	508

From Sept 2014 – work identified	
Hassenbrook School	Signed SLA
Palmers College	Signed SLA
Gateway	Considering SLA
Grays Convent	Considering Offer Document
The Ockendon Academy	Signed SLA
Princes Trust	Signed SLA

Achievements to date

- Promotion of the service at partnership meetings has resulted in more take up of the service.
- A set of documents to enable education institutions to provide (and evidence to Ofsted) outcomes.
- Utilising a work experience student at Thurrock Council to enhance the content of the student forms.
- Efficient and effective communication between the Work Experience Co-ordinator and partner contact
- Approximately 280 local employers regularly provide work experience placements, across all sectors.

- Thurrock Council leading the way in providing work experience placements in a range of different directorates.

Challenges

- Thurrock Council being reliant on one person to provide assurance for work experience placements
- Clashing work experience dates between institutions
- Continual need to promote and secure a range of placements as demand grows
- Sector specific engagement e.g. more opportunities in logistics sector to take advantage of the regeneration opportunities locally.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options. (Thurrock - Service Delivery)

- 3.1 The work experience service provided in 13/14 was delivered by one person. Robust systems and processes are in place to make efficient use of their time, but limited capacity/budget has meant that growth in the offer has been limited.
- 3.2 To extend capacity and mitigate the risks of one 'expert', two members of staff have been trained to conduct Health and Safety visits for work experience placements. This additional responsibility has been incorporated into their performance objectives/daily work. It is planned for two further members of staff to be trained by early October.
- 3.3 The cost of five staff, on a part-time basis, conducting health and safety visits to enable work experience placements is estimated to extend capacity by 100%. The potential income generated covers the additional training costs.
- 3.4 The first year costs of the service has exceeded income by 30%, with the increased demand we are working towards a position of creating opportunities to provide a cost neutral position in 15/16.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Thurrock Council is in a unique position with some of the largest regeneration opportunities across the country – the continuing support around providing a range of work experience opportunities for young people will ensure that Thurrock's young people can participate in and be part of the exciting agenda and promote the council's priorities around ensuring young people can gain the managerial jobs of tomorrow.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Children's O&S Committee may wish to establish a task and finish group to gain a greater understanding around the current work place arrangements in Thurrock and to identify ways in which support could be offered around the development of work experience opportunities across Thurrock.
- 5.2 To support this, members could engage with a range of partners including:-
- Headteachers/Principals
 - Work experience leads
 - Careers staff
 - Young People
 - Employers
 - LA officers
- 5.2 This would enable committee members to gain a greater understanding of some of the ways in which this offer could be enhanced – this could be undertaken by hosting a business networking event inviting key partners to discuss and identify ways to enhance and support the current offer.
- 5.3 The key timescales and meeting plan is outlined in appendix 1.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The work experience service directly contributes to Thurrock Council priorities 1 and 2:

Create a great place for learning and opportunity
Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- 6.2 The work experience service positively impacts on Thurrock Council's employer engagement activities, by generating new employment with training opportunities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

When the Local Authority were approached by the Chair of the 11-19 Strategy Group to develop and oversee the work experience offer agreement was reached via the development of a traded offer. The intention in taking on this work was to ensure that this work was cost neutral within 12 months. With the increase in schools offering work experience this will be achieved by

December 2014. As a result there are no financial implications associated with the work experience traded offer.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The Committee is asked to note the report content, and make two decisions, both of which are within the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

In working closely with local businesses and the community we are ensuring that we offer young people a range of work experience placements that are based on young people skills and interests and not on a gender bias or educational attainment. We have secured a range of work experience placements that are suitable for both young women and young men and that have challenged some of the gender stereotyping for example young men into childcare. We will continue to explore ways in which we can challenge stereotyping of all appropriate protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010 .

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – draft terms of reference for the Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People Task and Finish Review.

Report Author:

Michele Lucas

Learning and Skills Manager

Learning and Skills Team