

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Briefing Note

Committee	Employment in Hampshire County Council
Date:	20 July 2011
Title:	<i>Internships Plus</i> ; a new initiative in the HCC apprenticeship scheme, assisting Care Leavers into employment
Reference:	3081
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update EHCC on progress made following the Cabinet decision taken on 24th January 2011 to give further employment related support to young people, especially those from the most vulnerable groups for whom the Council has corporate parent responsibilities. At that meeting approval was given to;
- a) *‘the approach of consolidating existing schemes with a view to exploring further opportunities when the changes in departmental structures have been implemented and new ways of working embedded’*, and it was noted;
 - b) *‘that action will be taken to support employment opportunities for school leavers, with a focus on care leavers both through existing schemes such as Apprentices and also through developing a new programme for 40 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) formerly in the care of the County Council. A report on the criteria for the new scheme will be presented at a future Cabinet’*.
- 1.2. The Leader made available £600k for the new scheme with the intention that it be used primarily for wages/employment costs for the young people with a proportion of it to be used to meet the costs of pastoral support that may be required for this vulnerable group
- 1.3. The council already has a rich and multifaceted approach to supporting young people through the work of its Children’s Services Department. This proposed new initiative is designed to feed into the Council’s Apprenticeship programme¹ and is offered as a key component of the Council’s ability as a

¹ The corporate pilot Apprenticeship scheme came to a successful close early in 2011 and the future strategy is currently being developed

major employer in Hampshire to bring about positive employment outcomes locally.

- 1.4. This paper presents an outline of the new scheme; '*Internships Plus*'² aimed primarily at 16 – 18 year olds care leavers seeking employment. Once participants on this scheme have successfully completed their work placement they would then be encouraged to take up a further apprenticeship or apply for other appropriate roles within the Council.
- 1.5. The current situation (as at 06.07.2011) is that 48 work placements have been offered (see appendix) and 26 young people have indicated that they will start the University preparatory course on 18.07.2011. The work placements offer an excellent range of choice both geographically and in terms of the types of work involved. Unfilled placements will be held over until December/January when a second cohort of interns is likely to begin.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. National unemployment figures to end December 2010 showed that almost one million 16 – 24 year olds were out of work and that youth unemployment had risen to 20.5%. The figures for care leavers were even bleaker, with 33% of 19 year old looked after children not in education, training or employment³. Long term unemployment encourages problems with criminal behaviour, teenage pregnancy, poverty and social exclusion. Cabinet was concerned about the Hampshire situation (which translates to a possible 40 NEET care leavers in 2011) as in this context the vulnerable young person is likely to be further disadvantaged and less likely to be able to compete successfully in a much diminished job market
- 2.2. Evidence shows that young people leaving care tend to be disadvantaged when trying to find employment for the following reasons; low skills, poor education, health issues and little knowledge of what employers require and the labour market. Many people leaving the care system do not have access to work and career networks. This results in a lack of relevant work experience or knowledge about the world of work. Young people in care are often unable to commit to even part time work jobs because of conflicting priorities and the lack of role modelling other young people would normally have from their parents. Work experience and internships are a recommended way of enabling young care leavers to join the labour market. Early interventions (i.e. while still at school or 16+) can be extremely beneficial⁴
- 2.3. Analysis of numbers of people aged 16 - 24 who are Care leavers from 2010/ 2011 cohorts gives us a potential target group of circa 40 young people in Hampshire who may wish to take up some form of employment

² *Internships Plus* is the name given to this very specific apprenticeship scheme to distinguish it from the generic scheme

³ From Care to Independence; Improving employment outcomes for care leavers; Reed in Partnership January 2011

⁴ From Care to Independence; Improving employment outcomes for care leavers; Reed in Partnership January 2011

related opportunity with the council. However, in practice the number is likely to be much smaller. This is due to two main factors: Firstly, establishing definitive NEET numbers is not an exact science. People slip in and out of the NEET category as their aspirations and circumstances can change rapidly (for example undertaking episodes of casual work, moving away from the area or supporting a family). Secondly, experts from various organisations working with these groups of vulnerable young people have advised that while some will seize an opportunity for work and flourish, significant numbers of them are likely to be unwilling or simply unable to sustain a commitment to regular work due to personal history/circumstances. It is estimated that less than half of the potential 40 young people in this category will in fact be available to, or wish to, take up an *Internship Plus* placement.. All estimated figures should be viewed with caution and *Internships Plus* will need to be the most flexible employment initiative the Council has undertaken to date if it is to succeed in its aims and to be as inclusive and supportive as possible.

3. Offering employment opportunities successfully to vulnerable young people

- 3.1. The learning from the Council's own experience as an employer of young people from vulnerable groups, coupled with guidance from national and local expertise, is that most will need considerable support to become employable. *Internships Plus* is congruent with the Hampshire wide support already in place from the Council and partner agencies. It aims to increase the options available to the young people and present them with pathways into work at gentle and sustainable gradients.
- 3.2. Recent experience from the pilot apprenticeship scheme has shown that the success of the individual apprentice depends heavily on a stable supportive placement. Therefore the timing of placements for *Internships Plus* needs to take into account periods when teams are in the midst of significant change activity and managers/teams offering placements need to be fully briefed about the support their intern may require and the challenges involved in successfully managing a placement.

3.3. *Internships Plus* 2011/12

- 3.3.1 This blue ribbon scheme has been created in partnership with the University of Winchester and Catch 22⁵ (Training providers experienced in working with Care Leavers). The pilot begins on July 18th 2011. In essence it is a particular and unique form of apprenticeship which has been given the different name of *Internships Plus* to avoid confusion with standard apprenticeships. It offers a 12 - 18 month paid work placement (or internship) during which time the intern is an employee of Hampshire County Council working in a supernumerary role with very significant pastoral support available to them and to the managers who host their placement. All interns will work towards a level 2 qualification in customer relations.

⁵ Catch22 has been appointed as an official partner of the European Year of Volunteering 2011

The internship includes a 4 day preparatory programme taught by the Lifelong Learning team at Winchester University prior to the work placement. This programme is funded by the University through Aim Higher monies.

- 3.3.2 The target group is 16 – 18 year olds in the care of the Council.. Expert advice is that the number of completions for the first running of a programme such as this may be low due to the needs, circumstances and life experiences of these young people.
- 3.3.3 Successful completion of *Internships Plus* will help participants be far more competitive in the job market by giving them a generally applicable level 2 qualification, valuable and substantial workplace experience and skills, build their work 'network' and give access to role models, as well as the kudos of a university name and the label 'intern' on their curriculum vitae's.
- 3.3.4. Recruitment to the scheme is being handled through Children's Services colleagues. Over half of this year's Care Leavers have indicated that they have plans in place from September. The remainder have been communicated with directly and had the opportunity of a personal meeting with the Pastoral Care Supervisor for *Internships Plus* who has also been able to give information and guidance about this scheme as well as other opportunities of potential interest. Recruitment has been inclusive rather than competitive and as of June 17th there were 16 firm applications and several more possible ones.
- 3.3.5 Participants on the successful pilot 'Work Experience for Care Leavers' scheme in CCBS, which began in March 2011 and is a short period of unpaid work experience, will be able to take up a work placement internship without having undertaken the preparatory course
- 3.3.6 The preparatory course begins week commencing 18th July 2011 and consists of 4 consecutive days 10.30 – 3pm. It includes some skills analysis and career planning. It will set expectations about appropriate workplace behaviours, and give an introduction to the work of the Council. The aims of this time are to prepare the interns with personal development and relevant information; help them build a peer group for support; motivate and encourage them; begin to prepare them for the length of a normal working day and travelling to work. The University will award a certificate for participating on the course and individuals will be encouraged to link back in to the university summer school for children in care to present on their experiences.
- 3.3.7 The work placement will be for 12 months initially with potential to extend to a maximum of 18 months to allow completion of the qualification. It is paid at the minimum wage for the age, in line with the corporate apprenticeship scheme. There will be a phased approach to full time hours. We aim to begin placements within a month of the preparatory course finishing.

- 3.3.8 It is anticipated that some of the young people who currently have plans for college or jobs from September may change their circumstances later in the Autumn. We also expect that some interns who begin work placements at the Council in September may well drop out before Christmas. We therefore plan to introduce a second opportunity to join the scheme in January 2012.
- 3.3.9 Catch 22, who will draw down national funding to deliver the level 2 qualification, are offering volunteer mentors for the young people (this will be organised in conjunction with Children's Services) as well as briefings and ongoing support for managers who are hosting an internship placement.

3.4 Key issues with *Internships Plus*

- 3.4.1 Matching the needs, aspirations and capabilities of the potential interns with an appropriate and stable placement in the right location is particularly challenging in a time of unprecedented organisational change. However, departmental response to requests for placements has been extremely supportive. We aimed to have a majority of placements offered by managers and teams who already had experience of successfully supporting work experience or apprenticeships for Care Leavers and young offenders, and who would be under no illusions about the requirement for pastoral support. Currently there are 41 placements on offer across all departments, ranging from administrative roles to catering, transport and training. We are continuing to develop more placements to enable a good choice for the interns both in July 2011 and in January 2012.
- 3.4.2 Experience shows that issues over payment, income and costs of actually attending work can prohibit young people from joining employment or training. Delays to salaries, initial high tax codes and the cost of travel have all in the past contributed to young people finding such opportunities unattractive. Therefore *Internship Plus* participants will be paid for attending the preparatory course and will receive immediate and up front help with the costs of actually participating in the programme; this includes travel costs and funding for uniforms/suitable professional clothes/equipment. Payment arrangements have been put in place to facilitate this speedily (e.g. travel expenses for the course will be disbursed at the end of each training day on receipt of travel tickets)
- 3.4.3 The challenge for colleagues supplying pastoral support and the Council managers hosting work placements will be to provide the right support to the young people to maximise the chances of a successful outcome. Flexibility and understanding will be important but this will have to be balanced with good performance management. This will not always be an easy balance.
- 3.4.5. Successfully setting up and running this type of programme, with external partners and a vulnerable and often hard to reach target

group, is labour intensive and requires specific expertise – sometimes for quite low returns in terms of numbers, as drop out rates are likely to be high. Evaluation of the successful outcome of the programme will need to give higher priority to the impact on individuals rather than weight of numbers.

4. Finance

4.1. The £600k set aside by Cabinet will fund the following, spanning FYs 2011/12 – 12/13;

- a) An estimated 35⁶ interns, with staggered starts, on 12 month contracts with the possibility of extension to a maximum of 18 months to complete their qualification
- b) Employment associated costs such as travel, uniforms/appropriate work wear
- c) Pastoral Supervision provided through Children's Services
- d) Workplace support and guidance provided through Catch 22
- e) Overall coordination of the scheme provided through Human Resources (Hampshire Learning Centre)

5. Recommendation(s)

5.1. That EHCC note the development of *Internships Plus* as an appropriate response to Cabinet's request for such a scheme to be developed and Cabinet's decision to allocate £600k to fund this scheme.

5.2 That EHCC note a further report will be produced for a meeting of Cabinet in the autumn giving an update on the outcomes of the scheme and requesting an agreement in principle for funding for future years to be included as a priority in the budget planning process for 2012/13.

⁶ This estimated number should be viewed with great caution due to the extremely changeable plans, aspirations and life circumstances of these young people. However, recruitment to the scheme is inclusive rather than competitive, and every support will be given to encourage interns to maintain placements.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

<i>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</i>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<i>Maximising well-being:</i>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<i>Enhancing our quality of place:</i>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Cabinet; Employment Opportunities for vulnerable young people	2527	24 January 2011
Cabinet; Employment Opportunities for vulnerable young people; Progress Report	2867	18 April 2011

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. A full EqIA is available on request. The primary objective of this initiative is to enable the vulnerable young people leaving Care at age 16 – 18 to compete more equally in a challenging and competitive job market.

1.2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Care Leavers and NEETS are often disproportionately represented in the crime statistics. Although this is a relatively small group of young people, if they are successful in entering and sustaining employment they are considerably less likely to become young offenders.

2. Climate Change:

2.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

This is a small cohort of young people and, although interns will be using public transport, the immediate impact of this employment scheme on Hampshire's carbon footprint is negligible.

2.2 How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

As Hampshire County Council uses its weight as a large local employer to bring new support possibilities to its role as corporate parent the longer term development of this scheme will have more of an impact on community sustainability and economic wellbeing as more young people take up employment. A number of the internships are offered in the Environment Transport and Economy department. The individuals who take up these posts will develop knowledge and skills specific to this area – and indeed all interns will improve their general knowledge and skills through exposure to their department's continual improvement work in this area.