

APPENDIX 1

A SELECTION OF LINE MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONER COMMENTS WITH REGARDS TO WORKING WITH FOUNDATION APPRENTICES

“Foundation Apprentices are a fantastic addition to the Business Administrative Team; they have always been willing to help, always have a ‘can do’ attitude and are willing to learn. The benefit of having FA’s is that they come to the team with freshness and their ideas are always from an objective perspective. I have always found our FA’s to be invaluable to me in my work especially when I have needed to be guided through processes that are new to me, or when I have needed something done urgently. They are an important part of the Community Care team”. **Service Manager, Community Care Services.**

“The Foundation Apprentices that have supported my Team have been nothing short of fabulous. Their energy and commitment has been a breath of fresh air, which has permeated throughout the entire team. Nothing has been too much trouble for them and they’ve been a real credit”. **Team Manager, Children and Young People Services.**

“I just want to express my views on the number of Foundation apprentices that have worked with us. I have been extremely impressed by the responsible, polite and professional manner that they have shown. They have always been helpful and quick to learn and respond promptly to any requests made”. **Social Worker, Community Network Team.**

“The apprentices we have worked with and trained have complimented the running of our service and have supported our development. We have seen a higher level of productivity and they have been more motivated and satisfied workforce. We are providing future skilled workers who offer a fresh prospective; they keep ahead of technology and recognise the investment in their development”. **BSS Line Manager**

In addition to acquiring the views of line managers and social work practitioners; during April 2016, 19 FA’s completed a brief survey, noting their experiences and observations on the FA scheme.

They were asked to rank four statements by selecting either 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree'; the details of which are recorded below:

Statement 1: The Foundation Apprenticeship scheme is extremely rewarding.

12 out of 19 (63.2%) strongly agreed with this statement.

7 out of 19 (36.8%) agreed with this statement.

Statement 2: During my Apprenticeship, I received the necessary support from the Council to undertake the role.

13 out of 19 (68.4%) strongly agreed with this statement.

6 out of 19 (31.6%) agreed with this statement.

Statement 3 – Undertaking an Apprenticeship has helped me decide that my preferred career is to work within the Council?

4 out of 19 (21.1%) strongly agreed with this statement.

15 out of 19 (78.9%) agreed with this statement.

Statement 4 – I would recommend the Foundation Apprenticeship scheme to friends and family.

15 out of 19 (78.9%) strongly agreed with this statement.

4 out of 19 (21.1%) agreed with this statement.

As part of the same survey, FA's were asked to comment on potential changes to the FA scheme. A selection of these comments are detailed below:

"The only improvement I could suggest would be to allow Apprentices to work/sit in with a variety of different teams to gain even more experience rather than just in the team they are based"

"An increase with Apprenticeship pay may make the scheme seem more appealing but I understand with current budget cuts this may not be possible."

"I have found the Foundation Apprentice Scheme wonderful. I cannot really think of anything specifically, possibly a higher pay raise as I know that apprentices work the same hours as normal staff members"

Finally, FA's were asked to comment on any positive aspects of the FA scheme:

"I feel that the Foundation Apprentice scheme allows you to experience a working environment, engage with new people and gives you the opportunity to progress within the Council. The most rewarding, personally, would be the opportunities to progress your career, also to see first-hand the work and support Children's Services provide to children and young people".

"The Foundation Apprenticeship Scheme has given me the substance to building a future within the council due to providing structure, punctuality and discipline".

"I feel it gives you a chance to build relations with people within the Council to help you gain the experience and have a great chance of employment within the Council that you wouldn't have normally if you came from outside the Council".

"I feel that the Foundation Apprenticeship scheme definitely helped me find my feet and helped me discover that I would much rather be working than in college/education. I found it very motivating to be within a working environment with many professionals, enjoying the tasks I was completing, whilst working towards a qualification. My foundation apprenticeship rewarded me with a temporary BSO position within the council; if I didn't gain an apprenticeship first then I would not have had this opportunity."

"I think that the apprentice scheme is a truly marvellous thing that allows young people to gain great experience. I am still working my way through my apprenticeship as I have even managed to get a temporary job as a Business Support Officer which is wonderful. I like the fact I had an opportunity to progress if I wanted to. It has sent me in a good direction; I work in nice conditions and don't have any problem with my work loads. For myself, I have found that there are many positive outcomes that can come out of being a foundation apprentice."

Conclusions

It is evident from the experiences of our FA's and their colleagues, that the FA scheme offers real opportunity for young people to gain the skills, experience and potential career in what can be, an extremely rewarding environment. It could also be argued that that the scheme provides FA's with an element of structure and security that, to some degree, appears to be helping them grow into responsible and conscientious young adults.

If there are any Sections within the Council, still undecided as to whether to "invest" in FA's; based on the experiences of BSS, there is relatively little to lose and so much more to be gained by fully adopting the FA scheme.

Financial Impact

1. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Equality Impact assessment

2. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

3. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Legal Impacts

4. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Risk Management

9. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Consultation

10. No requirement to consult.

Recommendations

11. That the Panel note the content of this report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

12. Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

Implementation of Decision

13. After consideration, this is not applicable.

Appendices

14. None.

List of Background Papers

15. None

Officer Contact

Ian Finnemore – Business Strategy Manager

Telephone: 01639 763023

Email: i.finnemore@npt.gov.uk