

Partnership apprenticeships

Background

The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for the borough) is likely to receive some funding from central government in exchange for achieving stretch targets agreed in the borough's first Local Area Agreement. This is known as Performance Reward Grant or PRG, and will be paid to the Partnership in two lump sums in the final quarter of financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The Partnership wishes to identify a focus for spending PRG and is currently considering a number of options, including developing a Partnership Apprenticeship Programme or supporting an existing apprenticeship programme which can be tailored to include a 'partnership' element. To investigate this option further, officers have met with the Council's Regeneration Team and Director of Community Learning to better understand any apprenticeship programmes currently in operation throughout the borough.

Initial research has identified the following:

- London Councils has made a commitment to provide more than 2000 apprenticeships in London through local authorities and their contractors by 2012.
- The Council, its contractors and partners (such as NHS K&C) currently offer a small number of apprenticeships and related schemes (such as Headstart Traineeships), but would need to increase the numbers of these to provide 50-60 apprenticeships to meet the London Councils pledge.
- Apprentices are paid employees who are then released for training by prior agreement – usually one day per week. Apprenticeships are subject to an accredited framework, which may vary according to the particular scheme but each apprenticeship must contain the following four components as part of that framework:
 - Employment
 - NVQ qualification
 - Technical certificate
 - Keyskills training
- Other London local authorities who offer successful apprenticeship schemes (such as the London Borough of Ealing) support this with dedicated officer resource to ensure that the scheme operates successfully and contributes to a positive experience for the apprentice and employer. This usually consists of an advisor or project manager, a mentor for the apprentice/s and training and support for managers of apprentices.
- Any apprenticeship scheme would need to be hosted by an employer who would cover salary costs and act as a conduit for the LSC to provide funding for the training component. In some instances, the employer may be required to meet some of the training costs for those

apprentices over 19. In either case, the apprentice would then likely be subject to the usual terms and conditions of employment within that organisation.

- London Apprenticeship Company (LAC) has set up a Group Training Scheme for London, supported by Westminster City Council, LSC London Region and the LDA and through this, is securing apprenticeships for young people across the region. LAC fulfils the role of employer in these apprenticeships and offers a brokerage service to arrange the placement and required training. As a regional scheme, LAC would recruit apprentices from across London, not just RBKC residents. The possibility of LAC guaranteeing local apprenticeships for local people could be explored in order to harness the benefits of their offer – such as, acting as the host employer.
- To date, there are no ‘partnership’ apprenticeship schemes on offer in the borough which either offer apprenticeships across a number of organisations, hosted by a single employer, or offer an apprenticeship which enables the apprentice to take up placements across a number of organisations within the chosen field.

Project brief

The Partnership wishes to increase employment and training opportunities for local residents, including young people who are, or are at risk of becoming NEET and/or those whose ‘employability’ is affected by the current economic climate. Increasing the apprenticeship offer in the borough could address this goal and would not only help to meet designated LAA targets (captured in Delivering for Our Community) and the London Councils apprenticeship pledge, but would support elements of the forthcoming Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill which will seek to ensure that every 16-18 year old who is suitably qualified is entitled to an apprenticeship.

The overall aim of this project would be to:

- increase employment and training opportunities for local residents.

Objectives to deliver this aim would be to:

- develop a ‘Partnership Apprenticeship’ programme to offer apprenticeships to young people and/or those suitably qualified, across the organisations represented within the KCP; and
- support existing apprenticeship programmes in the borough to maximise employment opportunities for local residents.

Further research is required to identify the practical implications of offering a scheme that ‘shares’ the apprentice amongst organisations and/or places the apprentice in an organisation other than the host organisation. Further research is also required to determine the scope of any support mechanisms needed to deliver a successful apprenticeship scheme, and how these would be offered within a partnership context. Finally, it will be important to determine how a new scheme can support or complement any existing

schemes, ensuring that employment and training offers are maximised and costs are shared or reduced where it is possible to do so.

Scope

The scope of the project would therefore be:

- to establish a Partnership Apprenticeship programme offered across the partner organisations of the KCP;
- to establish appropriate support mechanisms for such a programme within the 'host' organisation; and
- to compliment existing apprenticeship and/or training schemes on offer in the borough through aligning programmes, subsidising placements and/or sharing support mechanisms.

Viability

In order to determine how deliverable the project is likely to be, it would be necessary to undertake a viability test. This test should cover the following:

- assessing the demand for apprentices within organisations represented in the KCP and assessing the demand for apprenticeships within the resident population including the demand for attaining practical work experience across a number of organisations;
- assessing the capacity of local training organisations to provide the necessary elements of any framework with which the apprenticeship must comply; and
- assessing the capacity of the host organisation to support an apprenticeship scheme, including assessing the viability of the London Apprenticeship Company offer.

Cost

Subject to confirming specific details of the project, the likely cost-related elements of the project would be:

- cost of apprenticeship placements including salary and any possible training contribution (not expected in most cases) – *approximately 20K per apprentice*;
- cost of support mechanisms to ensure successful apprenticeship scheme including project management, mentoring for apprentices and training and support for employers; and
- any post qualification costs which the host organisation may be required to meet under usual terms and conditions of employment within that organisation (for eg. redundancy costs if applicable).