

SCTP Pre-employment Group Meeting 11 October 2017 at Sussex Downs College, Newhaven

Attendees:

Members: Emma Hotston (Asphaleia), Kat Last (Barnardos), Shiromi Cabraal (BHCC), Ana-Maria Maddock (Employ Crawley), Dan Wallman (DV8 Sussex), Louise Scott (Medway Youth Trust), Luis DaSilva (Medway Youth Trust), Mandy Crandale (Possability People), Colin Brown (Skills Training UK), Stephen Burkes (Sussex Skills Solutions), Lynsey Williams (Sussex Skills Solutions), Stacey John (Swim UK), Ian Ross (Whitehead Ross), Nina Thair (West Sussex Alternative Provision College), Jane Chew (West Sussex County Council), Jamie Guest (YMCA Downslink Group), Paul Mitchell (SCTP), Sarah Sawyer (SCTP).
Guests: Lucy Moran & Jimmy Day (UK Unsigned Education)

Local Authority Updates

West Sussex County Council

- Too early for NEET figures at the moment, they are currently conducting the Autumn activity survey for return to the Department for Education.
- Careers advisers in West Sussex are currently focussing on 16-18 NEETs (Raising of Participation Age group)
- Jane agreed to share the careers advisors details with training providers so they know who is working in each of the six West Sussex hub areas.

East Sussex County Council

- Too early for accurate NEET figures, however the September Guarantee figures show a decline of 0.5% for Yr11/12 and 2.5% on Yr12/13. The council suggests this may be due to lack of apprenticeships being offered to 16-18 year olds due to recent funding changes making 16-18 apprentices less attractive to employers.
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Brighton & Hove City Council

- Shared the July 17 NEET data.
- The Council is undertaking some work to look at attainment gaps for those pupils on free school meals, to track their destinations and the effects of any interventions.
- The Council is also doing some work on 'poverty proofing'. This will involve working with some local schools to see how this issue affects pupils' attainment.

Member Discussions

1. 16-18 Apprenticeship Availability

Following on from ESCC's concerns about the lack of apprenticeships being offered to 16 – 18 year olds, the members discussed the issue of apprenticeship starts and employers reticence to take on new apprentices, and how this will affect the progression for learners on their programmes.

- This was felt to be a wider apprenticeship issue, not just affecting 16-18 year olds.
- It was felt that the amount of bureaucracy due to the apprenticeship reforms was stopping employers becoming involved in taking on new apprentices.
- It was felt that the financial incentives offered to employers to take 16-18 year olds were not sufficient to outweigh the extra work required to train younger employee.
- This could lead to an increase in young people going into jobs without training which does not count as a RPA outcome with concerns about RPA targets not being met.

ACTION: SCTP to feed these issues back to LEPS and through national provider network, AELP.

2. Traineeships

Traineeships were discussed and are working with a varied degree of success for different providers.

- Some members struggle to recruit onto traineeships, and different models were discussed.
- Some employers are hesitant about recruiting 16-18 year olds so recruiting onto a traineeship and then onto an apprenticeship straight after with the same employer can work as it is giving the employer a chance to see the young person working and gives the young person a chance to ease into the working environment.

3. Universal Credit

There was a discussion around Universal Credit (UC) and how the implementation of this might affect training providers who have traditionally received referrals from Job Centres for their courses.

- As UC moves claimants to greater self-management, they will spend less time with the work coaches which seems to be resulting in in less referrals to local programmes which could benefit claimants.
- Several providers have already noticed a significant drop in referrals since the roll out of UC across different areas of the South East.
- Members discussed the importance of keeping the work coaches informed of what provision is available as the coaches will still be having online correspondence with their claimants.
- For those working with young people who will be using the UC system, it is important to make sure the claimant discloses all their circumstances to their work coach to ensure they will still be eligible to attend certain programmes which would benefit them.
- There were also concerns about the fact that some employed people on UC were unable to get access to further training without negative benefit implications.
- DWP does run some provider fairs in some areas, which would be useful for providers to be involved in to help with recruitment.

ACTION: SCTP to feedback these issues to Steve Benwell at DWP and circulate details of provider fairs in the SCTP newsletter.

4. ESFA/DWP Attendance At Pre-employment Meetings

The ESFA and DWP were invited to this pre-employment meeting but were unable to attend. Members agreed it would be good to have regular attendance from the ESFA (old EFA part) and DWP at these meetings (and to sit in on the whole meeting) so they can give updates, but also so they can listen to the issues that members are facing.

ACTION: SCTP to endeavour to have ESFA and DWP attendance at future meetings.

5. Mental Health Needs Of Learners

Following on from the discussion at the previous meeting members reported that up to 70% of learners were presenting with some form of mental health issue. It was important that these learners received the support they needed but providers were struggling to put in place the resources necessary, particularly in relation to trained staff.

ACTION: SCTP to continue to work with ESCC, Mental Health First Aid England and Coastal West Sussex Mind to arrange relevant training for SCTP members.

6. Higher Needs Funding

Providers reported that although there was a need for this funding the bureaucracy involved and the need to justify at least £6k of support for each learner meant that many providers felt unable to use this funding to support learners.

Member Updates

All present had the opportunity to update the meeting on their recent activities. Of particular interest to other members and their learners were:

- Employ Crawley is one-year pilot scheme, based as a drop in facility at Crawley library, which aims to support local people into employment. They will be working with local partners and employers to help those with barriers to employment. Any providers who may want to work with Employ Crawley can find contact employcrawley@crawley.gov.uk or call 07814 903871.
- YMCA DLG are running a programme called Positive Placements which aims to help young ex-offenders or those who may be at risk of offending by using volunteer mentors to support them into progression to education, employment or training. Please contact if you come across any suitable young people.

SCTP Updates.

Fair Train Expert Session at Plumpton College on 2 November, as part of Work Experience month – a conference to find out what works and what is best practice in work experience. [Further information and booking details.](#)

[Consultation on Functional Skills Qualification Reform – English and Maths](#) – your chance to have your say in the Department for Education’s consultation which closes on 22 November.

SCTP CPD events coming up which will be of interest to our pre-employment group members:

- Developing English and Maths Teaching through Lesson Observations & Learning Walks – on Tuesday 5 December, 09:30 – 19:00 at Rewards Training in Crawley. [Flyer for further details and booking.](#)
- Matrix Standard – Introduction & Preparation for Re-assessment – on Thursday 25 January, 10:00 – 16:00 at Rewards Training in Crawley. [Flyer for further details and booking.](#)

The next Pre-employment group meeting will be on **Wednesday 28 February**, 10:00 – 1:00. If anyone can offer a venue for this meeting, please contact Sarah at sarahsawyer@sctp.org.uk.

The venue would need to be in the centre of Sussex to suit those travelling from further out in East and West Sussex, be transport accessible and be able to accommodate about 25 people.