

STAFF: TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Personnel Committee on progress made towards implementing Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) and National Traineeships (NTs) and associated training and development issues.

2. Summary

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 January 1999 (Minute P30/99 refers), the Personnel Committee approved a new strategy for the training and development of young people, generally those in the age band 14 - 25, including:
- (a) those who are attached to the Council for short periods of work experience; and
 - (b) those appointed to the workforce as NTs and MAs.
- 2.2 Pay scales for MAs and NTs had previously been agreed at the meeting of the Joint Negotiating Panel on 4 December 1998. At that meeting the Trade Unions expressed some concerns relating to the quality of training and equality of access to such training provision, which could not be resolved immediately, and which led to a delay in recruitment whilst discussions continued between Human Resources (HR) and the Trade Unions. At the end of April the Trade Unions withdrew their objections to the recruitment of MAs and NTs and the appointment processes have started.
- 2.3 Between December 1998 and April 1999, work continued to identify vacant, or soon to become vacant, posts which could fulfil the training requirements for either an MA or an NT. 15 places have been identified to date, including 3 MA posts in HR and 6 Childcare MAs in the Council's day nurseries. The advertisement process has been time consuming and involved personal contact with schools to ensure the widest field of potential applicants is reached. The usual routes for the recruitment of young people such as, the local press, the Careers Service, the Youth Service, and the appropriate Training Agencies (Manpower Forum, Training Options etc.) have also been utilised. In addition, information has been disseminated through internal channels (the Youth Service and residential care homes), as a first step towards broadening out the advertising process.

2.4 By the end of July 1999 it is anticipated that 15 MAs and NTs will have been appointed. The Annex to this report sets out the position with regard to all places identified to date.

3. **Background**

3.1 The formation of the Unitary Authority in April 1997 highlighted the need for a more coherent strategy for the training and development of young people, generally in the age band 14 - 25.

3.2 The current profile of Council employees reflects a very small proportion of employees under the age of 25 years (approximately 12% are under the age of 30). There is an obvious need to recruit, train and retain quality young people to provide the skills needed to deliver the Council's services in the twenty-first century. As vacancies occur, and posts are reviewed prior to re-appointing, creative thinking is resulting in the identification of high quality training places in a number of service areas.

3.3 Introducing MAs and NTs is only a part of the strategy for developing young people as there are many for whom this type of training would not be appropriate and whose needs must be addressed in other ways, such as the provision of relevant high quality work experience and support that may lead into NT or MA programmes where there is evidence to demonstrate that this would be appropriate. Links exist with several training providers to put such arrangements in place.

4. **Issues and Choices**

4.1 The relevance and costs of additional development opportunities, which go beyond the requirement of the national standards for NTs/MAs, is being researched. Development activities which may be particularly applicable to their individual and group needs as young people and as young employees of the Council include for example social issues, citizenship, health etc. and possible Duke of Edinburgh Award (DoE) or MK Challenge involvement.

4.2 In recognition of the Council's social responsibility to young people within its care links are being established with providers of initial training, such as Rathbone Community Industry (RCI) and the Christian Foundation to assist young people who may have been, or who are, disadvantaged in some way into work experience placements or NTs/MAs as appropriate. Such an approach can accommodate those without formal GCSE qualifications but who have the potential to learn in the workplace.

4.3 The possibility of the provision of preliminary training opportunities at Trainee level (NVQ level 1) for those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or poor educational record or other disadvantage is another area for consideration. It is likely that this would attract Government funding for the training element of the programme (such as day release to college) but, since there would be few posts at this level within the Council, would incur a cost of at least the minimum requirement to pay trainees £60 per week.

4.4 Progress on the appointment of NTs and MAs and on the areas described in paragraphs 4.1- 4.3 will be the subject of a future report to the Committee.

4.5 A high priority within the implementation of the developing young people strategy is the work needed to establish consistent processes and quality monitoring arrangements in respect of all forms of work experience provided by the Council, including training for supervisors.

5. **Implications**

5.1 Environmental

None.

5.2 Equalities

Implementation and monitoring of the strategy for Developing Young People will ensure that access is open and that the needs of groups and individuals are recognised.

5.3 Financial

There are no additional costs to report at present, although incorporating development opportunities such as DoE would have a cost.

5.4 Legal

Beyond the fulfilment of the agreed training programme all other rights and responsibilities are the same as for other employees.

5.5 Staff and Accommodation

In-house training and support will be provided for the supervisors of young people, including MAs/NTs. No unbudgeted costs are foreseen at this stage except those referred to at paragraph 4.3 in respect of preliminary training for those with special needs. Where an existing vacant post is identified as a suitable training opportunity there will be no new accommodation costs. If the trainee post is in addition to the existing structure then the employing directorate will need to consider how to meet any additional accommodation costs.

6. **Conclusions**

6.1 All work in this field is an investment in the organisation's future. Close collaboration between Employee Development, HR Operations, line managers, Trades Unions, and young people undergoing training will ensure the success of these initiatives.

Background Papers: Developing Young people - strategy document