

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills and
Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 31st January 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community &
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Employment Learning & Skills and
Community

SUBJECT: Apprenticeship Support by Be More Update

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this information paper is to provide an overview on the Apprenticeship Support by Be More contract managed by Halton Borough Council (HBC), on behalf of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. (LCRCA)

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy and Performance Board receives the information and comment, as relevant.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

The strategic delivery of the Be More Programme is led by the LCRCA Skills and Apprenticeship Hub (SAH), together with its delivery partners, Halton Borough Council, Growth Platform and Greater Merseyside Learning Provider Federation. It provides a one-stop shop for skills advice and support across the Liverpool City Region (LCR) in line with the Combined Authority's One Front Door approach to business support. The SAH offers an opportunity to simplify how employers and learners navigate the local skills system, providing much-needed strategic leadership and accelerating the delivery of the local skills strategy.

The Apprenticeship Support (AS) by Be More Team is a delivery partner, which is managed by Halton's Employment, Learning & Skills Division. The service provides free information advice and guidance (IAG) about Apprenticeships to schools, young people, parents and residents. The contract is currently under a Service Level Agreement from November 2019 to September 2022.

Prior to this contract and the rebrand of the service in 2019 the team were formally known as the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub;

established in 2014 working on behalf of the LCRCA and managed by Halton Borough Council.

HBC held a contract with the Education & Skills Funding Agency from 2017 to 2019 and were highly praised by the agency for our service in terms of its innovative delivery, contract performance and compliance. During that time the AS team delivered 1131 IAG outreach meetings to 25,290 residents, 33 Skills Shows to 14,933 individuals, commissioned and launched 13 Skills for Growth Action Plans. Please refer to appendix 1 for further information.

Service Delivery Outputs

The current contract outputs stipulate the delivery of 750 promotional events, of which 438 have been delivered so far to 26,071 residents, which includes 46 in Halton to 1712 residents. Additionally, the team have delivered 297 one to one support, advice & guidance interventions to residents.

A typical day for the team to deliver a promotional event on apprenticeships includes some of the following activities that may involve a 2-hour session one day or project managing the delivery of an event over 12 months;

- Plan and deliver a Skills Show to over 5000 students and residents
- Conduct 121 and group IAG events to JCP customers, parents and students
- Present an interactive event to a classroom of Adult Learners to support their progression
- Carry out mock interviews with students to prepare them for the world of work
- Deliver a question and answer session to student year groups after they have watched one of our live theatre performances
- Support an employer promote their vacancies at careers fairs in schools and local community venues
- Lead and support on Skills and Employment strategic initiatives for both the CA and HBC supporting multiple projects, events, reports and pilot programmes
- Create, organise and deliver an LCR Graduation event to celebrate the achievement of apprentices
- Work on multiple projects to raise the profile of apprenticeships and engage with SEN, Care Leavers and individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds in partnership with key stakeholders
- Deliver LCR ambassador conferences and networking events
- Create apprentice case studies and news articles of employers, training providers and residents to inspire and education readers to access the service and be informed

In the summer of 2020, IAG sessions were changed from physical activity to live presentations via Zoom, Microsoft Teams and the Learn

Live platform. This enabled the continuation of the service throughout the Covid pandemic to all students and residents to deliver a more varied programme (with external moderation of the chat facility built in). The sessions often include apprentices and employers from our Apprentice Ambassador Network.

Since the start of the new academic year in 2021, schools and Job Centre Plus offices are once again running physical careers fairs, interview events, parent's evenings, workshops and one-to-one sessions allowing the Apprenticeship Support team to deliver apprenticeship IAG to students, careers teachers, parents and residents in person. Supporting these activities are a group of trusted Ambassadors bringing a taste of the world of work to the sessions.

The AS team have developed 3 inspirational and humorous theatre plays, which provide a comprehensive suite of apprenticeship information for students from Year 7 through to sixth form college/Year 13. The content of the productions aims to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding around key themes of information relating to apprenticeships. Each play lasts 20 minutes and are being delivered to over 250 student year groups across LCR.

8712 apprenticeship vacancies have been advertised on the Apprenticeship Support by [Be More website](#) since November 2019. 96 News Articles have been published as well as a number of Employer Case Studies and 12 Newsletters to a growing subscriber database. These help inspire readers on the many apprenticeship opportunities available in LCR and direct them to the live LCR vacancies on Be More.

Our latest promotional campaign was launched in October 2021 aimed at encouraging more employers to upload their apprenticeship vacancies to the Be More website and encouraging more job seekers to use the Be More website as a 'go to' resource. The campaign premise is around rethinking apprenticeships and dispelling the commonly held myths around apprentices and apprenticeships by both employers and job seekers. Locations for the campaign include bus advertising, digital screens, billboards, kiosks, social media campaigns, landing pages, direct mail, print/magazine and radio advertising.

The AS team are also working on specific projects to support people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. In partnership with the CA and other partners a pre-employability programme is being developed to support and offer school students from an ethnic minority background a structured programme to enhance their chance of getting an apprenticeship. This is in reaction to the local data stating the low number of apprentices being from an ethnic minority background.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for further information.

Forthcoming Events/Projects

The AS team will be delivering 2 large events in 2022 which include an LCR Skills Show on the 1st and 2nd March at the Exhibition Centre, Liverpool and an Apprenticeship Graduation event in September. Further details are contained in the ELS LCR update PPB report included in your papers.

The SAH team are working towards ensuring that the Be More portal meets the CA's aspiration of the website becoming the 'go to' resource for localised careers content and guidance and are currently overseeing the scope of development planned for Be More, which includes detailed careers information on the key sectors across LCR and information on the roles within them and how individuals of all ages can access opportunities.

The content for the updated Be More Portal will be focused around three themes; Attract, Recruit, and Retain as well as providing careers IAG relating to opportunities across LCR, be a central resource for careers materials, and provide a job posting and application service as well as maintaining links and connectivity with vacancy sites such as the National Apprenticeship Service. It is intended for Be More to provide a comprehensive careers IAG service to all LCR residents, employers, schools, and stakeholder groups and for each area within LCR.

It is hoped that the SAH team will be in a position to engage their preferred web developer in February '22, with the view of relaunching Be More circa May 2022.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team is set to end in September 2022. There are 6 members of staff in this team that are employed by Halton Borough Council and deliver this contract on behalf of the CA.

The CA have secured funding and a contract extension to March 2023 to support some of the CA SAH delivery team but that does not include the Apprenticeship Support Team.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The service plays an important role in meeting Halton's Employment, Learning and Skills priorities. It promotes access to apprenticeships and emphasises the benefits of balancing practical and theoretical training in and out of the work place.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There are no implications associated with this report.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no implications associated with this report.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

In line with an orange book assessment there is no likelihood or impact of this work beyond the team performing the task.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality or diversity issues.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.