

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

DATE: 6th January 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director Economy, Enterprise &
Property

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills, and
Community

SUBJECT: Supported Internship Programme (work-
based study programme)

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the Supported Internship (SI) Programme contract currently being delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills division (jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning), including achievements to date, income and expenditure.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Supported Internship Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background information

- 3.1.1 In April 2021 Halton Borough Council were commissioned to deliver the Supported Internship Programme which is a structured, work-based study programme for young people aged 16-24 with special educational needs (SEND) who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- 3.1.2 The programme was initially contracted to deliver 10 Supported Internships in year 1 (September 21 – July 22).
- 3.1.3 The programme is a voluntary programme which is aimed at supporting young people with an EHCP to gain paid employment by:
 - Supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
 - Enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace

- Developing their confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work

3.1.3 The four key principles of the programme are that:

- Supported Interns will spend the majority of their time at the employers premises completing a work placement
- Supported Interns will follow a personalised study curriculum alongside their time at the employer
- Job Coaches are central to the study programme and provide support to the young person and the employer
- The primary goal for the young person is paid employment

The work placements that are undertaken are designed to support the young persons goal of finding paid employment. For the young person, the job must fit with their vocational profile, contributing to their long-term career goal and be flexible enough to address barriers where necessary. For the employer, placements should meet a real business need. The employer should be committed to supporting the young person towards paid employment.

3.1.4 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to Access to Work for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.

3.1.5 The Supported Internship Programme must be identified as a suitable progression route for the young person in collaboration with the young person, their family member, their current education provider and the Supported Internship Programme Team Leader. Those referred to the Supported Internship programme must have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). A copy of this should be shared with the programme team for them to be able to best support the Intern.

3.1.5 The Supported Internship Programme lasts for up to 52wks. Interns start the programme in September and work placements are identified for them to start by the following February at the latest to enable them to complete a minimum of 6 months in a placement with an employer before they complete the programme the following July.

3.1.6 The programme of study delivered by Halton Adult Learning includes employability, English, maths and IT skills with the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification where appropriate for the individual learner. Additionally, the group setting supports with the development of communication and team work skills, whilst supporting the individuals in understanding how to keep themselves safe in learning, online and in the workplace. Job Coaches support the Interns within the classroom environment.

- 3.1.7 Job Coaches are responsible for working with the Interns to identify suitable placements for them to complete. They continue to support them during the placement until the Intern and the employer are satisfied that they can undertake the role safely independently.
- 3.1.8 Job Coaches also provide travel training to help the Intern get to their education setting and the employers premises when they start on placement. This involves travelling with the Intern via public transport until the Intern, their parent/family member and the Job Coach are satisfied that they can undertake their travel safely independently.
- 3.1.9 Some Interns have multiple/complex barriers in addition to their special educational needs. This requires collaborative working with other internal colleagues including Safeguarding, Social Workers, and the Transition Team. Signposting to specialist organisations to address specific barriers also forms part of the support process and wrap around service provided throughout their time on programme.

3.2 Performance/achievement

- 3.2.1 Contract delivery commenced in September 2021.

Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a range of internal and external measures.

- 3.2.2 Performance to date

Year 1 – September 2021 – July 2022

- 11 Supported Internships started on programme
- 10 Supported Internships started an unpaid work placement
- 4 Supported Internships moved into paid work after completion
- 4 Supported Internships moved into further training after completion

Year 2 – September 2022 – present date

- 9 Supported Internships started on programme
- 4 Supported Internships have started an unpaid work placement
- Placements being sourced or finalised for the remaining Interns on programme
- Bespoke training also being sourced for some Intern on programme to enhance their employability prospects i.e. food hygiene, make up and beauty workshops/qualification

3.3 Income and expenditure

- 3.3.1 Supported Internships are funded as a study programme, and as such the main source of funding is from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Supported Interns can also apply directly to the

DWP's Access to Work programme for funding to cover the practical costs of the support in the workplace.

3.3.2 High Needs funding is also used to support the delivery of the Supported Internship Programme

3.3.3 Income and expenditure is closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

3.4 Key Successes

3.4.1 Mobilisation and implementation of the contract was achieved within a short timescale ensuring that the contract 'go live' date was met

3.4.2 This is the first year the Halton Employment, Learning Skills division has delivered a Supported Internship Programme. The knowledge and skills of the delivery team has enhanced the experience that the Supported Interns received

3.4.3 Feedback from the Interns and their families/parents has been positive.

3.5 Key issues

3.5.1 Ongoing recruitment of sufficiently qualified and experienced front line staff to deliver the programme by the required timescales. The contract has been significantly impacted by annual recruitment freezes since we went live in September 2021. We have been reliant on recruiting temporary agency staff where possible which has not always been sustainable. This has impacted on Supported Interns being able to receive the full programme offer this year which has been out of our control.

3.6 Concluding comments

3.6.1 The team involved in delivering the Supported Internship Programme have worked very hard with limited staffing resources to implement, deliver and sustain the programme during year one and year two. They continue to support the 9 Interns currently on programme are working hard to find suitable placements for those currently on programme.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Key policy implications have related to Safeguarding Children & Young People. Policies have been reviewed and updated in line with guidance as a service prior to the delivery of this programme Halton Adult Learning had only delivered to 19+ and upwards only.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Externally funded contracts are closely monitored to ensure sufficient income is being generated to cover the full delivery costs of provision.

HBC internal audit conduct annual audits on externally funded provision across the Employment, Learning and Skills Division.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Supported Interns engage with other departments across Halton that complement each other in supporting them and their families with a range of issues.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division increasing qualification levels and getting so many people into work are a very positive outcome for the local economy. Many of the individuals that have accessed the programme have also gained vital maths, English, IT and employability skills along the way, in addition to sector specific qualifications such as food hygiene, hair and beauty etc. Signposting to partner organisations to support has been a key part of the programme. Delivery of the Supported Internship Programme will continue to build on the success we have had previously.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Supported Interns will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers. Health and wellbeing modules are also covered as part of their learning programme.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The management of the Supported Internship Programme has been meticulous and close monitoring both internally and externally to ensure any risks identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

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

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.