

By: Director of Personnel & Development
To: Personnel Committee - 11 September 2008
Subject: Recruitment & Retention of Young People
Classification: Unrestricted

SUMMARY: This paper informs Personnel Committee of (i) the many actions that have been implemented to attract, recruit and retain young people and (ii) new and potential ways to increase the number of young people employed by KCC.

1. Context

Attracting, recruiting and retaining more young people to work for KCC is a workforce priority. In common with local government this employee group is under represented in the organisation and we have an ageing workforce with large number of employees forecast to retire over the next 10 years. This is highlighted in KCC's Strategic Workforce Plan 2007- 2010.

Actions that support the attraction, recruitment and retention of young people.

- Work experience opportunities are provided to young people, in particular school students aged 14-16. These placements are made across KCC and in the social care sector through the Kent Vocational Training Programme.
- Personnel & Development actively promote Kent Success Apprenticeships and encouraged managers to recruit apprentices including through regular extra-mails.
- A package of support is in place to assist apprentices gaining permanent employment with KCC. This includes targeted training.
- Apprentices have a guarantee of an interview if they meet the minimum criteria (policy change).
- Policy has been introduced whereby posts in grades KS1-6 do not require experience unless there is a business reason, in so doing providing more opportunities for young people.
- Model job descriptions and person specifications have been produced that focus on abilities and competencies (rather than experience).
- Managers have been trained in positive action recruitment

- A site has been developed on kent.gov (www.kent.gov.uk/yourfirstjob) that is designed to attract young people to work for KCC including Kent Success apprenticeships.
- Over 2000 credit style cards publicising the site have been sent to all KCC Secondary Schools, Connexions, Jobcentre Plus and Libraries and other KCC buildings. Access to PCs has been arranged with all libraries in Kent and contact details supplied.
- At the 2008 County Show employees from Greenhouse (KCC's Young People Group) have promoted and publicised the site and invited young people to ask about working for KCC.
- KCC jobs and careers are also promoted to young people at recruitment fairs.
- KCC's Gap Year Programme recruits young people to KCC and to businesses in Kent in the private and public sectors. Typically young people recruited through the scheme are recent A level students wishing to undertake employment prior to university; year in industry work experience students; graduates seeking short term employment.
- The Kent Graduate Scheme - KCC's flagship management trainee programme including a Finance and Highways stream provides excellent opportunities.
- Greenhouse – KCC's staff group for people under 30 empowers employees to support young people issues including attraction, recruitment and retention.

2. New and Potential Ways to Attract, Recruit and Retain Young People

- Personnel and Development is exploring ways in which apprentices can be recruited against actual vacancies in entry level grades. A discussion paper has been produced and is being developed.
- Targeting specific Business Units that would benefit from recruiting apprentices:
 - i) Kent Highway Service is at an advanced stage of developing an apprenticeship scheme for Highway Inspectors that will be launched during the Autumn
 - ii) Commercial Services are at the early stages of exploring an apprenticeship scheme for County Workshops
- On 20 June 2008 Skillsforcare announced that changes have been made in care regulations to allow well trained 16-18 year olds to

provide personal care, providing a significant sector for future apprentices. Discussions are planned between Supporting Independence, Key Training and Personnel & Development to explore opportunities.

- Personnel & Development will continue to promote Kent Success apprenticeships to managers together with the supporting actions outlined in this paper and encourage all business units to employ an apprentice.
- Apprentices currently receive a weekly wage of £80 per week. This rate will be reviewed. Issues to consider include whether an increase would improve attraction and recruitment rates to the Kent Success apprenticeship scheme.
- A new working group is to be established. Its purpose and objectives include creating a greater synergy between existing work placement schemes and to provide a forum through which related KCC activities can be strategically managed to improve outcomes for young people.

3. Noted

Significant activities, policies and schemes are in place to support the employment of young people and more are planned. Under representation of young people and the ageing workforce is a major issue across local government and other parts of the public sector. Further workforce planning will be required in this area and we are consulting with employers in Kent on how we can tackle these issues through collaboration and joint working.

Amanda Beer
Director of Personnel & Development
Ext 4137

Nigel Fairburn
Workforce Development Manager
Ext 4612