

To: Economic Development Cabinet Committee

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Customer & Communities  
Amanda Honey, Corporate Director, Customer & Communities

Subject: Update on Kent Jobs for Kent Young People Campaign

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary:

This paper discusses the progress of the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People Campaign.

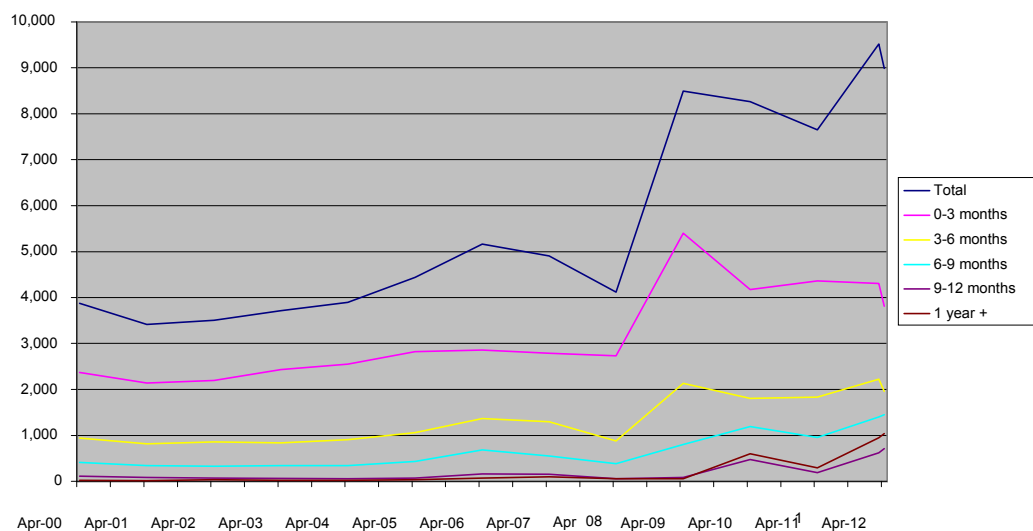
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## Kent Jobs for Kent Young People

### 1. Introduction

1.1 In response to the high levels of youth unemployment, the Council allocated £2m from the Big Society Fund to assist employers to create jobs for 18-24 year olds. The chart below shows the levels of unemployment since 2000, and the doubling of unemployment from pre-recession levels. Whilst the last three months have seen reductions in the overall levels of 18-24 yr old unemployment, the number of young people who have been unemployed for more than three months is still increasing, and currently stands at over 5,200.

Kent 18-24 Claimant Count and Length of Claim from



1.2 Utilising the £2m, the Kent Jobs for Kent Young People scheme has been developed to support employers to offer apprenticeships to those young people who have been signing on for three months. One thousand grants of £2,000 are available for employers who meet the criteria, with the intention being that most of the grants are allocated within an 18 month period.

1.3 Whilst the scheme was in development, the government introduced two grants for employers, a £1500 grant for companies to recruit apprentices, and a £2,275 grant for employers who recruit from the Work Programme (the government programme for those people who are long term unemployed). However, neither of the government schemes completely met the needs of Kent based businesses, nor provided long term opportunities for unemployed young people. Therefore we have worked collaboratively with apprenticeship providers, Job Centre Plus, and the two Work Programme Providers for Kent to bring added value to these schemes, as outlined below:

- KCC Grant
  - £2m from Big Society Fund to create one thousand, £2000 grants for employers that recruit an 18-24 yr old who has been on benefits for 3 months or longer
- Youth Contract – Wage support via Work Programme
  - £2,275 for 6 month opportunity
  - With our funding becomes £4,275 for 20 months employment (inc. minimum 12 month apprenticeship)
- National Apprenticeship Service Grant
  - £1500 for 12 month apprenticeship – open to all
  - With our funding becomes £3500 for 15 months employment (inc. minimum 12 month apprenticeship) only for Job Centre clients

1.4 The following criteria apply to a business that wishes to access the grants:

- Based in Kent
- Private companies up to 250 employees
- Social Enterprises /Voluntary Orgs ,
- Public Sector ,
- Offer minimum 12 month opportunity,
- Not to have started an apprentice in past 2 years – unless recruiting from Work Programme clients

1.5 In addition to a grant for businesses, the campaign includes the opportunity for businesses to access the Apprenticeship small business support service provided by Kent County Council, which ensures that the

whole process of recruitment is as simple as possible.

1.6 During the initial development of the scheme it had been intended to include an option for graduates, however it was decided that to keep messages simple, the first phase would concentrate on apprenticeships, with a graduate element to be launched later.

1.7 The scheme was launched at the Kent 2020 Business to Business event on 19<sup>th</sup> April

## **2. Success to date**

2.1 In February and March the Programme Manager met with a variety of business bodies to secure their support for the programme, including Invicta Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses, social care providers and housing providers. When the programme was launched these organisations included details in their newsletters. This coupled with appearances at business networking events, some limited newspaper advertising, and word of mouth has led to the following statistics:

- 150 Businesses making contact
- 97 businesses requesting an appointment with a KCC Apprenticeship adviser
- 136 opportunities pledged by businesses

2.2 Following the initial contact, and if required the appointment with the apprenticeship adviser, the opportunities are then taken forward to be advertised with either JCP or the Work Programme, or both if the employer wishes. At the time of writing we have:

- Advertised 46 vacancies
- 13 young people have either started their apprenticeship (or their 4 week work trial)
- 13 employers are at interview stage
- 20 vacancies are currently open to applicants.

### **2.3 Funding**

In May, the Campaign was successful in securing £48,000 from Job Centre Plus (JCP) Flexible Support Fund to support the administration of the campaign, with a target of delivering 70 opportunities for JCP candidates in the next three months. If this is achieved, there will be an opportunity to apply for an additional £300,000.

### **2.4 Developing Partnerships**

In addition to working closely with JCP, Work Programme providers, and Apprenticeship training providers, we have also reached agreement with Lloyds TSB, who have agreed to distribute (via their 50 small business advisors) 3,000 leaflets on our behalf to each of the companies that

banks with them. In total our partners have agreed to distribute 9,000 leaflets on our behalf over the coming months.

## 2.5 Secretary of State Visit

On 24<sup>th</sup> May, Iain Duncan Smith visited the Maidstone Community & Skills Centre to hear about the programme, and to meet with two of the young people who had been supported by the scheme. He felt that the way we had tailored our support to enhance the government programmes held lessons for other areas, and that there were elements he would like to take forward nationally.

## 3. Next Steps

### 3.1 Marketing

The marketing plan for the project sees an expansion during the next two months, now that the systems have been tested, and partnerships firmly established. A radio ad will be broadcast on both KM-FM and Heart radio, whilst billboards will initially be tested in Maidstone and Ashford districts. This will be complemented by press and web adverts, and supported by human interest press releases focussed on local areas, using case studies from young people that have been successfully recruited.

This extensive campaign will run until end of October, when it will be evaluated. This timeline recognises that businesses tend to recruit less during November and December, and the intention is that the marketing campaign will be intensified again in early 2013.

### 3.2 Graduate element

As discussed above, it is intended that a graduate element is launched in the autumn, with a number of organisations already expressing interest in participating. It is intended that some of these organisations are used to pilot the scheme.

### 3.3 Administration of the programme

The Kent jobs for Kent Young People programme has been designed and developed within the Customer & Communities portfolio to reflect the fact that the funding is a part of the Big Society Fund, and to build upon the knowledge and experience within the directorate following both its successful delivery of 890 jobs through the Future Jobs Fund, and the development of the apprenticeship strategy, including the small business apprenticeship support service.

However, as the programme is now up and running successfully it was felt that it would be more appropriate to locate it with the Skills & Employability team within the Education, Learning & Skills directorate, with portfolio responsibility transferring accordingly.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Kent Jobs for Young People Campaign has made significant progress since launching in April. This is a result of the strong partnerships built up over the five months prior to launch, and the constant testing of proposals with partners, and with employer groups.

It is already clear that there is a demand from employers for help to access apprenticeships, and that those employers are ready to hire young people, and are not deterred by the fact that the young people have been unemployed over the previous months.

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