

**By:** Roger Gough, Cabinet Member Business Strategy,  
Performance & Health Reform  
Amanda Beer, Corporate Director Human Resources

**To:** Personnel Committee **Date:** 17 September 2012

**Subject:** Apprenticeships and the Employment of Young People

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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### **Summary**

To provide an update on apprenticeships in Kent County Council and other schemes to employ and support young people into employment.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Employing a younger workforce continues to be a priority for KCC.

Priorities:

- To employ and develop talented employees from all demographic groups, particularly individuals with high potential who will be successors for employees that leave the organisation
- To deliver high quality services by employing a workforce that reflects and understand the Kent communities it serves
- To address the number of young people who are NEETs (not in employment, education or training)

## **2. Organisation Development and People Plan**

2.1 Apprenticeships and other routes to employment form part of the County Council's Organisation Development and People Plan which sets out how our people will deliver our strategic priorities.

## **3. Context**

- 3.1 As KCC continues to contract as an organisation maintaining and increasing apprenticeships and young people in the organisation is a huge challenge. From March 2011 until 31 July 2012 the workforce has reduced by 1,088 full time equivalents (FTE). The total Non-Schools workforce is now 8,973 (FTE)
- 3.2 There are a number of programmes and initiatives that support the employment of young people – work experience, apprenticeships, GradsKent, the Kent Graduate Programme, and the Aspire staff group.

#### **4. Work Experience for Young People in Kent Schools**

- 4.1 The County Council continues to provide work experience opportunities for young people in Kent schools. In the past work experience placements have been found in response to requests. Since the academic year 2010/11 a far more proactive approach has been taken by publicising placements on the kent.gov website and contacting schools directly to publicise opportunities.
- 4.2 During the 2010/11 school year 91 young people were provided with a work experience placement.
- 4.3 During the 2011/12 school year 142 young people were provided with work experience placements.

#### **5. Apprenticeships**

- 5.1 Despite the pressures on managers' budgets and a contracting workforce, managers continue to employ supernumerary apprentices (i.e. posts not funded) in recognition of the benefits apprentices bring and the high priority of apprenticeships within KCC. In addition to supernumerary placements apprentices are also recruited against suitable entry level roles (in grades KR2-4) providing there are no employees at risk of redundancy that could undertake the job.

##### **5.2 Key data summary**

- On average there are typically 80 apprentices employed at any one time.
- Currently 89 apprentices are employed by KCC and are in training.
- Since April 2011 117 apprentices have been recruited of which 22 have already been appointed to posts with KCC. The remaining apprentices are considered for KR2-4 posts where there are not suitable employees who are at risk of redundancy. Apprentices are also supported in obtaining employment with KCC or employers in Kent.
- Since September 2010 (from which date it has been possible to track progression) over 60 apprentices have moved into KCC jobs and are still in employment.

##### **5.3 Further Developments including an 18+ Scheme**

- 5.3.1 A review of how KCC develops the apprenticeship programme is currently being undertaken by the Skills and Employability Service. The programme will be extended to include jobs with training, which may lead to an apprenticeship or other professional / technical qualifications. A clear progression pathway for pre apprenticeships, apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships (Level 3+) is also being developed. This will include young people who are 18+. The intention is to introduce this on 1 January 2013.

5.3.2 The Skills & Employability Service intend to exceed the current target of 350 apprentices by 2015. This will be supported by further development in schools with 500 schools apprentices by 2015.

5.3.3 There will be a rebrand during November and all of these activities will come under 'Kent Jobs for Kent Young People'.

## **6. Graduate Employment**

### **6.1 GradsKent**

6.1.1 GradsKent was launched in October 2010 and operates primarily through its website, [www.GradsKent.com](http://www.GradsKent.com). The GradsKent website works with recruiting managers in KCC and external Kent-based employers to promote student and graduate employment opportunities. 69% of registered users on GradsKent are aged 25 or under, and 91% are aged 35 or under. It is therefore a key recruitment channel for recruiting managers to target younger audiences.

6.1.2 Since April 2011 GradsKent has placed 65 graduates into employment and placed 9 interns with KCC. Many graduates commence employment in short term contracts and then move on to other roles with KCC. Over 40 of the 65 graduates are still in employment with the County Council. Some snippets of case studies are given below:

Sarah was hired by the Learning & Development Team as an intern during summer 2011. Since that time, she has held temporary roles in the Kent Film Office, the ERP Project, and now has a permanent contract in FSC's Safeguarding Team.

Louise was hired on a temporary contract to join the Priority Connect Team in summer 2011. Towards the end of her contract she successfully applied for another internal position on the new Kent Employment Programme Project Team. Since she began that role in January, she has secured a more senior role within the same team and has progressed 3 grades since she joined KCC a year ago.

Chris and Sam joined KCC in 2011 as members of the ICT team and Graduate Services team respectively. This year they applied for the Kent Graduate Programme Management stream and were both successful. They will begin on the programme with a 3rd external candidate in October.

### **6.2 Kent Graduate Programme**

6.2.1 Kent County Council has a long tradition of employing graduates through its Kent Graduate Programme. Recruitment and selection of the current cohort has recently been completed. In total 668 applications were received for the 3 graduate streams – Management, Finance and Highways, of which 33 progressed to the final stage interviews and 7 candidates are in the process of being appointed.

6.2.2 Including the 2011 intake this make a total of 13 people on the Kent Graduate Programme (last year included finance and the highway transportation scheme).

6.2.3 KCC has a good track record of recruiting people through the Programme with over 40 employees having been recruited through the scheme and still in employment, from KR9 grade to senior positions including a Director.

## **7. Supporting Young People in KCC**

### **7.1 Aspire**

7.1.1 Aspire is Kent County Council's staff group for young people run by young people. It seeks to not only support and develop young employees but to also influence the national agenda through participation in events and telling other local authorities about its work. It aims to provide young people with a means to express themselves and maximise the impact they can have on the organisation in the long-term. Greenhouse has set itself a number of aims and objectives which include:

- raising the profile of younger employees within the organisation
- promoting home grown talent through personal and career development
- supporting and developing employees to realise their potential
- having an impact beyond the organisation, into the community
- influencing the national agenda; and
- helping raise the council's profile as an employer of choice

7.1.2 Daniel Vokes and Becky Shailer, the Co Chairs of Aspire said, 'In July, following a lengthy submission, Aspire was shortlisted for a prestigious ENEI (Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) Staff Network of the year Award. The Environment Agency pipped Aspire to the award, nevertheless this gave the Aspire Project Team members a view to the extra work that needs to be done in the next year to reach the high standards that have been set since the Employers Forum on Age became a larger, wider focused group.

7.1.3 Aspire remains committed to achieving these high standards, and it is through projects that Aspire seeks to raise the profile and abilities of the younger members of staff within Kent County Council. Key projects to this are the Director Shadowing and Member Shadowing projects. Director Shadowing is the first of these two projects to go live and aims to expose younger members of staff to the highest level of management within KCC. Further to this, Aspire expects the enthusiasm of younger staff to be conveyed to our Directors and raise the profile of the younger staff as a whole'.

## **8. 'Inspire The Future'**

8.1 Inspire The Future is a new free service run by the charity, Education and Employers Taskforce which aims to get 100.000 people from all sectors and professions to go into state schools and colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took. Any employee could take part. Apprentices, recent graduates and young people in the early stages of their career can be particularly inspirational to teenagers. It is recommended that KCC signs up to this initiative.

## **9. Number of young people employed**

9.1 The number of employees aged under 25 currently stands at 743; this is 7% of the workforce. This compares to the same time last year of 800 and 6.9% although there are fluctuations throughout the year. Information on employees aged under 25 is shown as an appendix to this report.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 That the Personnel Committee:

- (i) note KCC's approach to employing young people through work experience, Kent Success Apprenticeships, GradsKent, the Kent Graduate Programme and the Aspire young peoples' group the current quantitative data and plans for the future.
- (ii) agree to KCC signing up to the Inspire The Future initiative which will further build on our achievements.

**Nigel Fairburn**

**Organisation Effectiveness Manager**

**Human Resources**

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