

Enterprise and Business Committee
16th May 2012

Allan Williams
Corporate Training & Development manager
Vale of Glamorgan Council

The Vale of Glamorgan Council employs approximately 12 Foundation Modern Apprentices (FMA) each year in Business Administration but this year intends to employ 20 FMA. In addition it employs 2 craft Apprentices each year.

In addition to apprenticeships the Council provides various “work experience” opportunities and support for those looking for work as noted in the conclusion of a report written in December 2011

Conclusion

Over the last 12 months the Council has helped or is helping just under 2,000 people to find work by providing a wide range of opportunities including paid apprenticeships and professional traineeships, paid and unpaid work experience placements (with training) and vocational training.

The majority of participants are under 25 years old. The support on offer by the Council ranges from:

- ✓ 3 year Craft Apprenticeships
- ✓ 65 week Administration Apprenticeships
- ✓ 1 – 3 year Professional Traineeships
- ✓ 52 week Flexible New Deal
- ✓ 6 month Future Job Fund Wales
- ✓ 12 week Work Programme
- ✓ Advice and support on CV writing and job search which may take a few hours.
- ✓ 12 months of Vocational Training

Programme	Nos of people helped (last 12 months)
Apprenticeships (FMA & Craft)	24
Work Placements	113
Professional Trainees	15
Future Job Fund (Wales)	77
Flexible New Deal	736 (March 2010 – August 2011)
Welfare To Work Programme	448 (June 2011 – present)

Work Club (Holm View)	120 (June 2011 – present)
Job Shop Extra	167 (2011)
Sport that Works	17
Vocational Training	207
Total	1,925

Terms of reference

The main terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- is the current apprenticeship system providing effective support to the Welsh economy?

In parts

- is the current apprenticeship system meeting the current and future skills needs of employers in Wales? If not, what needs to be improved?

In part – more is needed along the module of a craft apprenticeship. A more demanding and respected training programme is required

- with increased priority on apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds, are apprenticeships an attractive option for young people?

My experience is that this age group is desperate and that apprenticeships are attractive

- do the systems for establishing Apprenticeship Standards and Frameworks and recruiting apprentices work effectively?

Not sure of first part, yes to second part

Key issues

Issues that the Committee may wish to consider as part of these terms of reference include:

- how effective is employer involvement in the apprenticeship system in Wales? Has this changed as a result of the current economic circumstances? Are employers able to find sufficient numbers of young people with the skills and aptitudes that they require? Do relationships between employers and training providers work effectively? Are apprenticeships still limited to certain sectors?

My experience has been good

- do social enterprises make effective use of apprentices?

When they know about them and its not too complex or time consuming - yes

- has the number of apprentices employed by local authorities, and the public sector generally, increased or decreased? Should the public sector be recruiting more apprentices?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has decided to increase apprenticeship opportunities

- the Welsh Government is encouraging Community Benefits clauses in public sector contracts which can be used to promote the employment of trainees and apprenticeships. Is this an effective mechanism for increasing the numbers of apprentices?

Yes, good move

- what is the average profile of an apprentice, for example age, gender, employment sector? Is this profile changing and, if yes, what are the reasons for this? The National Training Federation for Wales reports that the average age for an apprentice is 26. What are the reasons for this? Are apprenticeships generally successful from the perspective of the apprentice? Have apprenticeship completion rates changed in recent years? In practice, are apprentices guaranteed a job at the end of the apprenticeship?

Average age of apprentices in Vale of Glamorgan Council is 18 years.

Completion rates have improved dramatically.

No guarantee of a job but most of the ones who complete the programme successfully get some work – usually a temporary contract initially

- do Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus provide effective support for people wanting to find apprenticeships? Does the new Apprenticeship Matching Service, run by Careers Wales, work effectively?

In my experience - yes

- why do young people decide to be apprentices? What factors influence their decision?

My observation is that most would prefer a job but see the apprenticeship scheme as a way into work – getting experience and a qualification

- are apprenticeships an attractive option for young people of all abilities or are apprenticeships seen as a second best option compared with higher education? Are attitudes changing and if yes, what are the reasons for this?

Some youngster definitely choose an apprenticeship option over A levels or even university.

- are apprenticeships fully understood by those who have most influence on the choices of young people for example parents/carers, careers teachers in schools, teachers generally? Is there too much complexity and choice of programme?

Don't know.

- how effective is Welsh Government policy on apprenticeships? How does its policy of apprenticeships fit into its wider economic and skills strategies?

Simplicity, a clear standard, rigorous qualifications that employers and participants can trust and continuity are the ideal to aim for

- education and training, including apprenticeships are devolved matters, but employment law is not. Do young people have sufficient rights and access to apprenticeship training? If not, how could the situation be improved?

If anything they have too many rights – this puts genuine employers off participating in schemes

- are the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) promoting and supporting apprenticeships effectively? How does the capacity of SSCs affect their performance in this area?

No SSC for Councils

- is European funding being used to support apprenticeships effectively?

No – too bias to Objective One type areas

- are there examples of good practice apprenticeship systems in other countries that Wales can learn from?

Don't know

