

# Report of the Strategic Director to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 13th September 2017.

# E

---

## Subject:

Improving the Support for Young People in Care – Our Role in Corporate Parenting

## Summary statement:

The report summarises the activities undertaken by Bradford's Future Leaders 2017 cohort in taking forward the recommendations made by the Future Leaders 2016 cohort and their "Our Role in Corporate Parenting" report. This report will provide a suggested plan of priority actions for the Future Leaders 2017 cohort to further develop our Corporate Parenting offer.

---

Jim Hopkinson  
Deputy Director  
(Children's Social Care)

**Report Contact:**  
Sarah King – Targeted Early Help Team  
Manager  
T: (01274) 432259  
E: [sarah.king@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.king@bradford.gov.uk)  
Diane Cokewright  
Health and Wellbeing Reintegration  
Officer  
T: 01274 439236  
E: [diane.cokewright@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:diane.cokewright@bradford.gov.uk)

## Portfolio:

**Children Services**

## Overview & Scrutiny Area:

**Children's Services**

## **1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017 accepted the recommendations' and findings of Future Leader 2016 (see attachment Appendix 1) and requested for Future Leaders 2017 to complete phase 2 to take the recommendations forward.

## **2. OTHER CONSIDERATION**

- 2.2 Since March 2017 Future Leaders have consulted and engaged with Through Care Service and Jim Hopkinson, Deputy Director (Children's Social Care) to gain a better understanding of strategic and operational service delivery and continue to do so, this is a two way commitment.
- 2.3 Future Leaders 2017 have identified priority areas to focus on with support from thorough care service. These priority areas are listed below alongside a brief narrative of current activity and the recommendation numbers relate to the recommendations in the attached report "Our Role in Corporate Parenting".

## **3. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 3.1 Future Leaders time and commitment.

## **4. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5. OPTIONS**

### **5.1 Recommendation 1**

Through care strategy meeting, key players from health, education, CAMHS, Social care, housing, fostering and residential. Youth service has been requested but not available due to time. Leisure and Culture services have links with but not attending meetings. Voluntary sector services are linked in with LAC services this is working, they have an open invite to attend as and when needed. Future Leaders recommend that through care strategy meetings continue to explore links with other organisations in the future to meet the needs of LAC and leaving care young people.

### **5.2 Recommendation 2 and 10**

To support the development of the LAC communication plan working the LAC young people and key players – liaise with Emma Collingwood:

- Social media, twitter, what's app, face book
- Other ways of communicating with young people
- Communication plans that meets everyone's needs
- Not timely to get info onto council pages

- Access to information as and when needed
- Young person's app
- Extended to over 25's.

Future Leaders to support corporately – to launch October half term (national care leavers week).

### 5.3 **Recommendation 3 and 6**

To work with LAC to create a video for all corporate parents to raise awareness and explain the Role of the Corporate Parent.

- New starters pack
- everyone in council to watch
- members
- Children in care council to support with and future leaders.

Role model – mentoring young people till 25 – 3 times a year (link to video) – Training pack available/ independent visitor.

Voiceability review?

### 5.4 **Recommendation 4 and 8**

Gym membership cards for over 14's rolled out the leisure card for LAC is in processes and requires sign off by senior management. Further scoping is has been undertaken with regards to culture and retail offer.

Future leaders to continue to explore with LAC children.

### 5.5 **Recommendation 5 and 9**

To be discussed with LAC if this is an event which they would be interested in.

There should be more engagement with young people to attend many of Bradford Events – links with communication plans.

That apprenticeships and shadowing opportunities for LAC should be offer by all council departments – Apprenticeship worker already available in through care services.

Organisations willing to do apprenticeships- training needed, options for accommodation linked to this at Culture Fusion.

Future leaders to meet with Emma Collingwood to take forward.

## 6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 We ask that the members of the Corporate Parenting Panel endorse the future plans as detailed above.

## **7. APPENDICES**

- 7.1 **Appendix 1** - Future Leaders 2016 Report: Our role in Corporate Parenting.
- 7.2 **Appendix 2** - Engaging young people into the workforce of Bradford Metropolitan District Council through the Apprenticeship levy 2017.

# Appendix 1

City of Bradford Metropolitan  
District Council

**Improving the support for young  
people in care/care leavers**

**Our role in Corporate Parenting**

Future Leaders Programme 2016 -Mustansir  
Butt, Tina Butler, Noreen Akhtar, Ishaq Shafiq  
and Anisah Naz

10/5/2016

# Content

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Section One Introduction	2
Section Two Setting the Scene	4
Section Three Key Findings	7
Section Four Concluding Remarks	8
Section Five Summary of Recommendations	9
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference.	
Appendix 2 – Service Context	

## Section One

### Introduction

#### Background

Bradford Councils Future Leaders Programme 2016, was designed to contribute to the Council's talent management approach. It also forms part of a wider strategy that seeks to embed leadership skills, mindsets and behaviours across the organisation.

We, as part of Bradford Councils Future Leaders Programme, are five members of the team, who expressed a wish to work with Children's Services Department. This includes receiving individual mentoring from the Senior Leadership Team.

A challenge was set by Michael Jameson, around Looked After Children;

- How do we support young children in care?
- What is our understanding; what's the current landscape?
- What do we currently deliver and commission?

We have called ourselves, "Michael's Challenge Team."

#### Areas Explored

Following this, a desktop exercise was undertaken to start scoping in relation improving the support for children and young people in care, in seeing the local and national landscape.

Listed below are the key areas that we as a team were keen to explore as part of this task.

- What support is available?
- What are your priorities for looked after children?
- What's your understanding of corporate parenting and what do you see your role as being?
- What do you see as the challenges, barriers, solutions and opportunities for your service, for doing things differently?
- If your child or other family member had to access care services, what would you want to see and experience?
- Today you will receive a 12 year old in your care – where do you see them in six years' time?
- As part of our scoping exercise, which local authorities / or organisations would you suggest we contact, to understand more about children in care?
- We'd like to set up a small focus group with C&YP – is this a good idea and if so, will you help us to broker conversations with key people we need to talk to?

## Who we have spoken to:

The Children in Care Council.

As part of this task we have also engaged with key officers and councillors and they include:

- Michael Jameson: Strategic Director Children's Services
- Jim Hopkinson: Deputy Director Children's Specialist Services
- Jenny Cryer: Assistant Director Children's Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships
- Helen Serlin: Team Manager, Leaving Care
- Mick Nolan: Coordinator of Bradford's Children In Care Council and Participation
- David Byrom: Head of Service, Children's Services
- Di Watherston: Head of Service, (Social Work), Children's Services
- Andrew Burns: **Business Development Manager Sport & Culture**
- Cllr Val Slater: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder;
- Cllr Carol Thirkill: Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel.

We have also had conversations with the following West Yorkshire Authorities:

- Calderdale;
- Leeds.



## Section Two

### Setting the Scene

The vision for the Bradford district which both the Council's Children's Services and the Children's Trust share, is:

Our children and young people are the future of Bradford. We want them to grow up in a Family Friendly City where every child, young person and family is safe and well. We want them to realise their full potential, have high aspirations for themselves and their neighbourhoods and to become adults who help to drive the prosperity of our District.

Bradford's Children, Young People and Families Plan sets out the priorities for children, young people and families; how we plan to achieve these, who is responsible, and what success will look like.

- Priority 1: Ensuring that our children start school ready to learn;
- Priority 2: Accelerating education attainment and achievement;
- Priority 3: Ensuring our children and young people are ready for life and work;
- Priority 4: Safeguarding the most vulnerable and providing early support to families;
- Priority 5: Reducing health and social inequalities, including tackling child poverty, reducing obesity and improving oral health;
- Priority 6: Listening to the voice of children, young people and families and working with them to shape services and promote active citizenship.

Bradford has five key District priorities which are "owned" by different strategic partnership groups in the District. It has been developed alongside the District Plan which looks at the priorities for all areas including for children.

- Better Skills, More and Better Jobs and a Growing Economy;
- Great Start and a Good School for all Our Children;
- Better Health, Better Lives;
- Safe Clean and Active Communities;
- Decent Homes that People Can Afford to Live in.

A number of clear targets have been set within the local looked after children and care leavers strategy. These cover:

- Improve permanency for children through adoption and special guardianship orders
- Improve outcomes for looked after children and young people through improving placement stability;
- Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people being looked after;
- Ensure looked after children and care leavers are safe in their home and in their community;
- Improve education and enjoyment outcomes for looked after children;
- Improve positive contribution outcomes for looked after children. Make sure all looked after children are listened to so their views can help plan what we do and make it better;
- Support and develop our Children in Care Council;
- Strengthen the corporate parenting role;

- Improve access to work, education and training and ensure young people who leave care have access to a safe place to live.

The number of Children and Young People in Care is 922 and the age ranges from birth to 18+ years old. There are 451 females and 471 males.

There are approximately 428 Children and Young People in Fostering placements within the District and there are 59 children being looked after by another Local Authority.

Table 1 – Number of Looked After Children, by age and ethnicity.

Age	
0 – less than 1	51
01 – 04	147
05 – 09	187
10 – 15	367
16 – 17	163
18+ and in Community Home	7

Ethnicity	
White British	576
White Other	33
Gypsy/Roma	24
Asian/British Asian – Bangladeshi	6
Information Not Yet Obtained	16
Other Ethnic Group	11
Mixed – Other	19
White - Eastern European	7
Asian/British Asian – Pakistani	71
Mixed - White/Black Caribbean	31
Traveller of Irish Heritage	4
Mixed - White/Asian	85
Mixed - White/Black African	10
Black/Black British – Caribbean	2
Black/Black British – African	17
Asian/British Asian – Indian	3
Asian/British Asian – Other	4
Black/Black British – Other	2
Refused	1

**Who looks after our Looked After Children:**

392 Our Foster Carers  
 217 Friends and Family  
 91 Placed with Parents  
 58 Our Residential Care  
 83 External Residential/Foster Care  
 Others  
 (Adoption orders, hospital, secure etc.)

Statistics as of December 2016.

## Section Three

### Key Findings

This section presents the findings of this working group, into improving the support for children and young people in care and care leavers.

Following engagement with key stakeholders, a number of key findings and gaps were identified, which included:

#### Key Finding 1

Comparative work undertaken also identified that Leeds City Council has a multi-agency LAP, using a multi agency approach with Looked After Children. This has proved to be very successful as key agencies formed part of the approach and services appear more co-ordinated, thus addressing the needs of Looked After Children more effectively.

#### Identified Gap

There does not appear to be a multi-agency LAP partnership approach in Bradford, hence there appears to be a gap in Bradford Council.

#### Recommendation

To develop a multi agency approach to work with Looked After Children, which would improve the coordination and delivery of services and support to Looked After Children. The multi agency partnership should be accountable to Bradford Council's Corporate Parenting Board. Representation would be expected from Leisure and Cultural Services, Third Sector partners, including key representation from the businesses Community. Other key stakeholders will be identified as the project progresses.

#### Key Finding 2

With regards to communication, messages are delivered through the Children in Care Council; however there is no overall communications plan which could be used to deliver key messages in relation to Looked After Children.

#### Identified Gap

There appears to be no overall Communications Plan in place to not only deliver key messages in relation to Looked After Children but also to provide Opportunities to raise awareness, promote and buy in regarding the Corporate Parenting role, especially in expanding this across Council and Stakeholders.

#### Recommendation

A development of a robust communications plan which ensures that Looked After Children/leaving care are given specific consideration within existing plans around priorities and development of services for children and young people, for example the Children, Young People and Families plan) and that key organisations are held to account in relation to equality of access for Looked After Children.

### **Key Finding 3**

During the information gathering process it became apparent that the offer to Looked After Children in terms of Corporate Parenting support was not clear. There also appears to be opportunities to look at developing raising awareness sessions with Councillors in terms of fulfilling the Corporate Parenting role.

There was consensus amongst Senior Councillors, Council Officers and Looked After Children, about the need to strengthen this area further, by ensuring that within Bradford Councils Report template; a further heading be included to be called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting". This would further reinforce the importance of Corporate Parenting, whilst also demonstrating that this is a cross-cutting issue.

#### **Identified Gap**

Opportunities to raise awareness, promote and buy in regarding the Corporate Parenting role, especially in expanding this across the Council and key stakeholders.

#### **Recommendations**

There is a need to communicate a clearer understanding of what the role is of the Corporate Parent, who these are and the responsibilities surrounding this. There is opportunity to enhance the role of the Corporate Parent and we would seek to embed the role wider, and would like to pilot an initiative with Future Leaders, in taking a mentoring role with Looked After Children.

Council Management Team will clarify with each Council Department, their role as a Corporate Parent. We will ask each department to run an annual event for Looked After Children. Each Council Department will be responsible to design and publicise what their event is and the dates of each event should be coordinated so there is an even spread over the year.

It is recommended that all elected members receive as part of their member introduction training sessions that there is inclusion of the expectations around the role of being a Corporate Parent, focusing specifically on accountability and responsibility. This should also be extended to Council Staff.

It is recommended that a new section be included in Bradford Councils Report template called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting".

### **Key Finding 4**

Discussions with Looked After Children indicated that they are offered free tickets/offers and they felt that 'this is good, but that there is a flaw and that this can fall short as some families may not be able to get involved due to cost and need to be bespoke for each young person and as a family.'

#### **Identified Gap**

The need to encourage Looked After Children to make the most of the cultural offer and developing systems to ensure that the services available to young people meet their needs and are accessible.

## Recommendation

Working collaboratively, alongside representatives from the Children in Care Council, the new cohort of Future Leaders will work with a number of key partners in the District to develop a cultural offer to our Looked After Children. It is anticipated that they will develop the scheme and in term will aim to develop a discreet swipe card/potentially linked with an app, for discounts or free. This will include retail and leisure outlets.

## Key Finding 5

Dialogue with Officers and Councillors revealed that more could be done, in terms of developing and promoting the cultural offer for Looked after Children. Bradford Council has many facilities such as swimming pools, theatres and museums; where access could be made available to Looked After Children free of charge and to include businesses.

## Identified Gap

The cultural offer, or lack of; that is currently available across the District for Looked After Children.

We undertook some comparative work relating to the cultural offer within neighbouring authorities and below are the key points. It is clear that there are differing offers:

- **Bradford Council** are currently piloting an initiative, that started in September, of initially 60 membership cards, for free access for care leavers for gym, swimming and fitness classes. Passport to Leisure passes are also available for half price access for younger children. This is in the early pilot stage and at the last count, approximately 30 care leavers had signed up. A number of those had not attended a gym/swim/class before
- **Calderdale Council** offer passport to leisure and MAX cards that are given to carers and special guardians that enables them to get discounts in certain places, e.g. Eureka, bowling, free/discounts and recreational offers
- **Leeds Council** offer Looked After Children and care leavers, free access to swimming pools and gyms through Leeds City Council Sport & Active Lifestyles

## Recommendation

It is recommended that a separate piece of work be undertaken to explore the costs associated with providing all Looked After Children free access and free Passport to Leisure cards and to make use of facilities at the disposal of the Council; swimming pools, theatres and museums. This would ensure opportunities for young people to use these facilities, this creating more social, cultural and learning opportunities.

## Key Finding 6

Further discussion with Council officers and Councillors highlighted that there are not enough apprenticeship opportunities for Looked After Children from Bradford Council's apprentice scheme.

## **Identified Gap**

Places on Bradford Councils apprenticeship scheme are not currently targeted to Looked After Children.

## **Recommendation**

We recommend that Bradford Council prioritises places on the Councils apprentice schemes to Looked After Children (and to include 'professional' shadowing opportunities, similar to takeover challenge day but more regularly and consistently).

## **Key Finding 7**

During the information gathering stage, it became clear that there needed to be greater clarity in relation to what is in place for Young People who are leaving Care Leavers. Moreover, in our role as Corporate Parent, it is crucial that we know once Young People leave the care of the Council, that they are correctly signposted to organisations and services that will continue to assist them in their life development.

## **Identified Gap**

Not signposting and supporting Young People, once they have left Bradford Councils Care.

## **Recommendation**

To talk to care leavers before they have left responsibility of the Local Authority in more detail as to what level of signposting/support they would/or would not like to receive, in terms of the Council tracking their progress to help fulfil our Corporate Parenting role.

## Section Four

### Concluding Remarks

Providing support, guidance and care to Looked After Children in the District by Bradford Council, is complex and one that requires a multi-faceted approach. It was clear from our information gathering, that the commitment from Bradford Council Children's Services Staff and Bradford Councillors was exceptional.

It has been clear from the information gathered, that whilst there are good practices that exist to support young children in care, it is also clear that more can be done. Moreover, we have seen a commitment to ensuring children and young people in care do receive the highest possible care.

Members of the Children in Care Council felt that Looked After Children should have similar opportunities and positive life experiences as all children. They said that they "don't want to be identified as kids in care." The Children in Care Council said that they all want young people in the District, to be well rounded, resilient and leading citizens, equipped with the skills and tools to be what they aspire to be.

Members of the Children in Care Council told us they do not feel that they currently have the same opportunities as young people who are not in care. They feel children in care should have similar opportunities."

As key stakeholders, we are seeking to continue to work inclusively and collaboratively with members of the Children in Care Council to further co-create, develop and shape further, an area of work. This supports and encourages an ethos of working with the voices of children and young people. This is our commitment beyond this report.

Bradford Council needs to fulfil our role as a Corporate Parent, from the point at which children and young people come into our care to not just when they leave care, but also after care. As a Corporate Parent, we need to be treating Looked after Children, as if they were our own children and in the words of one of our young people, "we want someone to make sure we are doing okay."

### Next Steps

In relation to the next steps and progressing forward with this work, it is vital that the momentum is not lost and that an action plan be developed which sets out how the recommendations for this review will be implemented and taken forward. The action plan will also include areas of accountability and timescales for delivery.

The draft report will also be considered by Bradford Councils Corporate Parenting Panel, on Wednesday 8 March 2017.

## Section Five

### Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations set out below have come from the desk top research, discussions with the Children and Care Council, Bradford Council Children Service's Officers, Councillors and comparative work with the other West Yorkshire Authorities.

#### **Recommendation 1**

To develop a multi agency approach to work with Looked After Children, which would improve the co-ordination and delivery of services and support to young people in care. The multi agency partnership should be accountable to Bradford Council's Corporate Parenting Board. Representation would be expected from Leisure and Cultural Services, Voluntary and Community Sector Agencies as well as key representation from the businesses Community. Other key stakeholders will be identified as the project progresses.

#### **Recommendation 2**

A development of a robust communications plan which ensures that Children in care/leaving care are given specific consideration within existing plans around priorities and development of services for Looked After Children, for example the Children, Young People and Families plan) and that key organisations are held to account in relation to equality of access for children in care.

#### **Recommendation 3**

There is a need to communicate a clearer understanding of what the role is of the Corporate Parent, who these are and the responsibilities surrounding this. There is opportunity to enhance the role of the Corporate Parent, we would seek to embed the role wider, and would like to pilot an initiative with Future Leaders, in taking a mentoring role with young people in care.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Working collaboratively, alongside representatives from the Children in Care Council, the new cohort of Future Leaders will work with a number of key partners in the District to develop a cultural offer to our Looked After Children. They will develop the scheme and will then aim to develop a discreet swipe card/potentially linked with an app, for discounts or free. This will include retail and leisure outlets.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Council Management Team will clarify with each Council Department, their role is as a Corporate Parent. We will ask each department to run an annual event for Looked After Children. Each Council Department will be responsible to design and publicise what their event is and the dates of each event should be coordinated so there is an even spread over the year.



## **Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that all elected members receive as part of their member introduction training sessions that there is inclusion of the expectations around the role of being a Corporate Parent, focusing specifically on accountability and responsibility. This should also be extended to Council staff.

## **Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that a new section be included in Bradford Councils Report template called, "Implications for Corporate Parenting".

## **Recommendation 8**

It is recommended that a separate piece of work be undertaken to explore the costs associated with providing all Looked After Children free access and free Passport to Leisure cards and to make use of facilities at the disposal of the Council such as swimming pools, theatres and museums. This would allow young people to use these facilities, this creating more social, cultural and learning opportunities.

## **Recommendation 9**

We recommend that Bradford Council prioritises places on the Councils apprentice schemes to Looked After Children (and to include 'professional' shadowing opportunities, similar to takeover challenge day but more regularly and consistently).

## **Recommendation 10**

To talk to care leavers before they have left responsibility of the Local Authority in more detail as to what level of signposting/support they would/or would not like to receive, in terms of the Council tracking their progress to help fulfil our Corporate Parenting role.

## **Recommendation 11**

That an action plan be developed which sets out how the recommendations for this review will be implemented, including areas of responsibility and timescales for delivery. Progress against the action plan should be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in six months.

Research Report  
Gemma Cain – Future Leaders Programme  
2017

**Engaging Young People into the Workforce of Bradford  
Metropolitan District Council through the Apprenticeship Levy  
2017**

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the individuals involved in compiling this research as the information required to give an accurate position is often a matter of sensitivity and covers subjects that are complex and go way beyond the normal realms of consideration in relation to standard recruitment processes.

Special thanks go to the GMB Trade Union in Bradford for providing access to their partners and organisations who were willing to contribute. Offering support and an on-going willingness to continue to assist with this research and facilitate any arrangements which may contribute to the success of any programmes developed as a result.

# Contents

Pg. 4) Introduction

Pg. 5) Executive Summary

Pg. 7) Findings – Recruitment of Apprentices and Introduction to Work

Pg. 9) Findings – Children Leaving Care into Employment

Pg. 11) Conclusions & Recommendations

Pg. 13) Bibliography

# Introduction

As part of the Future Leaders Programme 2017 I have been tasked by the Director of Childrens Services, Michael Jameson to research the way in which Bradford Metropolitan District Council can break the stigma of not being an employer for young people and attract new talent into the Apprenticeship Levy 2017 scheme. The research was two-fold in that it focused on two main areas, one being very generalist and the other being very specific,

- Consider how Bradford Council can become more attractive to young people as an employer and what barriers are currently in place, what can we change and what is it about the current image that is restricting recruitment potential?
- How can Bradford Council engage Children Leaving Care (CLC) into employment through the Apprenticeship Levy Scheme (ALS) and what barriers, challenges and support is required to make this successful?

The report deals with the two areas in turn and will highlight the main points that highlight our current weaknesses as an employer and what would potentially need to be changed to improve the image and engage young people.

It will demonstrate areas which will need to be given serious consideration, specifically in light of CLC and the challenges that will be faced in supporting these young people, followed by recommendations based on information obtained from experts in their respective fields and how this can be implemented successfully without proving detrimental both structurally and financially.

# Executive Summary

The research proved very insightful regarding both the current image of the Council and how it is perceived; in addition there is also a huge amount of work to do enable the council as an employer to make this programme a success.

The following points highlight the main areas of concern that were highlighted through the research of which will be expanded further in the report.

- Nationally the Council is now in a position of weakness when proposing to recruit new apprentices, with the levy scheme affecting a large amount of employers both locally and nationally, the market to recruit young people has never been more competitive, demonstrated by the fact that, Keighley College, specifically stated that even them as a training provider held numerous vacancies with good employers with exciting prospects that they simply could not fill as the recruitment market for young people is extremely tight.
- The current facilities for attracting apprentices to the council are simply outdated and are not in any way attractive enough to stand out from the crowd. This is compounded by the fact that young people engage and seek job opportunities in a completely different manner now, of which the council has not yet embraced.
- A programme that is extremely proactive would be required to put the council out there on the job market to really stand out, especially in light of the Workforce Development Teams view to become one of the leading training and Apprenticeship providers, this would involve completely rethinking the way in which they currently recruit.
- Some of the Councils existing affiliations and commitments require further consideration and collaborative working is going to be the key to making a programme successful. There is the potential to have ready access to the groups of young people that the council wishes to specifically target such as those from SEND, BME and CLC with additional support throughout the placement/employment giving it further chance of success.
- One of the biggest challenges the council will face is the attitudes and behaviours that will likely need to change. With an ageing workforce and the potential for large influxes of young people, training will become key to facilitating a successful scheme, specifically around disability awareness, Safeguarding and even more specific areas such as Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

- Whilst the council has proposed work placements and traineeships, they may also benefit from considering Supported Internships, as the likelihood of success with the individuals who would be partaking would increase significantly by being able to gain additional support through the learning provider the council would not likely be able to put resources into.
- CLC whilst becoming young adult are still in an extremely vulnerable stage of their lives and whilst may make a great success of an apprenticeship placement would need an extra level of support than is provided in a normal apprenticeship arrangement. Significant attention would need to be given to any existing Education, Health and Care Plans, and significant collaboration with the Leaving Care team, support workers, social workers and other parties would need to be developed.
- Consideration needs to be given towards the possible development of a preparation for work scheme, this is due to the fact that some of the target groups the council proposes to recruit will likely need some coaching or assistance in building up basic life skills such as travelling to work alone as an example, to prepare them for the world of independent working.
- In all the research carried out, support has been raised in almost every element regarding CLC, specifically the care element. This is the area which was highlighted as requiring skills which may need to be developed significantly within the council, in addition, education around Children who have been in care and also spotting signs of potential issues that may begin to impact their ability to fulfil their potential.
- Engaging with young people currently in care will be the most useful source of information to making any programme to recruit this target group a success. By speaking to the individuals directly it would provide a first hand account of what they as individuals would like to aspire to and where they perceive themselves. By assuming what these individuals would like to do or get involved in will not go far enough to ensure successful placements.
- Mentorship and or workplace buddies will be one key to making these individuals feel comfortable in the workplace and provide an opportunity for them to open up about problems and or issues whether work related or personal that is impacting them. Again requiring training but further providing the opportunity for success, this maybe someone the Child Leaving Care picks or someone appointed in the first instance to establish a working relationship with them.

# Findings

## The recruitment of Apprentices and Introduction to Work

Having consulted sources of primary and secondary research it is apparent that there is a huge task ahead for the Council in terms of making itself more attractive to young people regarding the apprenticeship scheme in addition to attracting those from vulnerable groups such as CLC and SEND.

Having taken the opportunity to really look into what is on offer, if we simply consider our publications and website ( [www.bradford.gov.uk](http://www.bradford.gov.uk) ) compared to our comparators who are in the same recruitment situation, it is clear that we far from stand out. The way in which young people communicate and search for jobs has changed, using the National Apprenticeship Service website (<http://www.getingofar.gov.uk/>) as a prime example, it is eye catching and delivers exactly what a young person enquiring about apprenticeships would be interested in. The information on there is informative and the language used caters to a variety of audiences.

In meeting Mark Rowe, National Apprenticeships Officer for TUC and Union-learn, he clarified this point further, explaining that the majority of the leaders in this area spend a lot of time and money on getting this part of their recruitment right, they engage with young people to see what they want and also explained that it is really going to have to stand out and do something different as there has never been more of a tighter market to recruit new apprentices from.

Chris Stott, head of Business Engagement at Keighley College, explained further that, even at a time where there has effectively never been more opportunity for apprenticeships for young people, the college have vacancies for positions with good employers that pay over and above the national minimum apprentice wage that they simply cannot fill. He felt that competition was the main contributor to this factor and this was compounded by the difficulty in general to engage young people.

We went on to discuss at length the way in which the Council plans to attract new apprentices and garner interest in the roles that are carried out. It became very clear that unless something new and exciting is developed there would be little interest. Mark explained that some of the employers he works with in industries such as Nuclear and Heavy Engineering, the use of open days where people can look around, see how things are done, look at the plant and equipment used and talk to staff that do the jobs to get them really thinking about what they want to do.

One suggestion he made and placed a lot of emphasis on was to visit and go see what goes on in terms of an apprentice recruitment programme, especially due to the fact that if the council were to visit Yorkshire Water for example, there would not likely be much crossover in the types of roles each employer would be looking to recruit to and given the historic success of their programme could provide some insightful information on how to really build an attractive recruitment programme for new apprentices.



When conducting further research personally, it appeared that Bradford Council – Skills for work signed up to the governments Disability Confident Scheme ( [www.GOV.uk](http://www.GOV.uk) ), however only at the base level of Committed. The levels range from Committed to Employer and then Leader, in light of the Councils vision to be inclusive and also attract candidates from the SEND and CLC sectors, it is surprising to see that this is not something that as an employer is not more openly identified and advertised.

It became clear from all that were involved in the research, that to clearly make the project a success, there would need to be a significant amount of collaboration involved specifically regarding the minority groups. This would involve working with the education provider to ensure that the level of care within education is brought into the workplace in the form of reasonable adjustments where practicably possible, with regular contact with Social services, Support workers and alike. It was made clear by Emma Rich, head of SEND and CLC at Keighley College that the support isn't just someone who they can go to every now and again, it goes further in that some SEND employees/trainees would likely require a programme of introduction to the workplace to build their confidence as any situation like this would likely be well out of their comfort zone. Even going as far as travelling to work every day.

Elements of independent living would need to be considered to compliment what is being taught through the learning provider. It was made clear however, that whilst there may be concerns about the financial impact connected to some of these adjustments, through the proper assessments made by Access to Work it would be highly likely that funding would be provided to support the individual on their Work Placement/Apprenticeship.

Great emphasis from all involved also placed concern on the level of training management had received in managing and supporting young people, more specifically in relation to the council's current workforce demographic regarding age. The awareness of disabilities and difficulties was an area which requires a lot of work and commitment from leadership to engage in training and understand the basic fundamentals of the Equality Act 2010 ([www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)).

Without this there is the potential for unintentional discrimination through management actions that albeit were good in their intention but place someone in the qualifying category at a detriment.

It would place more emphasis on management making decisions based on educated judgement rather than simply relaying all decisions to HRplus to negate risk, this may work in the short term but could become a barrier to progressing work on a day to day basis.

## Children Leaving Care into Employment

Not having much prior knowledge of the area regarding children leaving care there is still a significant amount of research to be done to ideally make any recruitment programme as successful as possible.

First giving regard to past research which includes in depth case studies (Dixon 2006), it is noted that there are inherent difficulties in the individual maintaining employment or staying with a placement, simply based on their personal past, the type of care they have entered into and personal issue they have had to overcome or are currently dealing with, this may be drug or Alcohol abuse or other extremely sensitive matters.

What does come through in this report is how someone can make a success and like with any other young person a willingness to succeed and better themselves proves the key to moving forward which is something the council through its programme would need to be mindful of, support and embrace at many levels.

In discussing the subject with Emma, she emphasised that the likelihood of those who would enter into a work programme/placement would, like in the above findings, benefit significantly from a pre-employment programme, this is due to experiences such as this in most cases being completely alien to them. There is also the propensity for the individual to not just be vulnerable in the sense that they have been cared for by the local Authority but may also have complex educational or health needs that would need to be supported.

Again from the research it would appear again that support is the key work that keeps being reiterated, this was also seconded by Mark Rowe in that he explained that the he has seen programmes where vulnerable individuals were in work placements such as Remploy, and where the individuals were adequately supported it was extremely successful and not only that, the attendance levels and absence rates were extremely low even with complex needs due to the commitment from the individuals and their willingness to engage in employment.

In gaining research from a teacher who works with children currently in care and those preparing for leaving care, the message that was made abundantly clear was that serious consideration would need to be given to any Education, Health and Care Plan in place remaining in place until the individual turns 25. Whilst to most who work in education and social care this may seem obvious however, to Human Resources and Management it is likely a concept of employment that has not been given much consideration unless they have worked regularly with this group of people.

She also raised the point of personal characteristics that can become a barrier to employment such as *“mood swings, emotional outburst, lack of trust, attachment issues and an eagerness to impress/ overachieve or just fail as that is what they have always been told will happen”*. Again, though the message was clear that given the amount of support available already and through collaborating through the 6-12-month LAC reviews with a robust support network there is every chance of these opportunities succeeding.

One recommendation made by Keighley college is a model that has been extremely successful elsewhere is a supported internship (<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk>). They have proved to be very useful regarding CLC and also SEND and give a huge amount of information for employers in light of the above subject giving the young individual much more chance of success and the possibility to go onto take up an apprenticeship placement thereafter.

The department of Children's Services and the Skills for Work Team will likely be heavily involved in this stream of the Apprenticeship Levy programme, but the question would be how the council intends to develop a framework for raising issues and dealing with them given the amount of outside support the young individuals would have. If we took a matter of discipline for example, whilst the statutory entitlements exist in legislation, it would need to be decided how the situation would need to be treated and who would need to be involved given their potential vulnerability.

This is a consideration for Human Resources and CMT to address but would need to be decided prior to a work programme to make it as seamless as possible and operate efficiently.

In carrying out my research one of the biggest obstacles has been gaining access to service users from the group this section specifically mentions, however after consulting with Keighley College with significant support from the GMB trade union, I have been granted access to come and work with and interview students who are currently in care and are in the process of leaving, to see what barriers they face regarding employability and also seek what their thoughts and aspirations are in terms of their futures.

I have also been granted access to a GMB member who has Asperger's Syndrome who is currently working full time successfully who would like to share his experiences and also explain some of the barriers he has faced, discrimination he has been subjected to and how he personally made a success of himself in the face of adversity.

Other secondary research such as a report called, Barriers to Employment and Unfair Treatment at Work (EHRC 2013) has also highlighted many issues regarding employment for those from minority groups such as disability, and by giving this some consideration a great amount of thought would need to be given to both the way in which the council chooses to target this group into work and also alleviate any of the fears that come about moving into the world of work.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

There is much work to do to really develop a scheme that is inclusive of all young people from every area of Bradford no matter what their difference. In highlighting specific groups to recruit, it is clear that there are many considerations which are not plainly obvious but by not considering them could significantly impact the potential for young people to really excel in the councils desired Apprenticeship Scheme.

Given the information I have obtained over a relatively short period, I would make the following recommendations in the first instance as I feel they would prove extremely beneficial to making this a success.

I must note that the research within this report is not anywhere close to really defining exactly what is required to develop the Council's recruitment plans to really engage young people into working in Local Government. I would suggest that this could be broken up further to really analyse each specific area.

As mentioned in my findings I am planning to continue my research and engage with young people from specific groups to seek their insight into views, opinions and barriers to employment and will be continuing to consult with the GMB Trade Union regarding their engagement activities with young people to see where they can assist further.

I would like to make the following recommendations,

1. The Council carries out a complete review and overhaul of its communications to make them not just more attractive but more accessible and look at the way young people interact in this day and age, using media's such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as examples.
2. Redesign of the Recruitment part of the Councils website and provide a direct access link from the BMDC homepage to the apprenticeship opportunities available through [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
3. That the Council develops open days where prospective candidates can come and visit work sites, see the equipment and meet staff and talk to them about the job they do, in addition to job fairs and recruitment days in schools and colleges.
4. Review of the currently process of recruitment, considering different ways of engaging potential new employees and consider stepping away from the standard competency based interview to really get a good impression of the young person sat in front of them as we may be missing an opportunity to recruit some really good candidates.
5. Management Training – this covers 3 particular areas and would need to go a lot further than just the basic information sessions
  - Safeguard
  - SEND awareness and accessibility
  - Equality and Diversity
6. Considering a supported internship to really engage the most vulnerable young individuals and really offer them an opportunity to succeed
7. Develop a programme to start accessing schools and colleges to begin an engagement strategy with young people, teaching them about the world of work but also building the profile and image of Bradford Council as an Employer and a Brand.
8. Clearly identify specific roles for apprenticeships so that a clear idea of what can be achieved is there from the outset for the applicants. This will also help decide future progression and assist with their continuous professional development.

9. Consider the councils current support network for young people in employment, specifically those with vulnerabilities and assess whether this will be adequate in light of what is hoped to be achieved through this programme.
10. Further collaboration with outside agencies such as schools, colleges, support groups such as MENCAP and Autism First to gain first-hand experience of what we need to do to make this programme as successful as possible.
11. Look at our current affiliations as an employer and reignite them to boost our profile and commitment to being a completely inclusive employer.

By implementing the recommendations above I feel that there is significantly more chance of this opportunity for the council to be a real success, in light of Section 2, Setting the Scene, of the Improving the support for young people in care/care leavers report, these recommendations will significantly contribute to both Priority 3 and Priority 6 and assist with the other 4 priorities.

They will also go further to give every chance of Recommendation 9 (pg14) being extremely successful and offer opportunities for LAC for years to come and develop Bradford Council into becoming the most inclusive employer in the district.

## **Bibliography**

### **Bradford Council Apprenticeship Information Page**

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/jobs/apprenticeships/information-about-apprenticeships-for-young-people/>

Accessed on 26/07/2017

### **National Apprenticeship Service Website**

<http://www.getingofar.gov.uk>

Accessed on 26/07/2017

### **Disability Confident Scheme**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

Accessed on 26/07/2017

### **The Equality Act 2010**

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Accessed on 26/07/2017

### **Supported internships**

<http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/supportedinternships>

Accessed on 29/07/2017

### **Young People Leaving Care – A Study of Cost and Outcomes (May 2006) – J Dixon, J Wade, S Byford, H Weatherly & J Lee**

The University of York, Social Work and Research Unit

B Block Alcuin College

University of York

Heslington

York

YO10 5DD

### **Barriers to Employment and Unfair Treatment at Work – Research Report 88, Equality and Human Rights Commission 2013**

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/research-report-88-barriers-employment-and-unfair-treatment-work-quantitative>

Accessed 26/07/2017

**Mark Rowe**

National Apprenticeships officer for the TUC & Union-learn

**Chris Stott**

Head of Business Engagement – Keighley College

**Emma Rich**

Head of SEND and Vulnerable Children – Keighley College

**Sarah Livingstone**

Teacher of Vulnerable Children – Ellar Carr School, Bradford