

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Skills

I will be reporting as follows for Full Council on 7 December 2023:

1. By Councillor Adams as follows:

In the light of our important role as corporate parents in ensuring that our care-experienced young people have the best and start possible in life, please may I have a report from the cabinet member responsible for the following:

How confident are we at DCC, that we can provide as many opportunities for work, apprenticeships, mentoring and work experience, for our care-experienced young people, as external organisations? The Talent and Aspiration Bank will be key to ensuring more care experienced young people have the employment support they need in a timely manner. Will the cabinet ensure that the resources needed to action the recommendations of the Talent and Aspiration bank will be provided expeditiously?

Response

1. Ensuring the best outcomes for Children who are or have been within our care is a crucial priority for Devon County Council, both ensuring that we are able to meet the aspirations and maximise the potential of our young people, but also support them to become successful, confident and independent adults. In line with this commitment to our care experienced young people, and as part of our ongoing effort to reinforce our role as a Corporate Parent, we have recently renewed our Corporate Parenting governance approach, restructuring our Corporate Parenting partnership around four key strands. One of these, Talented Me, brings together the authority with wider public sector partners, business and employer representative bodies and our colleges and wider training bodies to advance and promote employment and training opportunities for all young people below 25 seeking a next step.

As part of this approach, the Authority is currently pursuing a wide-ranging programme of activity across its activity, including:

- ***Provision of a growing programme of apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience places across the area***, with 7 care experienced young people already undertaking an apprenticeship across DCC or one of its suppliers, and formal offers of additional placements and apprenticeship roles offered by 9 of our suppliers to date in an ongoing push to extend and expand our leverage in this area.
- ***Ongoing work around the development of an extended programme of apprenticeship placements for care experienced young people with Exeter College***, seeking to secure up to 50 further apprenticeships opportunities for those who are in our care by the end of 2024.

- ***Seeking to leverage our purchasing and procurement power as an authority to secure additional training and employment opportunities for care experienced young people***, with 19 suppliers to date offering an extended menu of work experience, apprenticeship places, traineeships or wider engagement opportunities.
- ***Enhanced business engagement with Devon employers***, with a second roundtable due to be held shortly with businesses in Northern Devon to consider additional opportunities for our young people.
- **Additional direct support for our care experienced young people** seeking to transition into employment, training or other learning, with the provision / redeployment of 8 staff within the Childrens and Economy service over the last 18 months to work intensively with our care experienced young people on accessing training or employment opportunities. This has included over 1,400 engagements in the past 3 months alone, and 350 referrals / successes in supporting young people in their next steps.
- ***Development of the Talent and Aspiration Bank***, working across our young people to capture a single database of their areas of interest for future employment and training, and seeking to then match individuals up with opportunities they will value.

With regards the Talent and Aspiration Bank specifically, I am pleased to report that officers are currently working upon how to further resource this important project from within the Authority's, with the potential to roll out a comprehensive matching service in earnest after the Christmas break. I hope to be able to provide a more detail update on this initiative in the New Year.

Councillor Rufus Gilbert

Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery and Skills