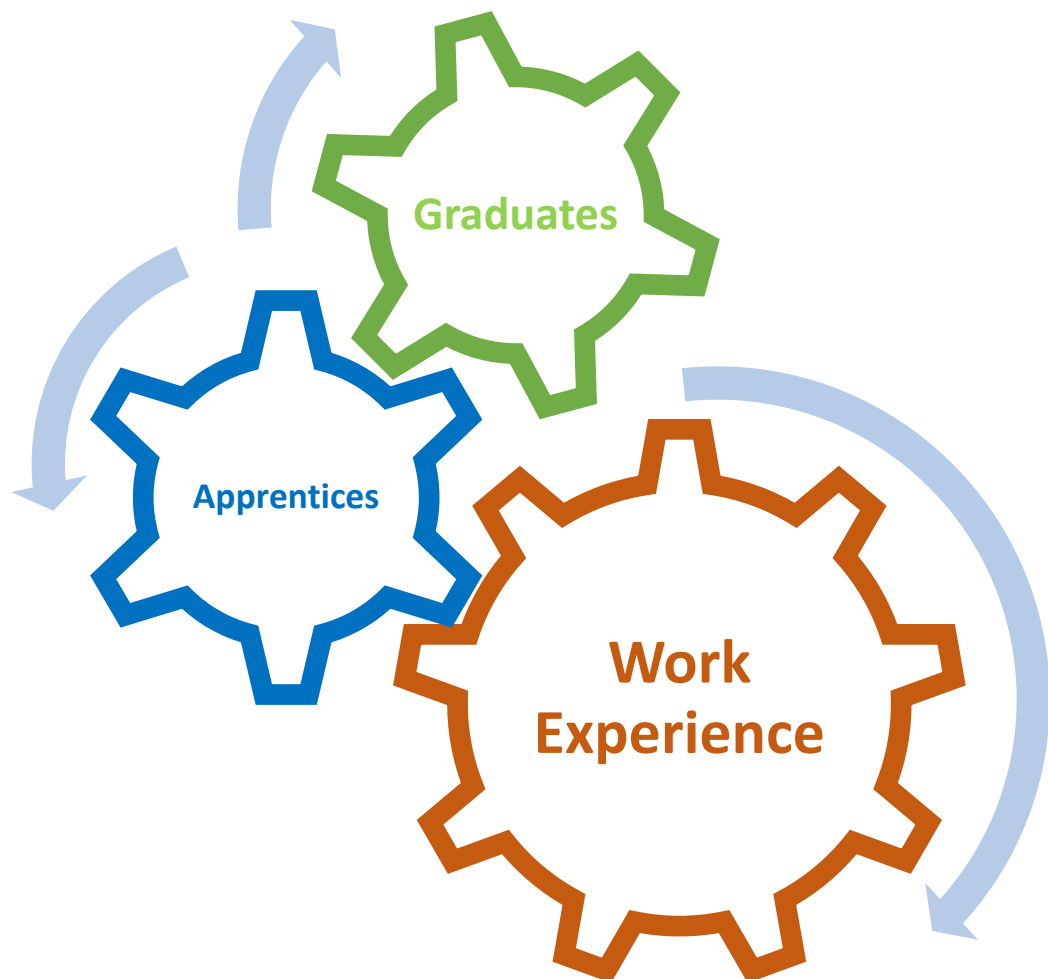


Work Ready Programme Report 2015-17



1 Overview

In April 2015 the Authority made an investment of £590k funding in the Work Ready Programme, which enabled the recruitment of 21 new apprentices and 10 graduates across all departments within a diverse range of roles, including trainee accountant, trainee solicitor, building cadet, business administration apprentice and trainee park ranger.

The organisation has benefitted by nurturing individuals who understand and fit in well with the values and culture of Carmarthenshire Council, while delivering against its corporate strategic aims and Welsh Government objectives [appendix A].

Our Work Ready Programme participants continue to deliver consistently high quality results both in work and academically [appendix B]. Most recently, the project team collaborated with students from Coleg Sir Gar to develop a qualitative evaluation of the programme in video format, highlighting the real life benefits for both participants and their managers [<https://vimeo.com/200872570> password SB2017].

At the planned level of expenditure it is projected that there will be a balance of **£128k** available at the end of the financial year 2016-2017.

The following presents a proposal to continue with the delivery of the Work Ready programme using this existing funding supplemented by £ 505,214 to secure development of the project over the next 2 years.

- **Work Experience** – to continue Work Experience placements of up to 1 month with further development of longer term placements and the facilitation of volunteering.
- **Apprentices** – to fund at least two level 2, 3, 4 or 5 apprentice per department corporately [aligned with departmental workforce plans] and to continue to support all departmentally funded Apprentices.
- **Graduates** – to fund and support at least one graduate per department [aligned with workforce plans], and to continue to support any departmentally funded graduates.

Expenditure [2 Years]	£	£
WRL Coordinator [2 years] including on-costs & mileage estimate	79,200	
10 Apprentices – SP 14 [incl on-costs] [estimated on Level 5, 18 month contracts]	307,800	
1 Apprentice @ 12k [incl on-costs] [additional apprentice as Work Ready resource] [estimated on Level 2 or 3]	22,500	
5 Graduates – SP 18 [incl on-costs] [2 year contracts]	223,714	
Total		633,214
Funding		
Current Funding		128,000
Additional Funding Required		505,214

2.0 Future Progress

2.1 Workforce Planning

Labour market changes drive organisational change and political and economic factors will have a strong influence on service demand and therefore skills demand within the workplace. The evolution of our business means that we need the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. The Work Ready Programme has direct influence on this and can help ensure that we nurture and grow those skills in the places where it's needed most.

To ensure the Work Ready Programme grows and continues to deliver successful outcomes it is vital to continually improve and review the way in which it delivers opportunities to a wide range of people across a diverse range of career paths. Utilising innovative methods to engage with and develop our workforce is at the heart of Work Ready and the organisation which it operates within. The Work Ready project manager has already begun to engage at DMT level to discuss workforce plans and how the future funding of Work Ready might assist in succession planning by addressing skills gaps.

Whilst it seems unlikely that the impending apprenticeship levy will provide any new money for Welsh local government, it is vital that the Work Ready project team continue to link with local learning providers engaging with Welsh Government to facilitate the most efficient and appropriate means to accessing funding to develop our existing workforce as well as those who are recruited as part of Work Ready. An example of this is fully funded professional development for Human Resources, accessed regionally within a cross-organisational setting and a range of level 2, 3 & 5 Leadership and Management programmes available across the organisation.

2.2 Recruitment and Induction

Timely arrangement of funding will allow recruitment of apprentices and graduates to be effectively marketed at a key time of year. Research shows that "business as usual" months are optimum to source talent; this, coupled with school and university exam times means that May is the best time to market these opportunities. Appendix C shows a draft recruitment timetable which would enable employment to commence over the summer months, leading to qualifications starting in September 2017.

2.3 Apprentice Wages

Currently apprentices are paid just above the minimum apprentice wage £3.70 per hour [£7298 per annum] for the first year of their employment, regardless of their age. Project staff have carried out a review of apprentice wages in neighbouring public and private sector organisations and have found that salaries offered there are more competitive, as shown below.

Organisation	Role	Salary
Carmarthenshire Council	Apprentice Level 2 or 3	£7,298
Tata Steel, Port Talbot	Apprentice Level 2	£12,000
Ladbrokes, Caerphilly	Customer Serv Level 2	£13,371
Bridgend Council	Apprentice Level 2	£13,871
Greenhill School, Pembs	Business Admin Level 2	£14,615
Cardiff University	Business Admin Level 2	£14,599

This restricts the project in terms of retention and recruitment of apprentices. Apprentice application numbers and quality of candidates has declined over the last two years. During this period there has been an increase in the number of apprenticeship opportunities in the area which may account for this.

In addition, apprentices often move on to new jobs with better pay early in their apprenticeship. This is more prevalent in those who are living independently of their families and therefore have greater financial demands to meet such as rent or mortgage and bills. For example, since the start of the project 9 apprentices have moved on to other roles during the first 12 months. Using the CIPD industry average cost of replacing an employee (£4,333) there are potential losses of £38,997 that could be improved by reviewing the salaries for these individuals.

In April 2017 the National Living Wage for over 25s will increase to £7.50 an hour. One of the advantages of the Work Ready Programme over other apprenticeship schemes is that it is not limited by age. Since the programme commenced, several of our apprentices have been over 25, therefore earning significantly less than the living wage.

2.4 Sustainability of the Programme

The project is almost in its 6th year of operating and has demonstrated exponential success year on year. During that time the Work Based Learning Co-ordinator who undertakes the day to day running of the project has occupied a funded post on a 2 year contract basis. The potential longevity of the project demonstrates the need for this post to be established on a permanent basis.

The establishment of an accredited centre internally or the provision of accredited learning would provide an potential income stream which could assist in the sustainability of the programme and further raise the profile of Work Ready as an innovative provider of work based learning opportunities.

The establishment of the post will support the Welsh Government's aim to create 100,000 apprenticeships over the next 5 years and also the wider objective to deliver higher skills, including professional and technical, by 2020. Within Carmarthenshire these skills will be critical in light of the digital agenda e.g. the City Deal project. Also of relevance is the 2016 Enterprise Act where at least 2.3% of the workforce in Public Bodies should be made up of apprentices. While this doesn't apply to Welsh Local Authorities it acts as a benchmark for public sector bodies everywhere and further establishes apprenticeships as a benefit to employers as an essential way to retain and nurture talent.

3.0 Recommendations

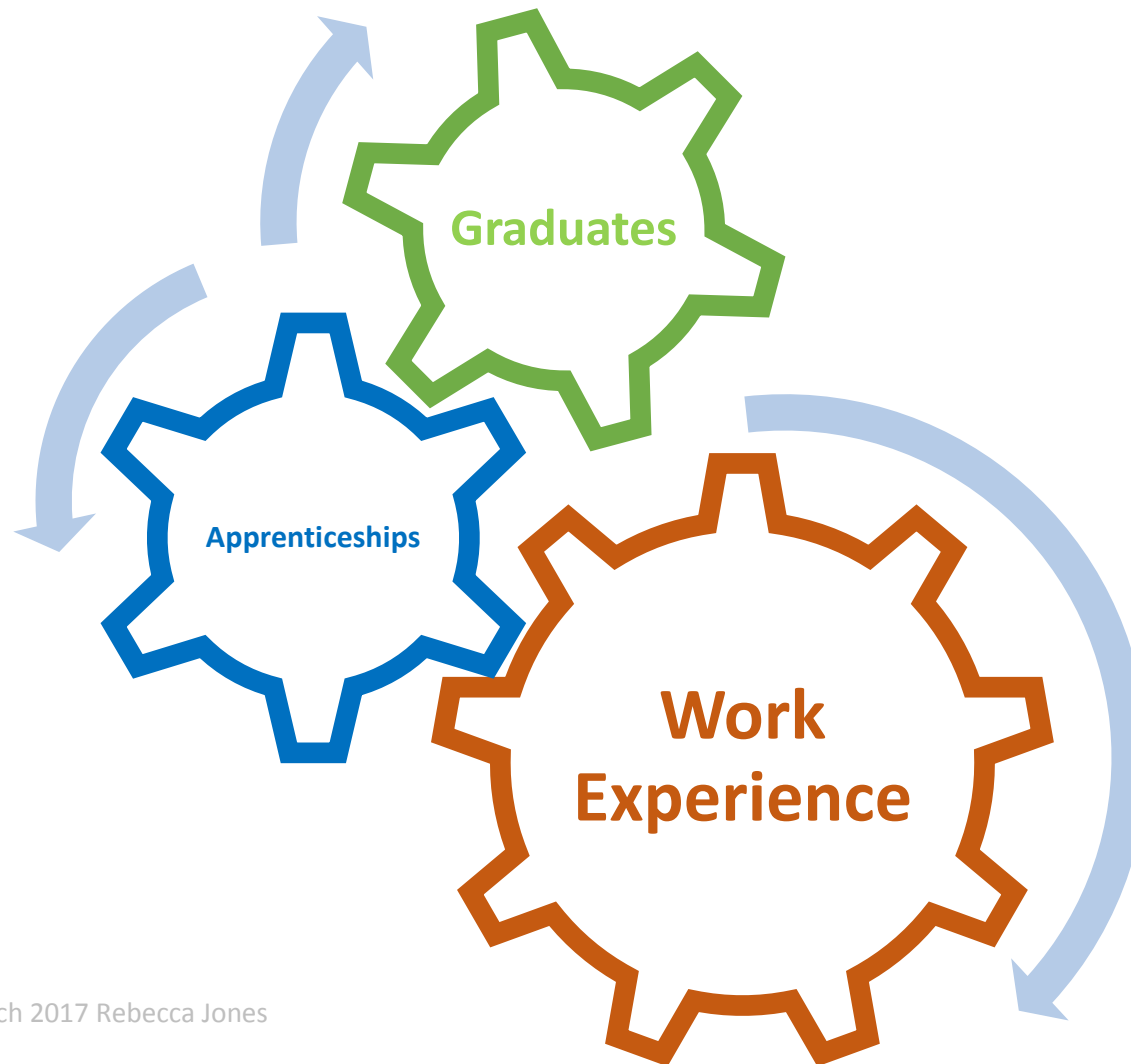
- Via workforce planning, map out current and future skills needs and identify areas of future recruitment demand and allocate resources to support these opportunities.
- Work closely with departments' workforce plans to facilitate multi-level development amongst existing employees by accessing funding available from Welsh Government.
- Continually develop people to ensure our workforce is highly skilled and supported through employees' early career within CCC, maximising potential funding streams.
- Increase apprentice salary to £12k per annum; the costed model might mean the employment of less staff but represents more effective use of the investment.
- Implement a comprehensive recruitment strategy to include social media marketing campaign.
- Ensure sustainability of the project by supporting funding for the post of Work Based Learning Coordinator.
- Explore regional expansion opportunities with a view to offering the Work Ready Programme to neighbouring local authorities, thereby reducing costs and providing opportunities for collaboration.

Work Ready Programme: Positive Business Impacts

Carmarthenshire has a stronger and more prosperous economy

Creating jobs and growth throughout the County

Developing training and learning opportunities for local people



Supporting Welsh Government target to create 100,000 apprenticeships in next 5 years

Assisting in the implementation of an integrated workforce plan that supports the Council's strategic objectives.

Providing better outcomes for our residents through appropriate recruitment and development of Work Ready staff

Progress and Achievements

Work Experience	Apprenticeships	Graduate Trainees
Over 650 work placements delivered under the project against a target of 300	50 Apprentices have been employed to date	21 Graduate Trainees employed to date
Engagement with Carmarthenshire Youth Council enabled improvements to be made to the application process, increasing access and inclusion to the target audience.	In 2016 an apprentice was awarded Level 3 'Apprentice of the Year' with Coleg Sir Gar and went on to secure permanent employment within our workforce	100% of graduates recruited with 2013-15 funding have secured employment following completion of the programme. Further development is needed to retain this talent within the organisation.
A wealth of evidence exists where individuals have progressed from work experience to apprenticeships or the graduate programme, then moving onto permanent jobs – demonstrating the economic benefits of the programme for the organisation and Carmarthenshire County	Over 90% of our current apprentices and recruited with 2013-15 funding, and several from the current cohort have either already secured permanent employment internally or moved into other roles outside the authority	Graduates are currently taking part in a secondment programme with the TIC team to increase their wider organisational knowledge as well as gain experience of working on larger scale projects, supporting the delivery of a key corporate initiative. This will form an integral part of the graduates' structured CPD programme in future.
	Implemented a new assessment process for level 1 literacy and numeracy, removing barriers to recruitment for those without GCSEs	
Innovative methods of engaging with young people on the theme of work experience have been implemented including delivering work experience sessions within personal social education lessons	Apprentices shadowed members of the Executive Board to gain knowledge and understanding of the political process	The graduate scheme has enabled us to retain talent within Carmarthenshire in key roles, developing future leaders effectively
Collaboration between Work Ready staff and Coleg SirGar students led to the creation of a showcase video of Work Ready, highlighting the benefits of the programme for participants and the organisation [https://vimeo.com/200872570 password SB2017].		