

Local Authorities' Role in Promoting Apprenticeships - LGA Briefing

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Key Messages

Councils across the country are taking decisive and innovative action to ensure that young people have the experience and skills that they need to kick-start their careers.

As well as offering career advice and actively encouraging others to take on apprentices, in **January 2009 the local government sector pledged to double the number of apprenticeships being offered from 7,500 to 15,000 as part of the Government's target for 35,000 new apprenticeships nationwide.**

The apprenticeships are open across all the 800 services councils provide to their local residents. They offer an insight into careers in business and administration, customer service, health and social care, warehousing, hospitality and catering, and early years childcare amongst many others.

Background

The current economic climate has seen councils working harder than ever to support local people and to combat rising levels of unemployment. **Nearly five out of six councils have set targets to reduce the numbers of 16-18-year-olds not in employment, education or training.** 83% of councils have a target to improve residents' skills and 89% have at least one target to increase employment.

As part of the drive to increase employment and to help local people into careers, local councils are:

- Taking on their own apprentices.
- Encouraging the businesses they procure services from to take on apprentices
- Offering advice, support and encouragement to local businesses in taking on their own apprentices

Case Studies

- **Knowsley Council** is screening potential apprentices for local businesses and ensuring they have the right selection of skills for the businesses who might wish to take them on. The Council advertises this "talent pool", matches up local businesses to individual apprentices, and then subsidises the cost of training the apprentice. The council has a dedicated team offering advice and guidance to the businesses and apprentices on getting everything possible out of these excellent opportunities.
- **Westminster City Council** has set up the country's first apprenticeship company. The company directly employs and trains apprentices before subcontracting them out to businesses across London. The company, which is aimed at 16-25 year olds but open to other people facing long-term unemployment, currently supports more than 250 apprenticeships in a range of sectors including health, creative, hospitality, retail, construction, leisure and financial services. This number is expected to rise to at least 1,600 by 2014.
- **Kent County Council** established a 14-24 Innovation Unit which focuses on developing the skills of young people and offering them career guidance. This directly led to an 11% drop in the number of unemployed young people in a 12 month period. The Council itself has taken on 250 apprentices.

For more information on this briefing and on the case studies please contact Nathan Stower on 0207 664 3226 or at Nathan.stower@lga.gov.uk