

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 3rd December 2020
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WARD(S): All

PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

SLOUGH ACADEMY

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide an overview of the Slough Academy, addressing the following:-

- The journey from the previous apprenticeship approach
- How residents and young people in particular can access apprenticeships?
- What support is provided to ensure our young people are well placed to secure apprenticeships with the council?
- How we ensure that the Academy plays its part as a corporate parent in supporting CLA / LC young people in securing apprenticeships with the council?

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Committee is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

The [Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy](#) (SJWS) is the document that details the priorities agreed for Slough with partner organisations. The SJWS has been developed using a comprehensive evidence base that includes the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The SJWS and the JSNA set out that the responsibility for delivering against these objectives sits within Young People Services.

3a. **Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

This report is for information only.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Slough Academy supports the Five Year Plan as follows.

- Outcome 1: Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.

The Slough Academy offers apprenticeships opportunities to SBC employees and the wider Slough community, as appropriate. By creating development opportunities we will attract new talent, grow our own and increase retention.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial cost implications.
Savings will be achieved as a result of training costs drawn from the Apprenticeship Levy rather than the council training budget.

(b) Risk Management

This report is for information only – no risks associated.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

This report is for information only – no human rights or legal implications associated.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

This report is for information only – no assessment as to the impact of the proposal/policy on race, gender and disability groups required.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The journey from the previous apprenticeship approach

From the end of 2018 the Council had two apprenticeship schemes in place which were Business and Administration apprenticeships targeting school leavers aged 16-18 and Youth Work Apprentices targeting young people 18-25.

There was an emphasis on supporting young people to apply and secure the apprenticeship opportunities.

In the summer of 2018 the Council changed its approach to apprenticeships in line with the newly introduced Apprenticeship Levy. It was felt that the above approach to apprenticeships whilst being good and admirable things to do, were not designed to meet business needs and were not compliant with the new levy requirements.

In order to meet the requirements of the Apprenticeship Levy and meet the business needs of the Council, the Slough Academy was established.

The Slough Academy is the council's new approach to growing and developing our staff to help build a stable and successful workforce that will serve our residents in the best possible way. It provides targeted learning and developing skills and capabilities to meet our business needs and creates opportunities for continuous professional development that not only increases capacity but also helps retain talent.

It is fully embedded in our five year plan and will ensure we have the right skills in our workforce for the future.

The roll-out of The Slough Academy is being delivered over three phases. The first phase is apprenticeships. Government apprenticeship reforms means there is money available to us to offer new apprenticeship opportunities to our existing staff and attract new talent to the organisation.

Apprenticeships have been broadened and are now available to a wider age group. Our current Apprentice ages range from 17 – 58 and we run over 25 different apprenticeship programmes across 4 directorates.

The Slough Academy works with our business stakeholders to identify career paths and link these to apprenticeship standards. Together they create viable opportunities which will add value to the service and organisation.

A business case for the apprenticeship is developed and must be approved by the Slough Academy Board (a representative group made up of Service Leads and presided over by the Director of Finance and Resources) before we can recruit.

Apprenticeship Achievements:-

- Completed successfully = 10
- In Flight = 27
- Pending = 19

Apprenticeship Statistics:-

- Apprenticeships vs Government Target – 2% vs 2.3%
- Apprentices who are Slough residents = 75%
- BAME Apprentices = 65%
- Apprentices (with disclosed learning disability) = 3%
- CLA/LA = 0%
- Apprentice Gender Split = 69 Female / 31 Male

Phase two will be about continuous professional development, which will help to grow and nurture our staff.

Phase three looks at succession planning – ensuring we have the right skills and talent in the organisation for the future.

5.2 How residents and young people in particular can access apprenticeships

The Slough Academy promotes and offers apprenticeship opportunities internally first and then advertises them externally in line with our recruitment policy.

We also promote these opportunities with our partners including the Slough Children's Trust, Young People Service, Adults and Communities, The Link (schools website), Job Centre Plus, Local Slough Youth Parliament, Slough Jobs Club, Further Education establishments, Dominique Unsworth (Resource Productions) SE Young Apprentice Ambassador Champion, the Slough Business Community Partnership, Aik Saath, National Apprenticeship Service, local papers, social media and online.

We create recruitment job packs promoting Slough Borough Council as an employer of choice, providing potential applicants with details of the role and entry requirements.

Applications are reviewed and scored, with the candidates that meet the requirements shortlisted for interview. All interviews are conducted by a mixed panel from stakeholders and the Slough Academy to ensure that the recruitment process is fair.

5.3 What support is provided to ensure our young people are well placed to secure Apprenticeships with the council?

In order to help and encourage apprenticeships amongst our young people the Slough Academy have undertaken the following:-

- Delivered Apprenticeship Awareness sessions to schools heads
- Delivered Apprenticeship Awareness sessions to 14 – 16 year olds as part of the schools drive to raise different career choices and paths
- Created an Apprenticeship site on the Schools hub
- Promoted Apprenticeships at local career fairs
- Promoted Apprenticeships with our partner Osborne
- Using social media to advertise and promote Apprenticeship opportunities
- Run Apprenticeship roadshows at different sites across the council to promote Apprenticeships to staff
- Created the Slough Academy website, including a variety of support material including videos to promote apprenticeships, featuring a range of different apprentice age groups
- Developed Slough Academy Champions in all service areas to encourage staff to consider Apprenticeships as a career path
- Vacancies advertised on the National Apprenticeship website

5.4 How we ensure that the Slough Academy plays its part as a corporate parent in supporting CLA /LC young people in securing apprenticeships with the council.

The Children's Trust and the Councils Youth Service are best placed to support young people in care / leaving care to apply for and secure an apprenticeship.

The Council and its key partners including SCST has recently reviewed and refreshed its Education, Employment and Training Plan for young people in Care or Leaving Care. This has recently been adopted by the Joint Parenting Panel.

A dedicated team within the Council supports all young people who are Not in Education, Employment and or Training, this team includes a dedicated member of staff supporting young people looked after / leaving care.

An operational and strategic group is in place that regularly meets to ensure that our work in supporting young people in care / leaving care to secure EET opportunities is robust and continues to improve.

The Council has recently launched its Inclusive Growth and Skills Strategy as part of the work related to this will be to ensure that the pathways to secure and sustain meaningful opportunities for our young people in care / leaving care are realised.

In the past the Business & Administration Apprenticeships had an annual cohort of 20 young people, with about 2 or 3 participants a year coming from a care background in Slough.

In both cases whilst significant pre-apprentice and ongoing apprenticeship support was provided the vast majority of young people on the scheme from within the care system did not successfully complete the apprenticeship.

The Apprenticeships that we require in the council now are not business and administration, but are related to professional paths.

Vacancy	Level	No. of applications	No. of posts	No. of applicants CLA	Outcome
Assistant Activities Co-ordinator	2	25	2	1 (Slough)	Interviewed and offer made. Worked with SCST to assist applicant. Failed DBS.
Early Years	2	35	6	0	
Project Co-ordinator	4	35	1	0	
Corporate Complaints Officer	2	37	1	1 (Non-Slough)	Applicant did not meet the minimum requirements for the programme – not shortlisted.
Civil Engineering Technician	3	Out To Advert 16/10/20	1	TBA	TBA

The Slough Academy will continue to promote and offer apprenticeship opportunities to CLA /LC young people, through our existing networks and partners.

6. Comments of Other Committees

Not Applicable.

7. Conclusion

The Slough Academy's remit is to continue to develop and offer business driven apprenticeship opportunities within the council and recruit new talent into the organisation where appropriate.

We will continue to promote external opportunities with related services and partners.

Evaluation of apprenticeships in Slough show:-

- 75% of learners are more likely to stay with SBC
- 88% of learners more confident to apply for promotion or new position
- 100% of learners develop transferable skills
- Learners demonstrate improved decision making and compliance

- Significant cost savings on training budget

The Slough Academy is a critical component in driving forward effective workforce development in Slough Borough Council by:

- recruiting fresh talent/new apprentices
- implementing career paths in each service
- developing our people, increasing capability and performance
- creating succession planning, promote from within
- reducing both training and external recruitment costs
- contributing to the replacement of expensive contractors

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Apprenticeship Success Article

9. **Background Papers**

None.

Appendix A - Apprenticeship Success Article

Something To Celebrate!

Congratulations to our apprentices from Adult Social Care, who have all successfully completed their Level 3 Lead Adult Care Worker Apprenticeships – achieving not just a pass but a MERIT!

They were the first group of Slough Academy Apprentices to start training and go through the new final End Point Assessment. The End Point Assessment had two parts:

- An examination on all elements of the programme.
- A face to face professional discussion (Q&A) with the assessor, where Apprentices provided evidence of how they had applied what they had learned in the workplace.

Being the first cohort was never going to be easy – and they faced a number of challenges along the way, right up to the end with the outbreak of Covid-19 .

Despite this, they worked hard, persevered and achieved their Apprenticeships with a fantastic result.

They are a great example of how you can develop your skills and start on a career path at Slough Borough Council.

Reflecting back on their achievement our Apprentices said:

“This was a great path to continuous professional development. My perspective in health and social care has changed moving forward and as a result I will remain a reflective practitioner throughout my career.”

“Looking forward to implementing all that I learnt once the Lockdown period is over.”

“Being selected to complete this apprenticeship made us feel valued and the encouragement we received from colleagues and management has been incredible.”

“We enjoyed putting the knowledge we learnt into practise and the opportunity to learn more about leadership has opened the doors to progress into management roles in the future.”

Like all major successes, these achievements also require the support of a team of people behind them.

A massive thank you to all the managers involved in supporting our learners with their mock assessments and test preparations.

A big thank you also to our Apprenticeship Specialist for all the hard work in coordinating the Apprenticeship programme and support around it from start to finish.

Surjit Nagra, People Service Lead, said: “The Slough Academy is all about growing our own talent and developing our staff. Apprenticeships are open to staff of any age and length of service, and they come at many different levels – including degree or post-graduate level. So if you’d like to be one of the Apprentices of the future, or you’re a manager and think your service area could benefit from offering Apprenticeships, please look at the Slough Academy pages on insite or talk to your Slough Academy champion to find out more.

“This is a fantastic achievement – a huge well done to everyone involved.
Congratulations!”