

Press Release

GROUNDBREAKING CIVIL SERVICE APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME IS LAUNCHED

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A groundbreaking new scheme has been launched in the South West to introduce Apprenticeships into the Civil Service.

Five current Civil Service employees from a variety of different organisations and departments have been selected to do the first course, in Business Administration, which is currently being piloted by City of Bristol College.

The aim of the Apprenticeship is not only to develop individual skills but also to share knowledge, ideas and best practice across the whole of the Civil Service.

To achieve that, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has been working closely with Civil Service South West (CSSW) to develop the scheme. Thanks to a high level of cooperation and the enthusiasm of all those involved, it has taken just six months to choose and start training the first learners.

“Everyone has worked really hard to make this happen,” said Geri Bowie, Employer Services Manager for NAS. “The Apprenticeship programme is designed to produce qualified, flexible staff who are not only trained in the skills their employers need in the workplace but who also have a very good understanding of how the wider government operates.”

The first apprentices come from Government Office for the South West (GOSW), the Health and Safety Executive and the Planning Portal. ACAS has also expressed a keen interest in the scheme. The Apprenticeship began in October and all those selected to take part either wanted to develop their work skills or had been identified by managers.

The Apprenticeship will lead to nationally recognised qualifications that can be used in other jobs as well - including an NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration, technical qualification EDI Level 3, a certificate in Business Administration and Key Skills (Communication Level 2 and Application of Number Level 2).

Claire Arbery, Contracts Manager at City of Bristol College, said: “The new scheme is the latest in a number of public sector Apprenticeship programmes to be delivered by the college. The benefits of an Apprenticeship for both the student and the

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employer are many, including increased staff retention and motivation.”

Apprentice, Fae Davis, 29, of Bristol, a Programme Support Office in the Planning Portal, said: “The idea of learning whilst working really appealed to me. The training relates to my current job and will give me a nationally recognised qualification. I was initially hesitant but I’m learning so much. It’s helping me in the workplace and I’m really enjoying it.”

Fae, like her course colleagues, is regularly visited by a personal tutor, who assesses her progress and together they organise an action plan geared towards completing the Apprenticeship in 12 to 18 months. The apprentices will also be offered the opportunity of attending group workshops and undertaking projects to help with their studies.

Paul Sysum, 41, of Chippenham, works in the Regional Parliamentary and Private Office of GOSW. He said: “I wanted to do this Apprenticeship to improve my personal development. It will give me a better understanding of my role within the Civil Service and that, in turn, will help me do my job better.”

Heather Milsom, 24, from Bristol, works as a personal assistant in GOSW. She, too, is confident and positive about the benefits of the training.

She said: “I have always wanted to become an apprentice but there wasn’t the opportunity when I left school. I’m really pleased to be doing this now.”

Sally Carter, 42, from Bristol, works with the Health and Safety Executive and was equally enthusiastic.

She said: “I wanted to further my career and qualifications, plus it’s a new challenge. I believe it will benefit me both personally and in the workplace and so will also benefit my employer. I also really like the flexibility of the course and the fact it is tailored to suit my specific role in the office.”

John Chudley, South West Director for NAS, said: “Apprenticeships are seen as an increasingly important career route. Not only do they provide an opportunity to earn whilst learning, they also help develop self-confidence, a sense of purpose and enable people to develop their career.

“From the point of view of the public sector, Apprenticeships represent a golden opportunity to ‘grow their own talent’ to the benefit of the organisation as a whole. I congratulate everyone involved in bringing this scheme to fruition in such a short time and look forward to seeing it rolled out to other areas of the South West in the very near future.”

ENDS

Photos

04: The new Civil Service apprentices (l to r): Fae Davis, Heather Milsom, Paul Sysum, Helen Chard and Sally Carter

Notes to editors

Further information from: Sue Bradbury (NAS public relations) on 01872 863863.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS will assume total responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system. This online system enables individuals to search and apply for live vacancies and allows employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants.

The service has ultimate accountability for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for Apprenticeship places. It will act to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assume responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.