

Press Release

APPRENTICESHIPS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

Date of issue 25 November 2009

Taking on 30 apprentices as part of a National Apprentice Service (NAS) scheme has proved successful and extremely beneficial according to Swindon Borough Council.

Not only have the apprentices gained from the training but the employers have also benefited from their contribution.

Working with strategic partners, the council placed candidates in a variety of public service roles during the last year. These included business administration, IT, health and social care, youth work, amenity horticulture, plumbing, electrical installation, childcare and early years.

Since completing the training one of the apprentices has been offered a permanent job and several others of the original 30 have had their contracts extended for another year in order to achieve their Advanced Apprenticeship.

Group Director Business Transformation at Swindon Borough Council, Hitesh Patel, said:

“We took on six apprentices in the Council’s Business Transformation Group. It was heartening to see each young person growing in confidence, developing real skills by doing real work, gaining qualifications and making a real and positive contribution to the work that my group does. It’s taken time and commitment from my managers and the teams that host Apprenticeships but I think that investment has been well worthwhile.”

Helen Morgan, Desktop Services Operations Manager said of her IT apprentice, Josh:

“From the moment he joined our team he was a true asset and received a number of compliments on his excellent work ethic from work colleagues and customers. He was keen to learn and not afraid to ask questions which helped him progress quickly

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in his role.”

Sinead Popowicz, now 18, was offered a 12 month Apprenticeship in Swindon Borough Council’s Human Resources department.

She said: “I chose an Apprenticeship so I could gain qualifications while working in a learning environment. That’s exactly what I got! I have had such a wide variety of jobs to do in a short space of time. I have learnt new communication skills and achieved an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration within 6 months of starting work. The Apprenticeship has given me confidence and now I don’t have to fear starting full time work later in life. On completing my NVQ 2 I would love to continue learning and gain an NVQ Level 3.”

Phillip Monger’s Apprenticeship involved working both at a residential care home for the elderly and a day care centre for people with physical disabilities. Phillip said the placements had taught him an enormous amount about the work of Adult Services and given him a totally different perspective on life.

He said: “I believe that both my individual and team communication skills have improved greatly. I have had the opportunity to attend a number of courses I needed to do the job and I hope to attend a lot more to enhance my skills in the future. Those I have already completed include Mental Capacity, Emergency First Aid, Moving and Handling, Infection Control, Staff Induction, Medication in Care Homes, Vulnerable Adults, Death, Dying and Bereavement.”

Swindon Borough Council has been so impressed with the positive aspects of placing apprentices it is continuing its relationship with the National Apprenticeship Service and actively encouraging more council organisations to take on and enjoy the benefits of apprentices.

John Chudley, South West Director of the National Apprenticeship Service, said: “I am delighted that Swindon Borough Council recognises the huge benefits that apprentices bring to public sector organisations. Apprenticeships are an excellent way for employers to ‘grow their own talent’, thereby maintaining skills and increasing productivity.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

A table giving a full breakdown of where apprentices are being put in place is attached with this press release.

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.