

## **Pre-apprenticeship Scheme – Overview**

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is reporting that increasing numbers of Southampton apprenticeship vacancies advertised on its website are not being filled. Meanwhile, NEET young people in the city are unable to access Apprenticeship opportunities due to low literacy and numeracy achievement, and are also not engaging in further education due to lack of financial support.

The Council is introducing a new Pre-apprenticeship pilot, aiming to address youth unemployment in Southampton by improving the take up of apprenticeships by NEET young people. The pilot will initially create 40 opportunities in the five month period November 2012 – March 2013, combining vocational work experience, a placement allowance and accredited literacy and numeracy courses, to create a new Apprenticeship pathway.

The pilot will be delivered in partnership with Wearsheaf Trust and existing Apprenticeship providers across the city. Wearsheaf is the main contract holder for ESF NEET delivery in Southampton (Phase 2 project) and is able to draw funding for any young people progressing into work. Phase 2 progressions are currently low with 14 young people moving into employment with training from 183 starts. The Pre-apprenticeship placement funding will increase the progression rate and Wearsheaf will utilise the additional ESF funding to provide administration for the pilot.

The pilot will offer a wide range of vocational placements for NEET young people across private, public and voluntary sectors. Apprenticeship providers in Southampton will identify and broker placements with employers already engaged in Apprenticeships, with priority to support SMEs and focus on key sectors such as construction, marine, retail and hospitality. The providers can draw from existing Education Funding Agency (EFA) budgets for this brokerage service and will also gain additional apprenticeship training for any young people that progress. Pre-apprenticeship placements will also be identified through the council's S106 Employment and Skills Plans for major developments in the city.

Placements will be 26 weeks in duration, 30 hours per week including day release for literacy/numeracy and vocational skills training. Young people will receive a placement allowance of £2,067, broken down as £79.50 per week to cover travel, subsistence, materials and sundries. The allowance will be fully funded by mini budget and PUSH allocations and will be procured to Wearsheaf via the council's Employment and Skills services Framework.

The Pre-apprenticeship pilot will be evaluated at the end of the five month period, in relation to overall progressions for NEET young people and impact on other council programmes including Troubled Families and Estate Regeneration socio-economic targets.

16 young people have started a pre apprenticeship placement to date across the retail, construction and hospitality sectors. The initial cohorts of retail placements are due to come to an end soon and we are working with them to identify suitable progression opportunities.