
Breaking down barriers to apprenticeship

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Introduction

The Minister for Education and Skills, in his annual remit letter for 2013-2014, asked Estyn to carry out a two-year review into barriers to apprenticeships, arising from any difficulties experienced by learners from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and those with disabilities, when entering apprenticeship programmes.

Estyn published the first of two reports in November 2014. The report identifies the barriers that prevent learners from BME communities and those with disabilities from engaging in apprenticeship programmes. The barriers include:

- lack of awareness of apprenticeships by parents, employers and learners themselves
- few apprenticeship role models from the BME communities or from disabled groups
- difficulties in finding suitable work placements, especially where employers believe there will be a need to provide additional support for learners
- real or perceived discrimination
- language difficulties for students for whom English is an additional language and cultural differences
- available support for learners not being accessed or fully utilised
- parental anxiety that the young people may not be able to cope
- insufficient co-ordination between schools, employers, work-based learning (WBL) providers and local community organisations to promote apprenticeships

The report also identified that, although the majority of providers have good arrangements to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, they are unable to show that this translates into measurable improvement in reducing barriers or stereotyping.

This second report builds on the work undertaken in the first report. It identifies examples of good practice in promoting diversity in apprenticeships, with a focus on young people from BME communities and young people with disabilities, as well as identifying good practice examples of joint working between providers, employers and communities to achieve diversity in apprenticeships.

As part of this review, inspectors collected and evaluated a range of information. They sought information from WBL providers, employers and learners, and attended a number of national conferences to gain the views of as many interested parties as possible. The case studies within this report are used with the agreement of the individuals involved.

The intention of this report is to inform the further development of the Welsh Government's equality and diversity guidance for WBL providers and to disseminate good practice case studies across the WBL network.

Background

In February 2012, following the introduction of the new Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Government published guidance to WBL providers on how they should address equality and diversity issues. The way in which providers address this element of the programme specification formed part of their tender documentation for the 2015-2016 contract allocation.

Alongside Estyn's work, the Welsh Government has carried out a campaign to identify areas of good practice. The findings from this campaign will be published and disseminated across Wales. Part of the campaign was to hold two "Real Conversation" events, one in South Wales and one in North Wales, where young people, employers and other professionals discussed any engagement and participation barriers faced by particular learning groups, and how to overcome such perceptions. This report takes into account many of the discussion points raised at the Real Conversation event and highlights where good practice is taking place.

Learners with disabilities

- 1 In Wales, learners are asked to self-declare as having a disability which impacts on their ability to learn and/or use facilities of a kind generally supplied by the learning provider. This information is recorded on the Welsh Government's Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). In 2009-2010, the percentage of all WBL learners who declared a disability was 2.2%, rising to 2.7% in 2012-2013. Recently published statistics for 2013-2014 show that this percentage has fallen slightly to 2.4%, (Welsh Government, 2015).
- 2 In 2012-2013, the percentage of apprentices who declared a disability was 1.3%. This figure excludes learners on Traineeships (training programmes for 16 to 17-year-olds who are not in work or college) and Steps to Employment / Work Ready (for people aged 18 and over who are in receipt of benefits). The figure was the same for 2013-2014.
- 3 There will be many reasons why there is a smaller proportion of apprentices than learners who declare a disability. Possible reasons include learners who do not progress to apprenticeships from engagement and Level 1 programmes, or learners who no longer declare a disability when entering an apprenticeship. However, progression tracking information for learners who declare a disability is not available and it is not possible to explore the disparity further.

What are the perceived barriers?

- 4 At an event held by Learning Disability Wales in July 2014, called "What works in Wales", delegates were asked what they felt were the barriers faced by people with a learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) when entering work-based learning. They also suggested possible ways to improve work-based training and routes into employment for people with a learning disability or ASD.
- 5 The barriers identified can be grouped into four areas, related to the job, employer, employee and support. Difficulties exist around the nature of the jobs offered, the location of the company and transport. A minority of delegates felt that the jobs offered were not appropriate for them. Delegates reported that employers had a lack of understanding of the needs of disabled employees and were not fully aware of the financial support that is available to them.
- 6 Employee-related barriers identified include the low level of self-belief, lack of aspiration, low skills levels of potential learners, lack of knowledge about the support available to them, lack of parent and carer aspirations and previous poor experiences. Support-related barriers include inaccessible JobCentre services and a complicated benefits system.
- 7 These perceived barriers are similar to those identified in Estyn's (2014) first report. They are also in line with those identified in the Real Conversation held in 2015. A recent report 'Able, ready to work and deaf', (Boyce, 2015), which questions the issues faced by people who are deaf or have hearing loss when in work or looking for work, also identified similar issues.

What support is available to learners with a disability or learning need?

- 8 Additional Learning Support (ALS) funding from the Welsh Government is available where a learner has a learning difficulty or disability and needs additional support to achieve their programme. This support is available to providers where learners meet criteria set out in Welsh Government guidance, and is subject to audit. A minority of providers report that accessing this funding is time-consuming and burdensome.
- 9 Non-devolved programmes are also available to support people whose health or disability affects their work, including for example the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) "Access to Work" grant scheme. This scheme aims to provide practical advice and support to disabled people and their employers in order to overcome work-related obstacles that result from disability. Grants are available to people who are aged 16 or over and are about to start a job or work trial or are in a paid job or self-employed.
- 10 At the Real Conversation event, feedback from delegates was that young people do not know enough about what support is available to them. They also felt that Job Centres should be more proactive in letting employers know what is available to them prior to any interviews. This feedback is supported by Estyn's evidence collected during inspections and survey visits. This lack of employer knowledge is also discussed in Boyce's (2015) report, which suggests that deaf people feel that they have to hide their condition on job applications, because of discrimination. The report also highlights that nearly half of its respondents were not aware of the Access to Work Scheme.

What are WBL providers doing to break down barriers for learners with disabilities?

- 11 For young learners with a disability, the first step to employment can often be entry level programmes. These programmes aim to give learners the skills they need to get a job or progress to learning at a higher level, such as an apprenticeship or into further education. However, generally the providers' role in breaking down barriers is not established well enough and there are insufficient links between the work of external agencies, employers and providers.

Case study 1: Futureworks, Pembrokeshire

Context:

Futureworks is a WBL provider which works in partnership with Employment Training, City & County of Swansea to deliver Traineeship Engagement and Level 1 programmes. The case study below highlights how these programmes can help learners with disabilities to progress successfully.

Strategy:

Learner A was referred to Futureworks as having both medical and emotional needs requiring a high level of support. Learner A has a wide range of medical conditions

and problems, which include moderate learning difficulties and anxiety. He is involved actively with six different medical professionals and services. Learner A's health problems have an effect on his day-to-day life, and his ability to complete everyday tasks such as using a keyboard or opening a door is difficult.

Action:

While at school, Learner A took part in work experience for one-day per week at a local holiday park. Futureworks contacted the park ranger to discuss possible future learning opportunities. It was agreed that the Learner A could be enrolled initially on a Futureworks Traineeship Engagement programme, where he would be based at the holiday park for three days a week. It was also agreed that the park ranger, Learner A and his training adviser would meet regularly to discuss progress, Learner A's general welfare and the most suitable learning activities going forward.

Outcomes:

Following this successful Traineeship Engagement programme, it was agreed that Learner A would progress to Level 1 learning. Further support was provided to Learner A by Futureworks as he studied for his Level 1 Horticulture NVQ. Futureworks and Learner A are now exploring further learning opportunities.

How do supported employment services break down barriers?

- 12 Across the sector, work is undertaken by supported employment agencies, who operate within the mainstream employment market to support people with disabilities who are looking for paid employment. At the same time, these agencies support potential employers and their existing employees to adopt and adapt practices to integrate clients with disabilities into their workforce on equal terms to their colleagues.
- 13 An example of this type of working is Action on Hearing Loss Cymru. Building on the work highlighted in their recent report, from September 2015 they will provide a Specialist Employment Service to clients in Wales who are deaf or have hearing loss, and who need support to get into work. Clients referred by Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) at Jobcentre Plus offices, or by Statutory Referral Organisations, will receive help from trained expert advisers from Action on Hearing Loss Cymru. The advisers, who all have the ability to use British Sign Language, will work with clients for between 8-32 weeks, covering a wide range of support from curriculum vitae (CV) writing and interview preparation to confidence building and time management skills. The service aims to support people into reliable and lasting employment opportunities and links are being set up with WBL providers.

Case study 2: Quest Supported Employment, Cardiff

Context:

Quest Supported Employment works with disabled and disadvantaged people, including young people of working age with a learning disability or mental illness. Quest supports these learners into sustained employment, working a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Strategy:

Through their 'transitions project' Quest project workers support young people with learning disabilities to prepare for employment.

Action:

Learner B has additional learning needs and requires extra support with reading, writing and understanding instructions. A project worker from Quest supported Learner B to complete an unpaid work placement within a nursery. Learner B attended for one day per week for 30 weeks and gained valuable work experience during this time.

Initially, Learner B required a lot of support from a Quest job coach, who visited Learner B at her work placement on a number of occasions to help her settle into a work routine and understand what was expected of her in this new environment. She also received travel training, where her job coach travelled with her to and from her work placement. After many sessions, Learner B became an independent traveller. This skill significantly enhanced her confidence level.

Communication was also a barrier for Learner B. She did not always understand certain social norms and Quest provided extra support with this issue. For example, on many occasions the support focused on effective communication with management and children and the differences between professional and social dialogue.

Outcomes:

Over the course of the 30-week work placement, Learner B grew in confidence, and gained a greater understanding of the childcare setting, along with valuable knowledge and experience. After the work placement, Learner B applied for jobs and was successful in securing an apprenticeship in a local private nursery.

Quest continued to support Learner B throughout her probation period, meeting with her on a monthly basis to make sure that she understood her role and what was expected of her. She is now working independently towards completing her apprenticeship.

Case study 3: Project Enable

Context:

Project Enable is a partnership between Cwm Taf University Health Board, Elite Supported Employment Agency and the NHS Wales Centre for Equality and Human Rights. The project is based on Project Search, which is recognised by the Department for Work and Pensions and has achieved considerable success across 14 pilot sites in England, including in six hospitals.

The project reached an important milestone in 2013 when the first pilot hosted by the health board introduced four young interns to the catering services of the Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant, South Wales.

Strategy:

To develop an internship programme for young people with learning disabilities.

Action:

The four interns attended a recruitment day where they were met by the catering manager and his team. There was an opportunity for everyone to ask questions and to visit different parts of the catering department, including the restaurant, coffee shop, the kitchens and the ward-based catering service. The interns then worked as members of the catering team supported by a job coach. The job coach gave support needed to build the confidence of the interns to work independently. The interns were also required to complete a catering hygiene qualification with an adjustment made to the end of course examination to allow it be verbal rather than written.

Outcome:

Over a period of six months, the interns had the opportunity to work in each of the different areas, learning new tasks at a pace designed to support their individual learning and development needs. Following the success of the pilot, it was possible, with the support of Elite, to offer training contracts to three of the four interns.

In February 2014, the three interns returned to the Royal Glamorgan Hospital on training contracts funded by the Work Choice Youth Contract and supplemented by an Elite training grant. The duration of the training contract was six months and all the interns were paid the workplace rate of pay, which is above the minimum wage.

Case study 4: Transitions and Employment Services – Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Context:

This RNIB service supports blind and partially sighted people of all ages across Wales to develop their employability skills and apply for work. The service organises work placements for young people and ensures that organisations and employers receive appropriate training and are equipped to work with blind and partially sighted people.

Learner C was in the third and final year of her psychology degree when she met the transitions officer (employed via a Big Lottery funded project Future InSight) at an event for students at Swansea University. After hearing about the work that the service had done previously with other learners, Learner C expressed an interest in working with the police forensic services.

Action:

The transitions officer contacted South Wales Police to discuss the possibility of a placement within their forensics department. Learner C completed the police vetting form, so that they could check that she was trustworthy and unlikely to breach confidences. Soon after vetting had been cleared, South Wales Police were able to offer Learner C a one week placement in the scientific investigation team based at Neath police station.

Following completion of a risk assessment by the transitions officer, Guide Dogs for the Blind helped with mobility routes for Learner C to get to her placement on time.

At the beginning of her work placement, Learner C received a health and safety induction, a tour of the department and an introduction to the team members, an overview of some high profile cases the team had been involved in, and a talk on the gathering of essential evidence.

Following induction, Learner C shadowed an officer as he performed his work. This included a trip to a compound where a vehicle that had been involved in a serious traffic accident was stored. Learner C observed the officer taking photographs of the vehicle and swabbing for DNA. Back at the office, Learner C observed the completion of the relevant paperwork and the writing up of the report.

For the next few days, Learner C shadowed an officer who investigated a number of burglaries. She also visited a house following a fire and watched as the officer took photographs of the scene. Learner C also observed officers gathering evidence at many different crime scenes.

Outcome:

Learner C thoroughly enjoyed her experience with South Wales Police and said that, from the first moment she walked through the door, they were friendly and welcoming. The placement has confirmed her choice of career direction and she is now ready to pursue an apprenticeship in forensic science.

What are employers doing to break down barriers?

- 14 Many employers are working successfully with WBL providers to offer work experience to learners with disabilities. This work experience gives the learner a valuable insight into overcoming barriers arising from their disability, including what support is available to them.

Case study 5: Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB)

Context:

Cardiff and Vale UHB, in partnership with a private contractor A4E and Job Centre Plus, provides a pathway for disadvantaged groups who have found it difficult to find employment. These difficulties are often due to a range of factors including poor academic history, a lack of a work history, relevant work experience, references, learning disabilities and other social issues.

Strategy:

The apprentice style programme provides candidates with opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge required to undertake the role of a health care support worker (HCSW) within nursing routes. During the six-month programme, learners complete the UHB's corporate and clinical induction programmes (equivalent to the Employment Rights and Responsibilities qualification of an apprenticeship framework), including the All Wales Manual Handling Passport. Learners also undertake a programme of study leading to the achievement of both knowledge and competence based Health and Social Care Diploma units at Level 2.

Completion of this programme gives learners an employment history and associated references, making it possible for the candidates to look for employment within the UHB or in the wider community.

Action:

Four learners identified by the UHBs dyslexia assessment service as having dyslexia received appropriate additional support in order to complete their programme, including extra time to complete assignments. This support enabled these learners to achieve qualifications for the first time in their academic careers.

Outcome:

Many learners from this programme have progressed to apprenticeship programmes.

Learners from black and minority ethnic groups

- 15 The minority ethnic population in Wales is concentrated geographically. According to 2011 census data, just over half of the BME population in Wales live in Cardiff and Newport (52,976, and 14,711 respectively), where they account for a much higher proportion of the usual resident population (15%, and 10% respectively) than the national average of 4%. Swansea has a BME population of 14,326 people (6% of the usual resident population), making Swansea the third most populous city in terms of BME groups, (Office for National Statistics, 2013). The high concentration of BME groups in Cardiff, Newport and Swansea is responsible for the number of good practice case studies from these areas.
- 16 Providers and community leaders spoken to during this survey were unanimous in reporting that a major barrier to the recruitment of BME learners is the perception of parents and carers, particularly from the Somali and Bangladeshi communities, that apprenticeships are for young people who have not done well at school. While this perception is not unique to BME learners, its prevalence within BME communities was highlighted many times. 'Under-Representation by Gender and Race in Apprentices' (Newton and Williams, 2013) noted that "some ethnic minority individuals may be missing out on a career route that suits their needs better than, for example, traditional academic pathways" (p. 9).
- 17 At the Real Conversation event in March 2015, a representative from Race Council Cymru, referring to this perception of a "second-class route", felt that the 'meaning' of the word 'apprenticeship' may be a discouragement to some. She referred to the Deputy Minister's opening remarks about parents believing that apprenticeships are trade routes only. She felt that in some cultures the word could hold a different meaning and may not encourage learners and their parents. To explain this, she gave the example that, in some African cultures, the term "volunteering" is used to describe army conscription and, because of this, it is not held in as high esteem as it is in Europe. She suggested that some African cultures may feel a similar confusion about the word "apprentice", (Millman, 2015).

What are providers doing to help break down barriers for BME learners?

- 18 Providers in Wales are working to address the negative perceptions about apprenticeships held by BME learners and their families in a variety of ways, including holding awareness raising sessions and employing specialist recruitment officers:

Case study 6: Raising Parental Awareness of Apprenticeship Opportunities

Context:

The Quality Skills Alliance (QSA) is a WBL consortium of one of Wales's largest further education colleges and over 25 partners and sub-contractors. The QSA has 2,000 learners who are following education and training programmes across many different sectors. The consortium is the largest provider in Wales of automotive provision across the main disciplines and also provides training in niche and priority sectors, for example pharmacy work, sustainable resource management, media and design, technical theatre, and Cardiff City Football Education Department.

Strategy:

To increase awareness of WBL opportunities within BME communities.

Action:

At a recent conference for the Somali and Bangladeshi Community Partnership, the Chief Operating Officer of the QSA spoke to over 250 parents about the value of apprenticeships as an alternative career path to academic routes. The questions asked by parents at the conference made it clear that they were unaware of the opportunities for career progression that were available via an apprenticeship route. The Chief Operating Officer, who started his own working life an apprentice, was able to highlight the possibilities by using his own career path as an example.

Many of the parents who attended the conference own their own small businesses. These parents were unaware that family members employed within their businesses could join apprenticeship programmes and work towards a range of directly related vocational and managerial qualifications.

Outcome:

Following this successful introduction, parents and prospective learners have been invited to QSA open evening events to learn more about the apprenticeship opportunities that are available to them. The Chief Operating Officer and other members of staff from the QSA will continue to meet with parents and prospective learners at future community partnership events. It is too early to judge the impact of this work on breaking down barriers.

Case study 7: Responding to the needs of the community

Context:

ACT is Wales' largest WBL provider, with six skills centres across Wales and 17 sub-contractors. It trains approximately 6,000 learners a year across a wide variety of vocational routes. ACT directly employs over 300 staff, and has been identified by Estyn as being sector leading in its proactive approach in recruiting learners from BME communities onto its WBL Programmes.

Strategy:

ACT employs a learner recruitment manager who is responsible for forging relationships with schools and community groups to raise awareness of ACT's services to potential learners and supporting those learners onto their training programme.

Action:

The learner recruitment manager has engaged with over 30 secondary schools across Wales. Members of ACT's recruitment team are business ambassadors who

work with Year 11 school pupils to help develop their employability and enterprise skills. ACT arranges for these learners to attend taster sessions, either at school or at an ACT centre. Apprenticeship learners also attend these events to share their success and the benefits of completing an apprenticeship programme.

ACT also runs two alternative curriculum academies in South East Wales. The learners that attend the academies are those that usually find a traditional school approach challenging or want to take vocational options. The academies support and develop young people from an early age to help them progress onto Traineeship provision, with the aim of eventually following an apprenticeship.

The learner recruitment manager works with Communities First groups and the youth service to share information and to ensure that the needs of minority groups are being met. She engages with potential learners at youth centres, youth clubs, community projects and job clubs. These community groups enable her to meet with a diverse range of learners that reflect the demographics of the local area.

Outcomes:

An example of where this has been a success is with the Riverside Community Centre in Cardiff. The centre had five members of staff who needed to complete a child care apprenticeship, all of whom had English as their second language. The manager was concerned that these members of staff would not be able to achieve due to their weaknesses in writing. The five members of staff completed an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course through a community project. ACT worked with the staff to build their confidence, meeting with them and setting them work prior to starting an apprenticeship programme. All five members of staff achieved their foundation apprenticeship and three progressed to Level 3.

In 2014-2015, 8% of learners recruited onto ACT's programmes are from a BME background. This is double the demographic for WBL in Wales (4%). In Cardiff, 12% of the total learners recruited onto ACT's traineeship programmes are BME. Achievement and progression of ethnic learners are as good as they are for white learners.

What is the role of the third sector?

- 19 Third sector organisations play an important part in encouraging and supporting BME learners onto apprenticeship programmes. However, inspectors faced difficulties in contacting many third sector organisations in the Cardiff, Newport and Swansea areas. Recent funding cuts have resulted in many long-standing organisations either no longer existing or working with significantly reduced hours and resources.
- 20 One such group is the Somali Advice and Information Office, established in May 1988 to address the specific and complex needs of the Somali population in Cardiff. As part of this work, prior to funding cuts, the Office employed an employment and training adviser who would go out into the community and talk to parents, explaining to parents that apprenticeships are not "a bad way". The agency is committed to helping this community to break down barriers to learning, but due to the lack of resources available to them are unable to continue this work in the strategic way they would wish. The considerable local knowledge and expertise of this agency in working with the Somali community is not being used to its full potential.

- 21 The Somali Progressive Association (SPA) is a registered charity and a community-based non-profit making association governed by a board of trustees elected from the local community. The SPA work closely with Cardiff City Council Youth Services, encouraging members of the community to attend drop-in sessions run by the service in order to gain a better understanding of what apprenticeship programmes can offer.
- 22 Another third sector society based in Cardiff is the Somali Integration Society (SIS). This society is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 2002. Its aims are:
- to enable the community to become self-sufficient and independent, without the need to rely on others
 - to encourage individuals to acquire the necessary life skills such as reading, writing and a sound knowledge of the English language
 - to allow the Somali community to function and to gain recognition as equal and significant members of society
- 23 The SIS has bid successfully for funding from a variety of sources. It has however relied mainly on local government funding to support its few contracted staff. Funding cuts have meant that the office is now open for a limited number of hours per week and the manager now volunteers his services on a once per week basis, travelling from London to do so.
- 24 The lack of very basic literacy and numeracy skills (in both their home language and English) within the local community precludes many potential learners from applying for apprenticeship positions. The SIS has previously worked with Workers' Education Association Wales (WEA Cymru) to offer pre-entry as well as entry level ESOL classes. However, due to funding constraints, it is no longer possible to offer this type of pre-entry course.

Case study 8: The Sahan Project

Context:

To address economic disadvantages within the Somali community, SIS has run the Sahan project (Sahan means 'to find out', funded until 2013 by the Big Lottery Fund 'People and Places'.

Strategy:

The project allows the SIS to work in partnership with local organisations to address the educational and training needs of Somalis and other groups, to improve their lives, increase their educational qualifications, and enhance their employment potential.

Action:

As part of the Sahan Youth Project, the SIS offers sporting and physical activities to engage young people and encourage them to work together to achieve success. Participants have the opportunity to develop as sports leaders, or to take part in

athletics and football. Wherever possible, the project uses peer facilitators and trainers to deliver its workshops. These young people form the Sahan Youth Empowerment Expert Group.

Members of this group have encouraged their peers to become involved in other projects such as the 'GOT' (Getting On Together) Anti Extremist Project, creating an anti-knife crime DVD, and working with the Prince's Trust. This work helps local young people to grow in confidence and progress into education, employment and training.

Outcomes:

As a direct result of his work in the Youth Empowerment Expert Group, one former member of the group joined the Cardiff City Football Youth Academy, where he successfully completed a trial and was signed on-contract for the club. Another, who represented Wales at the British athletics finals, has now begun a two-year football and education scholarship, run by Cardiff City Football Club in association with Cardiff and Vale College.

Building upon the success achieved as a member of the group, another learner was able to use project funding to join a Youth and Community Work Access to a higher education course, run by Cardiff City Council, and is now studying for a BA (Hons) course in Nursing at Kingston University in London.

The success of the original Sahan project resulted in the SIS making a further submission to the Big Lottery Fund. Phase two of the project will tackle the situation of young Somalis by addressing the underlying causes of poverty and disadvantage in the community; in particular, the lack of vocational qualifications and social isolation from wider Welsh society. The intention is to work with local further education colleges and WBL providers to provide access to vocational qualifications and apprenticeships, with support from the SIS before, during and after training.

How do Youth Support Teams help to break down barriers?

- 25 All local authorities in Wales have youth support teams and work in partnership with other youth support services, to provide support for young people who need additional support to achieve their full potential. Qualified youth workers are available to provide information, support and guidance to young people aged between 11 and 25, in local, friendly and informal settings. Many teams have youth workers who target specific BME groups and work with them to secure employment or training.

Case study 9: Supporting a learner to interview – Swansea Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)

Context:

EYST was set up in 2005 by a group of ethnic minority young people in Swansea with the aim of filling a gap in provision for young BME people aged 11-25 by

providing a targeted, culturally-sensitive and holistic support service to meet their needs. Since set up, EYST has grown and now employs a team of 15 staff, and due to funding from a wide range of funders is able to deliver a range of services from education, employment and health to personal and community safety.

Strategy:

Working to break down the perceived or actual perception of discrimination from employers who are less willing to give opportunities to young people.

Action:

Following receipt of information from a WBL provider, EYST promoted the opportunities of apprenticeships to three potential young people. EYST then supported the young people through the application process. Out of three young people, two were successful in achieving an interview but learner D was not successful in obtaining the interview.

However, one of the other young people was unable to make the interview day. EYST contacted the provider and enquired if they could contact Learner D and send him along for the interview. This was agreed.

Outcome:

Learner D attended the interview and was successful in obtaining the apprenticeship place. He then went on to obtain a short-term contract, after which he gained full time employment with the same company.

EYST played a key role in advertising the opportunity to the right young people. The service provided support thorough the application process and took positive steps to get an interview for Learner D when an opportunity arose.

- 26 In another example of proactive work from Youth support teams, learning coaches at the Cardiff City Council Youth Services identify and support young people aged 16-19 years old that are NEET (not in education, employment and training) from the Butetown, Riverside, Grangetown and Canton areas of Cardiff. The coaches work at drop-in centres in the local communities and have access to many resources to support NEET clients that present themselves, including diagnostic forms, start packs, vacancy newsletters, training calendars and various information from partner organisations.

Case study 10: The work of a Learning Coach at Cardiff City Council Youth Services

Context:

The learning coach team are employed by Cardiff City Council as part of their Youth Services department.

Strategy:

The learning coach team engage with potential learners who are not currently engaged in education, employment and training (NEET) in order to identify and break down potential barriers to learning.

Action:

Learner E presented himself as NEET at a drop-in centre at Riverside Warehouse. A learning coach then undertook a diagnostic assessment with Learner E to understand the barriers he had, if any, to engaging in learning and to find out what he was interested in doing.

Following the diagnostic assessment with Learner E, the learning coach understood that he had a strong interest in customer service and in pursuing a programme or employment opportunities where he would also gain qualifications. The learning coach was able to show Learner E information from ACT Training, linked to an apprenticeship opportunity with British Gas. Learner E was keen to be referred for an interview once the process had been fully explained to him.

Outcome:

An appointment was made for Learner E to attend an interview at ACT offices in Cardiff, which he attended and was asked to return for the taster day a week later where he was successfully shortlisted from a group of 20. Learner E is now on the British Gas apprenticeship scheme and earning and learning with a positive outlook on life.

Learner E said: "I've worked in different jobs since leaving school but nothing has given me a career path. That's why I applied for this. The quality of the training was so good. I've got new skills, met new people and I have a qualification. I feel more positive about my future now."

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