

Growing traineeship programmes



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Introduction

This resource has been written for traineeship providers who want to grow their traineeship programmes, and for providers who do not yet offer traineeships but who hope to do so in the future.

The aim of a traineeship is to help young people gain the skills and experience they need to get an apprenticeship or job. Traineeships are a highly flexible programme which providers can tailor to their local context, to the needs of particular groups of young people and to local employers. This enables them to address skills gaps, contribute to local growth and support young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) into meaningful and sustained work.

Over the last two years, many providers have grown their traineeship provision and are delivering these programmes to a wide range of young people. We consulted with some of these traineeship providers and asked them to identify the key success factors that had enabled them to grow their traineeship programmes. This resource presents their top tips for other traineeship providers.

This resource was funded by the Department for Education and developed by Learning and Work Institute (L&W). L&W is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

For more information about L&W's work on traineeships, please contact Nicola Aylward at nicola.aylward@learningandwork.org.uk.

GROWING A TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME

Providers identified the following elements as being key to the successful growth of their traineeship provision. These are presented under the different stages of a programme: development; marketing and promotion; securing referrals; delivery; and progression.

1. Development

Tailor traineeship programmes to your local context

Developing a programme that responds to local employment and skills needs is key to growing your traineeship provision. Local employers will be more likely to see the potential benefits to their business and engage with your provision if it addresses their skills needs. You should develop a thorough understanding of your local economy, particularly in relation to skills gaps and future employment trends, and draw on this when designing your traineeship programmes.

Hackney Community College has access to employers who are recruiting for both apprenticeships and traineeships as a result of a number of new builds in the local area. Employers are put at the forefront of their traineeship programme, identifying opportunities and taking an active part in developing the training. They conduct informal discussions with trainees to explain the construction industry, their company and the opportunities available. Employers also arrange 'round robin' trade tasters whereby trainees move around the different trades to gain an understanding of the various jobs. Trainees are recruited at specific times of the year that coincide with the build stage of employers' projects. As employers have already identified the vacancies that will be available in the various trades, trainees are aware of the

opportunities from the outset and the areas they can try out. Employers support the trainees throughout their programme, providing a clear pathway to a real vacancy at the end of the programme.

Use local labour market information and statistics

Make sure you keep up-to-date with local labour market information and statistics which can help you identify skills needs and labour market trends. Strong links with your Local Enterprise Partnership (you can find information at www.lepnetwork.net) can also be useful in ensuring that you have a good understanding of the local employment context and can adapt your traineeship provision to local skills needs.

2. Marketing and promotion

Run a public marketing campaign

Public marketing campaigns can be an effective way of raising awareness of traineeships amongst local employers and young people. They can also effectively reach intermediary organisations, referral agencies, parents/carers, other education providers and the wider public, all of whom can encourage potential trainees and employers to participate in your provision. Your campaign should include clear and tailored messages that demonstrate the potential benefits of traineeships to different stakeholders.



Develop a marketing strategy for your traineeship

A marketing strategy can ensure that you target the range of stakeholders who can help grow your traineeship provision. It will help you develop appropriate messages and activities for your different target audiences and ensure you contact each at regular intervals, without overburdening any particular group of stakeholders.

Develop clear messages for different stakeholders

Employers: Marketing campaigns directed at employers need to convey the key benefits of engaging with a traineeship programme. They need to demonstrate how employers can use traineeships to address current and future skills gaps in their organisations or sectors. Your marketing campaigns should include testimonies and case studies from employers who have had positive experiences of supporting trainees.

Potential trainees: Clear messaging about what a traineeship involves and how it can provide a route to an apprenticeship or employment is key to engaging the right young people onto your programme. Recruiting young people who are motivated to work, and providing tailored support to those who experience specific barriers to employment, will maximise completion and progression rates. This will boost the reputation of your programme and support its continuation and growth. Marketing messages can be tailored to specific groups, e.g. young people who are NEET or who have been unsuccessful in applying for an apprenticeship.

Parents/carers: Parents/carers can have a significant influence over a young person's decisions about education, training and applying for jobs. It is therefore important that they are aware of traineeships and their potential benefits for young people. Provide clear messages about what traineeships are, and clearly signpost

to further information. This will increase the likelihood of parents/carers encouraging young people to take up a traineeship.

Schools and other education providers: It is important that schools and other local education providers are aware of traineeships, so they can promote this as a viable progression route for their learners. Provide clear messages about your provision, the target cohort and its potential benefits. This will enable these organisations to pass on accurate information about your traineeship programmes and increase the likelihood of their young people taking up a traineeship.

Local information, advice and guidance services: These organisations can be crucial in signposting young people to your provision. Provide clear information about your traineeship programmes, their potential benefits for young people and the support on offer. This will increase the likelihood of IAG workers recommending them as a potential option for young people.

Redwood Skills have a clear trainee information leaflet that concisely outlines the purpose of a traineeship, the benefits to the young person and expectations of them. Their website also provides a range of information about traineeships and is simple to navigate. There is a separate section for schools and parents, with printable downloads available.

Develop a range of marketing activities and materials

Given the diversity of relevant stakeholders, marketing activities need to be varied and delivered in a range of formats to reach the widest possible audiences. Marketing activities and materials might include: holding events and briefing sessions; using posters to advertise in community spaces and at the sites of other education and training providers, such as schools; using social media; publishing newsletters; and promoting successful outcomes through case studies and testimonies. Websites are also a key source of information for stakeholders and so should be kept up to date and be easy to navigate.

Heathercroft Training Services Limited work with a range of local employers, the local Youth Employment Service (which produces a monthly newsletter advertising traineeship vacancies) and The Prince's Trust to advertise their traineeships. Heathercroft has successfully worked with one local school during GCSE results day to recruit trainees who had not achieved the required grades to enter sixth form. Job Fairs at the local Jobcentre Plus have also been used as a way of recruiting young people. Heathercroft also works in partnership with Project Search; an organisation which produces a newsletter promoting traineeship and apprenticeship vacancies. The monthly newsletter is well known in the local area. It is an important resource in ensuring that young people, parents, employers and referral partners are aware of Heathercroft's traineeships and the opportunities available.

3. Build strong referral routes into your traineeship programmes

Strong partnerships with relevant local organisations and agencies can ensure that any young person who might benefit from a traineeship is signposted to your provision. Use these partnerships to pass on clear and accurate information about your provision to potential trainees. This is a highly effective way of growing your traineeship programmes.

Key organisations and stakeholders will need clear and tailored messaging about traineeships to support them to refer suitable young people to your provision. These stakeholders will include:

Employers: Develop and maintain good relationships with employers as this is central to the growth of traineeship programmes. Some young people will contact employers directly to enquire about employment or training opportunities. Strong relationships with employers will increase the likelihood that they will refer these enquiries onto you and recommend your provision. Engaging a range of employers in your traineeship provision will also mean that you are better able to match trainees to placements in sectors of interest to them. This will increase the likelihood of them successfully engaging in and completing the programme. This provides further positive experiences for the employer and encourages their continued participation and engagement.

Schools and other education providers: If you have strong relationships with local schools and education providers then you will increase the likelihood of receiving direct referrals from them. They may refer young people to you who have

expressed an interest in developing skills for employment, or when they receive applications from young people who are not appropriate for their current provision. You may also be able to deliver information sessions and/or presentations about your traineeship provision to their learners.

Jobcentre Plus: Partnerships with local Jobcentre Plus centres can be an effective way of securing referrals of young people who are NEET. This is particularly important for providers in areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out, as young people may be mandated to traineeships under the new Youth Obligation. Consider delivering information sessions to Work Coaches and other JCP staff to ensure they have accurate information about your traineeship programmes.

Local support agencies: Local support agencies, such as employment or specialist support services who work with vulnerable young people, can be another effective route for referrals. Partnerships with these services could enable you to engage young people who are slightly further from the labour market in your traineeship programmes.

Internal teams and colleagues: Cross-referral between tutors within your organisation can be an effective way of growing your traineeship programmes. In particular, a strong referral route between apprenticeship and traineeship teams will ensure that any young people who apply for an apprenticeship but are not yet ready can be referred directly onto a traineeship. It also means that young people who are nearing the end of their traineeship can be referred to the apprenticeship team to secure an appropriate progression opportunity.

The Source Skills Academy works with local schools and regularly attends careers events to promote traineeships. There is a dedicated apprenticeship team who lead learner recruitment. Where they have been unsuccessful in securing an apprenticeship for a young person, they will refer them directly to the traineeship team. The Source has a good reputation locally. They have an excellent relationship with Sheffield Futures, who regularly refer young people directly from their careers advice team. The Source also has good partnership arrangement in place with Jobcentre Plus, who regularly refer clients onto traineeships. Advisers from the Sheffield JCP were invited to The Source to observe traineeship delivery so they could gain a more in-depth understanding of the programme.

As a result, JCP Advisers are now able to identify suitable clients and give them an accurate overview of traineeships and the benefits of participating before making a referral. The Source also produces a monthly traineeship newsletter to update their teams and account managers, who provide business support to employers. The newsletter contains case studies of young people who have been successful and is used to promote traineeships and source work placements. By giving real examples, an employer who is unsure whether they want to commit to recruiting an apprentice may be willing to take a trainee on a work experience placement. This can be converted into an apprenticeship at a later date if the trainee is able to prove their value.



4. Delivery

The quality, flexibility and support provided within your traineeship is key to ensuring that trainees have a positive experience, complete their programme and progress. These factors impact on the likelihood of a successful traineeship experience for you, the trainee and the employer, which feeds into the reputation and continued growth of your traineeship programme. Successful trainees can also act as ambassadors and provide case studies for your marketing activities, helping to promote your programme to their peers.

Establish a roll-on, roll-off programme

A flexible/rolling programme will mean that new trainees can join quickly, rather than having to wait until the start of a new term or academic year. This will enable you to support more young people through your traineeships within a given timeframe. It is also popular with referral organisations because it means there is no time lag between them making a referral and a young person starting on a programme. A roll-on, roll-off delivery model may therefore increase the likelihood of an external agency making referrals to your provision, providing an effective way of growing your programme.

Offer young people incentives for participating

Offering financial incentives and rewards for participating in a traineeship is another way of boosting recruitment. It can help to motivate trainees by adding a sense of value to the programme and help to overcome financial barriers.

Conduct a thorough initial assessment of a trainee's needs

You should carry out a thorough initial assessment of each trainee's needs. This should check that a traineeship is the most appropriate option for each young person and that they have a good chance of completing and progressing from the programme. The initial assessment is also crucial in ensuring that young people understand what the traineeship will entail and that any additional needs are identified and appropriate support is put in place. All of this will contribute to a trainee successfully engaging with and completing their programme.

CT Skills has found that a key factor in growing their traineeship programme is ensuring that trainees are recruited onto the right programme to suit their individual needs. To support this, CT Skills put their six Employment Support Officers through a Level 4 information, advice and guidance (IAG) qualification. Their placement officer is also IAG qualified, enabling him to offer advice and guidance to young people and employers. CT Skills no longer specifically market traineeships, but have instead established 'Step Forward', a free informal weekly group to help young people decide what they want to do and how they are going to achieve their ambitions. Young people are invited to attend and discuss a range of options, one of which is traineeships. This enables CT Skills staff to identify a young person's individual needs and match these to appropriate traineeship opportunities with local employers.

Establish a single point of contact for learners

You should establish a single point of contact for trainees. This enables them to develop a relationship with a member of staff, leading to more personalised support and increasing the likelihood that the trainee will have a positive experience. In turn, this should improve your completion and achievement rates and therefore the reputation of your programme.

Develop flexible and adaptable delivery models

Programmes with flexible delivery models which can cater for the needs of individual trainees and employers have better rates of completion and progression. Delivering English and maths in flexible and creative ways, for instance through contextualised activities or delivery in the workplace, will improve trainees' engagement with the subjects. Flexibility over start and finish times might also help some vulnerable groups - including single parents, young adult carers and care leavers - to engage in traineeships. This helps to ensure that programmes are inclusive, thereby increasing the potential pool of young people who can access traineeships. This will support the growth of your programme.

Provide holistic and individualised support to trainees

Providing appropriate support to trainees throughout their programme will increase the likelihood of them achieving a positive outcome and improve your achievement and progression rates. As well as learning and employability

support, this may include addressing any barriers trainees experience in relation to their physical and mental health, finances or practical barriers such as travel.

Trainees with **Heathercroft Training Services Limited** receive one-to-one support from a tutor and specialist English and maths teachers each week throughout their traineeship. This personalised support is tailored to the young person's individual needs and is contextualised to match their work placement. A short leaflet, a copy of the Learning Agreement, risk assessment information and details of the work placement are given to the parents/carers of young people who participate in the programme. A leaflet highlighting what to expect when offering a traineeship programme is also given to the employer before the trainee commences their work placement. This triad of support from Heathercroft, parents/carers and employers gives trainees a secure and safe environment to develop their skills and secure employment or an apprenticeship.

Provide wraparound support to employers

Traineeships are more likely to be positive experiences for employers if they feel supported throughout. Regular contact with employers will enable you to answer any questions or concerns they may have, and identify and address any issues as and when they arise. Support for trainees is also integral to your relationship with employers. If you are available

to support trainees with any problems as they arise then their placement is more likely to be a success. Support is therefore crucial in ensuring that employers continue to engage with your programmes and support an increased number of trainees over time.

5. Progression

Identify opportunities for progression early on in the programme

Successful progressions into an apprenticeship or job is central to the continued reputation and growth of your traineeship programme. It is important that opportunities for progression with the trainee's work placement employer are scoped out early in the programme so that alternative opportunities can be sought if necessary. This will increase the likelihood of your trainees securing positive outcomes and will have a positive impact on your destinations data, which is useful to promote in your marketing materials. Finding an alternative progression route is easier if you have good relationships with a range of employers.

Petroc College's traineeship team conducts workplace support visits with the trainee and employer every two weeks to review progress and set goals for the following weeks. In-between reviews, trainees are encouraged to use text messages to communicate with the college team, who are able to respond immediately to any questions or concerns. Social media, in the form of Facebook and Messenger,

is also used by the college to keep in constant contact with trainees. By week seven, the employer is required to confirm whether they intend to offer the trainee an apprenticeship or employment. If a positive outcome cannot be secured, the trainee is transferred to a work placement with another employer.

Capture the positive experiences of trainees and employers

Testimonies and case studies of trainees and employers are powerful tools for marketing and promoting your provision. Where possible, gather feedback and positive stories from trainees and employers at the end of their programmes. You can then use these in your promotional materials to explain the potential benefits of traineeships to young people and employers in their own words, which can feed into future recruitment and growth of the programme.



CASE STUDIES

Rathbone Training

Rathbone Training have provided traineeships since 2013. They specialise in childcare and youth work. They also offer a general traineeship programme through which they source work experience opportunities in a range of sectors, taking account of the local employment market. This means they can cater for diverse needs and interests, and do not have to turn any potential trainees away.

Rathbone offer traineeships as part of a learner journey. Key to growing their traineeship programme has been an emphasis on connecting their study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships. They transition young people through these phases, supporting them to acquire the appropriate skills and experience at each stage. During this journey, traineeship programmes are used to plug a gap for young people who are not quite ready for an apprenticeship. The traineeship is therefore viewed as a 'stepping stone' into an apprenticeship, targeted at young people who were unsuccessful at interview, typically because of a lack of experience and interview skills.


Rathbone's aim is for each young person to stay with the same tutor as they progress through their study programme, traineeship and apprenticeship, so that they do not have to adjust to a new tutor each time they progress. To support this, their apprenticeship staff are also responsible for their traineeship programme, which means learners have a single point of contact throughout their journey who they can go to with any queries. This has been particularly helpful for young people who have additional needs or are from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, this approach has supported the rates of retention and successful completion in

Rathbone's traineeships, and feeds back into the growth of their programmes.

Rathbone use varied recruitment activities. They advertise through social media, making use of Facebook and Twitter. They find that word of mouth is one of their most effective recruitment tools, as lots of learners refer their friends. It is therefore important that all young people have a positive experience. Rathbone also receive referrals from charities and third sector organisations, so Rathbone's relationships with external agencies is also crucial to the continued growth of their traineeship programmes.

Rathbone have a call centre, through which learners apply for apprenticeships and have a telephone interview, before they are interviewed by the employer. Call centre staff pick up young people who are not getting through the telephone interview or employer interview and invite them in for an information, advice and guidance meeting. Through this they may identify that a young person requires a small amount of support to succeed at interview, for example, a day of support with interview techniques. However, if they require more support then they may be offered a traineeship programme. Rathbone view this process as crucial to ensuring that each young person is on the right programme with the correct level of support, which increases the likelihood of successful completion.

Crucial to the success and growth of Rathbone's traineeships is the support they offer to both young people and employers throughout the 12-week programme. All traineeships are tailored to the individual needs of each young person. The initial conversation between a young person and a tutor is crucial to ensuring the programme is appropriate for the learner's needs. Tutors carry out a thorough initial assessment with each



young person to identify their maths and English levels and any support needs. This includes input from a special education lead, who is responsible for supporting learners with additional needs and those with Education, Health and Care Plans. All young people begin with a thorough induction process before they move onto the Functional Skills, employability and work experience elements of their traineeship.

Rathbone also have a designated employer partnership team, who are the first point of contact with employers for all their programmes. This team is responsible for sustaining relationships with existing employers and recruiting new employers. Rathbone speak to all employers once a week in order to check on

attendance and welfare of trainees, and carry out regular visits to employers where issues have been flagged up. They view supporting employers as crucial to their role in delivering traineeships, particularly as trainees are often new to employment and so may need additional support in the workplace. Employers often have a lot of questions, and are often dealing with new kinds of situations, so it is crucial that they are in regular contact and offer support as any difficulties arise. This ensures that employers have a positive experience of the programme, increasing the likelihood that they will continue to engage and therefore support the growth of Rathbone's traineeship programmes.

Interserve

Interserve has successfully grown their traineeship programme by tailoring their provision to the needs of learners, employers and the local economy, and through a combination of effective marketing, strong internal and external referral routes, and good relationships with a range of employers.

Interserve carefully develop programmes that respond to both learners' and employers' needs. Interserve's business development engagement team and curriculum development team work closely with employers to develop programme content, ensuring that each traineeship is bespoke and addresses particular recruitment gaps. Interserve train their career coaches to be able to offer thorough and locally tailored advice and guidance to learners. They have sought to develop in-depth knowledge of the local context so that IAG is locally relevant. They target employers who are struggling to recruit for particular roles, who are quick to see the benefits of traineeships. This leads to positive

experiences and outcomes for employers, which supports programme growth.

Interserve has grown its traineeship provision by targeting learners who can benefit most from their programme. Careful recruitment, and a thorough initial meeting, are key to this. Interserve also use a variety of forms of marketing to promote their traineeship programmes, and this mixture of activities has been crucial in raising the profile of their provision locally. As well as advertising on their website, Interserve run recruitment events, such as open evenings, where they invite potential trainees and local employers in to find out more about traineeship opportunities. This has been particularly effective in demonstrating the potential benefits of traineeships to young people and employers.

Interserve has also found that relationships with local agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus, are crucial for improving local awareness of their traineeship provision and increasing referrals to their programme. Internal referral routes are

also important for ensuring that learners are enrolled on the most appropriate programme. Traineeships are part of Interserve's holistic training offer, which includes pre-employment study programmes and a large apprenticeship programme. This integrated approach means that if a young person is referred to Interserve's apprenticeship team but needs some initial support to get to this level, they can quickly be referred to Interserve's traineeship programme. This has been a key way of growing their traineeship provision.

Interserve also ensure that programmes are bespoke to each learner, taking account of any additional needs or support requirements. They use diagnostic tools to assess English and maths levels and to identify whether any additional needs are present. They use self-assessment tools, which cover a range of different skills and abilities, including issues of personal development and welfare. Information about the additional support that Interserve can provide to trainees and employers is clearly communicated at an early stage. During the traineeship staff regularly review learner progress. This enables them to identify any emerging issues or

challenges. If this happens then the trainer will run a joint learner review with their employer to identify ways to overcome the challenges arising. Similarly, if any additional needs are identified during this process then the trainer puts support strategies in place. All support issues are communicated across the organisation so that awareness feeds back into the work they do across the business, which supports positive learner engagement and outcomes.

Relationships with employers have been critical to the success and growth of Interserve's traineeship programme. Their employer engagement team is responsible for forming and maintaining these relationships. They meet regularly with employers and at monthly meetings they review whether they are meeting the employer's needs, how the traineeship is progressing, and whether they need to offer any additional support. Interserve find that once an employer has had a positive and beneficial experience with a trainee, they are more willing to offer future placements. The support they offer to employers is therefore key to their programme growth, as is their ability to tailor the programme to local skills gaps and industries.



Ten top tips for growing traineeship programmes

Below are ten top tips that providers identified as key to the successful growth of their traineeship provision:

Tailor traineeship programmes to your local context

A traineeship programme that responds to local employment and skills needs will be more attractive to local employers, helping you grow your provision. Use local labour market information to identify skills needs and employment trends.



Develop a marketing strategy for your traineeships

A strategy will ensure that you have appropriate messages and activities for the whole range of stakeholders who can help you grow your traineeship programmes, e.g. events and briefing sessions; posters; social media; newsletters; websites, and testimonials from previous trainees and employers.

Run a public marketing campaign

Public marketing campaigns can be an effective way of raising awareness of traineeships amongst the wide range of stakeholders who can encourage young people and employers to participate in your provision.



Build strong referral routes into your traineeship programme

Strong partnerships with relevant local organisations can ensure that clear and accurate information about your provision is passed on to potential trainees. This includes employers, schools, other education providers, Jobcentre Plus, local support agencies and careers advice services, as well as your own internal teams and colleagues.

Establish a roll-on, roll-off programme

A flexible/rolling programme means that new trainees can join at any time, enabling you to support more young people through your programme within a given timeframe. It may also increase referrals to your programme, as there is no time lag between the referral and a young person starting.



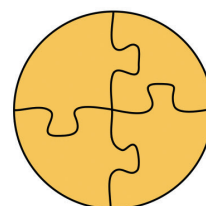


Develop flexible and adaptable delivery models

Tailored delivery models which cater for the needs of trainees and employers will increase the likelihood of them continuing to engage with your provision. Flexibility over start and finish times may also enable some vulnerable groups to engage in traineeships, and so increase the pool of people who can access your programmes.

Provide holistic and individualised support to trainees

Providing appropriate support to trainees will improve your retention, completion and progression rates which can help you recruit to and grow your traineeship programmes. This support may include addressing any barriers trainees experience around their learning, employability, physical and/or mental health, finances or practical issues such as travel.



Provide wrap around support to employers

Support is crucial to securing ongoing positive relationships with employers, and therefore your ability to grow your traineeship programmes. Regular contact with employers will enable you to answer any questions or concerns they may have, and identify and address any issues as and when they arise.

Identify opportunities for progression early on in the programme

Scoping out opportunities for progression with the trainee's work experience employer early in the programme means you can find alternative opportunities if necessary. This will increase the likelihood of trainees progressing into an apprenticeship or employment and have a positive impact on your data, which is useful to promote in your marketing materials.

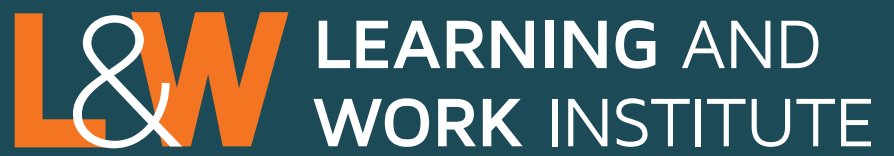


Capture the positive experiences of trainees and employers

Gather feedback and positive stories from trainees and employers at the end of their programmes. Use these in your promotional materials to explain the potential benefits of traineeships to young people and employers in their own words, which are powerful tools for recruiting to and growing your programmes.







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