



CABINET – 26TH FEBRUARY 2020

SUBJECT: GATEWAY TO EMPLOYMENT - CAERPHILLY SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To develop a pilot model to deliver a sustainable and framework compliant programme that provides holistic skills, training and apprenticeship provision that includes work experience, placements and apprenticeships.
- 1.2 To provide work experience and taster opportunities for school pupils as well as provide support, advice and guidance to schools to help those who do not wish to follow a traditional attainment pathway to access alternative provision via an apprenticeship route.
- 1.3 To provide ring fenced sustainable job opportunities through Caerphilly County Borough Council as an employer, supporting the Well-being Objective 2 of the 2018-2023 Corporate Plan.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Apprenticeships offer considerable benefits to society and the economy. They provide people with the opportunity to develop job related competencies, technical skills, numeracy and literacy skills and self esteem. They also play an important role in tackling youth unemployment. Skills developed through Apprenticeships contribute to higher value-added economic activity. They are good for growth and social mobility.
- 2.2 A training, skills and apprenticeship scheme within Caerphilly CBC would respond to the Council's emerging workforce development plans, whilst also being synergistic with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and its aim to create a range of apprentice and employment opportunities that satisfy the needs of industry, business and commerce in SE Wales. It will ensure the priority sectors are targeted to maximise opportunities from the Cardiff Capital Region and support the growth sectors in the region, providing opportunities across a range of demographic and socio economic profiles.
- 2.3 The Academy would provide a holistic mentoring, employment support, training and apprenticeship programme for all ages, to meet the current and future skill requirements of the Council. In addition, it would make a significant impact on reducing levels of inactivity and unemployment amongst local residents throughout the county borough.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the development of a pilot Caerphilly Skills and Apprenticeship Academy – Gateway to Employment - from April 2020 for initially a year.
- 3.2 The £127k additional cost to fund the pilot is funded from the Education & Corporate Services reserves.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To meet the requirements of the Council's workforce development needs and minimise outsourced agency costs by providing a robust in-house recruitment process that will help shape services, target our resources and prioritise our efforts in helping the local community to flourish.
- 4.2 To respond to the social, economic and skills needs for the borough and wider region, working in collaboration with the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership who are currently engaging with employers and other stakeholders to identify current and future skills needs.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 has both raised demand and encouraged employers to consider how apprenticeships can best support their recruitment and training needs.
- 5.2 Welsh Government is building its skills system to better respond to industry changes, and place Wales in a stronger position to deal with the impact of globalisation, technological changes and to respond to the decision to leave the European Union. Their strategy is to invest in training which provides economic and social returns and addresses skills shortages and gaps that hold back productivity and growth.
- 5.3 Welsh Government has focused on raising the quality of apprenticeships and strengthening regulatory oversight of the system. The learning content of apprenticeships is being informed by the three regional skills partnerships, labour market information and sector reviews carried out by Qualifications Wales. Each of these components is helping to build apprenticeships that stimulate growth.
- 5.4 Welsh Government's primary focus continues to be on apprenticeships at level 3 and above, where returns are higher and reflect good practice in other European countries. In particular, expansion of Higher Apprenticeships in STEM and technical subjects, to create the next generation of professionals to drive innovative practices, create new products, and boost productivity levels. In 2017/18, Higher Apprenticeships accounted for 19 per cent of all apprentices in learning. Higher Apprenticeships represent 48% of the learning taking place at Local Authorities.
- 5.5 Degree Apprenticeships were introduced in 18/19; delivery will initially be focused on degree level skills gaps identified by Regional Skills Partnerships in Digital/ICT and Advanced Engineering. At every stage degree apprenticeship investment will be determined by evidence of skills gaps/shortages and the impact on the Welsh economy. Universities commenced delivery of Degree Apprenticeships in Digital/ICT in October 2018, with Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering Degree Apprenticeships expected to be published from April 2019, ready to commence an intake in September 2019.
- 5.6 Welsh Government is currently reviewing the quality of commissioning, developing and issuing the apprenticeship frameworks in Wales to meet the changing needs of the economy, so that frameworks remain relevant and portable across the UK. They are currently

consulting on the future role of the Issuing Authority in Wales, and undertaking a consultation on the future structure of apprenticeship frameworks in Wales.

- 5.7 Caerphilly County Borough Council currently has a number of apprenticeships across the Authority, with a significant cohort within Caerphilly Homes particularly related to the WHQS programme. The Council appointed an additional 25 apprentices last year. However, the Council does not currently have a programme that looks at how it will approach apprenticeships in the future to meet workforce development needs. The key steps for the Council to consider are:
- How we introduce new, or further develop apprenticeship opportunities within the Council and how they are included in work force planning; whether that is looking to recruit new staff or up skill the existing work force.
 - How we work with schools to increase the number of school leavers entering apprenticeships, integrating apprenticeships into the wider education system.
 - The training routes and frameworks available and where they meet the workforce planning needs.
 - How we can engage with other employers and organisations to encourage apprenticeships more widely in the local economy, in particular the foundational economy.
 - How we provide the wider wrap around support for work experience, placement and apprenticeship placements to ensure they sustain their opportunity.
 - How we establish and resource a system for review and monitor the apprentice placements to ensure compliance with the Welsh Government's Framework.
- 5.8 There could, also, be an option to provide a shared apprenticeship programme within the local authority, where an apprentice could be shared internally across CCBC delivery areas. For example a shared apprenticeship programme could be developed across the Council House Build programme, Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme post 2020, 21st Century Schools and registered Social Landlords with routes into the private sector. This area has recognised skills shortages within the foundational economy and could therefore be subject to a grant application from the Welsh Government's Foundational Economy Challenge Fund to fund any proposal.
- 5.9 The Council's Community Regeneration team offers employment support services to communities within the borough via the Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus programmes. The team already have excellent links with CCBC departments that support participants with work placements, trials and job opportunities. The team have also established links outside the council with external partners and other employment services that help to aid the local community in finding sustainable work within the borough through local employers. By breaking down barriers to employment and providing opportunities for upskilling, the Community Regeneration team can equip the participants with the correct training in order to succeed in their chosen career path.
- 5.10 **LAC Engagements**
- The Engagement Progression Co-ordinator will liaise with the Looked After Children (LAC) Co-ordinator and the Employment Triage Workers to ensure young people who are registered and engaged in existing LAC projects will have the appropriate support from Employment Mentors in reducing complex barriers to access skills support and training as a pathway to Further Education and Employment.

5.11 Some of the ways in which the Community Regeneration team is currently working with partners to address employability and the skills agenda within the Borough are as follows:

- The team are running a pilot with Park Services to identify any licence renewals required and thus help participants sustain in their jobs. The team are able to provide bespoke training solutions to reflect the needs of the participants, for example strimming licence renewals and Lantra training.
- The employment service offer within the Community Regeneration team is further complemented through partnership working, for example links to Coleg y Cymoedd have enabled the team to run sector specific recruitment drives. The first successful event utilised the shared resources of CCBC, Coleg y Cymoedd and Wales Co-op to promote opportunities in the care sector; and the team are looking to hold a further three events in 2020 covering the construction, contact centre and retail sectors.
- Further to the initiative outlined above, staff from the Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus teams have also been working in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd to develop vocational training pathways within a variety of priority sectors. The first of these focused on the hospitality sector and participants received a range of qualifications including Food Safety, Front of House, Personal Licence, Silver Service and Barista; and 2 participants received subsequent placements in Front of House at the Coleg y Cymoedd Nantgarw campus.
- A further pathway has evolved into a bespoke training opportunity for participants already with caseloads, who were interested in careers in customer service. The programme has consisted of an ILM Level 2 Award in Leadership and Team skills. It is anticipated that they will all pass as the work completed so far has been to a high standard; and in the meantime mentors are working with the Business Liaison Officer to contact potential businesses and employers within the area with the hope of securing opportunities for interviews or work placements within the participants' chosen employment pathways.
- Following the success of these initial pathways, a series of further initiatives are currently in the process of being planned, again in partnership with the College and other organisations. In addition to the successful care sector initiative and further planned pathways outlined above, pathways can also be developed to respond to the Council's workforce development needs.

5.12 Appendices 1, 2 and 3 set out a model to develop a Caerphilly Academy that both responds to the Council's workforce development needs and industry requirements, whilst providing a robust support and monitoring procedure that meets the needs of the participant, the employer and Welsh Government legislation.

Conclusion

5.13 The proposed programme would respond to the social, economic and skills needs of the county borough and the wider region. It would enable an inclusive response to both the Cardiff Capital Region and Welsh Government Policy agendas by developing an innovative approach to aligning skills and training provision to meet the needs of the Council's workforce and the Welsh Economy through collaboration across the Local Authority and its partners and their associated supply chains. Further, it would seek to address the current and future skills shortages in the Council, its partner organisations and in priority sectors; attracting and delivering supported training, work placements and apprenticeships for local people; creating sustainable opportunities from a strong partnership base which is embedded in social value ethos.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions that have been made in relation to the content of this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

This proposal contributes towards outcomes in:

Objective 1 – Improve Education opportunities for all,
Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle and
Objective 6- Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

The Corporate Plan can be found on the intranet on the Policy portal, within the performance management section. See link below

<http://sc-aptken1/KENTICO/getattachment/ab780120-3a2b-47f9-bff0-f383462fbb98/Corporate-Plan-2018-23.aspx>

7.2 A Foundation for Success 2018-2023

This proposal contributes towards key priority Supporting People 1 which seeks to provide training opportunities that afford pathways to employability and increases the number of people that are economically active.

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Implementing the Gateway to Employment will contribute towards the national Well-being Goals as listed below-

- A prosperous Wales*
- A resilient Wales*
- A healthier Wales*
- A more equal Wales*
- A Wales of cohesive communities*
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language*
- A globally responsible Wales*

Involvement – Those involved would be many and diverse, from Council services, contracts and their supply chains, Coleg y Cymoedd, Job Centre and the Department of Work and Pensions who refer people to us for the ‘triage service’. We will need to develop greater involvement with the private sector to meet their needs in order to help people into sustainable jobs.

Long Term - The benefits for upskilling and enabling people into sustainable and well paid jobs has a clear link to improving quality of life and lifting people out of poverty. This begins with education such as literacy and numeracy and moves on through a range of experiences and skills to become work ready.

Collaborate – This Academy cannot be achieved in isolation as it deals with the complexity of needs often associated with long term unemployment, quality of life and wider economic determinants from a national and local level and its principle is based on collaboration.

Integration – We have considered how this would support other organisations objectives and

we found there is a significant benefit to others such as the Job Centre and DWP whose purpose is to enable people into employment. At a local level if there is more money going into the economy this supports local business. From a health perspective a satisfactory job and contribution to society have been shown to provide positive benefits in improving and sustaining good mental health and reduce the need for mental health services.

Prevention – The complexity of the problem we are trying to solve requires a long term and multi partnership approach, from helping young peoples' skills attainment and skills for adults and using our purchasing power and contracts, including the supply chain to promote training and apprenticeships, and to make sure we are joining up with relevant programmes like the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

Many individuals and groups who fall under the protected characteristics, and wider issues covered by the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, are often affected to a greater extent by poverty, vulnerability and the related causes; therefore any provision that provides opportunities for up skilling, training, empowering, getting more people participating and contributing to the local economy is positive.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Much of the operational delivery support would be funded via Welsh Government or EU funded programmes.

10.2 The current WG element is part of the overall Flexibilities grant, the award for which has now been received from Welsh Government for 2020-21. This total grant amount being the same as the 2019-20 budget. (£819k)

10.3 Outlined below are the potential additional resources that have been identified. Alternative funding sources are being explored. However, there may be a requirement for a contribution from the Council towards an "Apprenticeship budget".

Salaries: (presumed – all salary figures may be subject to change following the outcome of Job Evaluation for new roles) - **£70k for 12 months**

1 x Academy Mentor (assumed grade 7/8) = Circa £40k

1 x Academy Support Officer – Apprentice (assumed grade 4/5) = Circa £30k

Delivery Budgets

- **Paid Placements:** 18 placements - **£32k for 12 months**

Rationale – to provide an incentive for participants who have completed an initial unpaid placement period but may require further financial incentive to continue with a placement up to the point of accessing paid employment / apprenticeship. In the face of growing austerity, participants may often find it difficult or impossible to continue for long periods of time in placements on an unpaid basis, even where they recognise the benefit of the placement as a pathway to their chosen career. It is reasoned that a funded element within the placement structure will provide participants with the extra financial support that they need to continue and therefore gain the experience required.)

It is the intention to provide 18 paid work placements over the pilot period across CCBC, targeted at LAC's, 25+ long term unemployed and participants with disabilities. These placements will be created with the intention of providing longer term job opportunities for participants. Participants will be prepared for work through training provided in the Academy to ensure they have the appropriate skills to enter paid employment. All placements will be subject to a 2 week unpaid work trial to assess job suitability, followed by a 4 week paid work placement. Should the trial and work placement be successful and a suitable vacancy exist, participants will be offered a contract of employment by the relevant CCBC department. Participants will receive full mentor support during the trial, work placement and for 12 weeks after entering contracted employment. During the 12 weeks after entering contracted employment, resources for providing suitable workwear, travel costs and upskilling will be available to all participants.

- **Training/Barriers: £25k for 12 months**

Rationale – to provide funding to support participants to access vocational training, either for those participants who are not eligible to access the training and barriers budgets provided by the employment programmes, or for bespoke courses which may not be deemed eligible spend under the budgets of the employment programmes. The budget will also be available as a fund to address the many barriers faced by participants, most commonly relating to travel to/from training and opportunities and also any equipment required such as PPE. Any less typical barriers requests will be assessed by Mentors and Senior Employment Mentors on a case by case basis and will be approved or denied as appropriate.

It is anticipated that in the first instance, participants will access training via the employment programmes (if eligible) or through the Community Education training provision; however the budget will be available for training needs which fall beyond the scope of these existing provisions.

The total additional cost of the proposed 12 month pilot is £127k. It is proposed that this is funded from the Education & Corporate Services reserves.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Delivery staff are directly funded by Welsh Government and EU funded programmes. Staff funded by these programmes' are on fixed term contracts until the 31st March 2021 for Communities for Work Plus and Legacy programmes and June 30th 2022 for the Communities for Work programme. Should the grants seek administrative and service efficiencies post 2021 there could be implications for the Academy after the pilot period should there be a decision to continue it.
- 11.2 This proposal includes the creation of 2 dedicated staff members to support the Academy programme, as follows:
 - **Academy Mentor** (presumed grade 7-8) – This role will take responsibility for the supervision and mentoring of all Academy participants who are not already eligible for the existing employment programmes (and therefore do not already have a mentor as part of those programmes). It is expected that these participants will primarily be made up of school leavers / graduates / apprentices. The role will be responsible for overseeing these individuals' progression throughout the Academy process, using a caseload approach, to include initial assessment and guidance in securing placements/opportunities, followed by ongoing supporting and mentoring as each individual progress. This ongoing support will include supporting participants to access training according to their own needs and those of

their chosen placement / career path, ongoing reviews to check progress and support to both the individual and placement managers to resolve any ongoing issues which may arise whilst a person is on placement or during the initial stages of their employment.

- **Academy Admin Support Officer** – This role will take responsibility for all administrative duties necessary for the setup and day to day delivery of the Academy. Duties will include initial contact with participants, file management, responsibility for Academy finance in relation to orders, invoicing etc., liaising with training providers to book and oversee training (including management of registers) and other duties as appropriate. In line with the overriding ethos of the Academy programme, it is proposed that this role be offered as an apprenticeship opportunity, with daily mentoring being provided by the Senior Employment Mentors (see below).

The management of the Academy programme will be undertaken via existing resources within the Community Regeneration team. The 2 x Senior Employment Mentors will take lead responsibility for operational management of the programme and will also be responsible for line management of the Academy Mentor as well as line management and mentoring of the Academy Admin Support Officer.

Strategic management of the programme will be fed up to the Senior Management team within the Employment programmes, namely the Employment Manager (who will be responsible for line management of the Senior Employment Mentors) and Development and Monitoring Manager, with overall strategic management sitting within the remit of the Community Regeneration Manager.

Employer Liaison will primarily be carried out by the existing Business Liaison Officer, who already works to build links with the local employment network to establish local opportunities and support them in meeting labour demand, in line with the requirements of the existing Employment programmes. The remit of this role will be expanded to include the Academy, ensuring that the Academy programme is fully integrated into the wider network of Employment Support provided by the local authority.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 All consultation responses are reflected in the report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

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Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Skills and Academy Proposal – Gateway to Employment
Appendix 2 Gateway to Employment Model
Appendix 3 CCBC Academy Model

Appendix 1

Skills & Apprenticeship Academy Proposal

Gateway to Employment

Proposal

To develop a model to deliver a sustainable and framework compliant programme that provides holistic skills, training and apprenticeship provision that includes work experience, placements and apprenticeships.

Provide work experience and taster opportunities for school pupils as well as provide support, advice and guidance to schools to help those who do not wish to follow a traditional attainment pathway to access alternative provision via an apprenticeship route.

To provide ring fenced sustainable job opportunities for the locally unemployed through Caerphilly County Borough Council as an employer, supporting the Well-being objective 2 of the 2018-2023 Corporate Plan.

To ensure young people who are registered and engaged in existing LAC projects will have the appropriate support from Employment Mentors in reducing complex barriers to access skills support and training as a pathway to Higher Education and Employment.

Aim

To respond to the social, economic and skills needs for the county borough and wider region, working in collaboration with the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership who are currently engaging with employers and other stakeholders to identify current and future skills needs. This would enable an inclusive regional response to both Cardiff Capital Region and Welsh Government Policy by developing an innovative approach to aligning skills and training provision to meet the needs of the Council's workforce and the Welsh Economy through collaboration across the Local Authority and its partners and their associated supply chains. This would address the current and future skills shortages in priority sectors; attracting and delivering training, work placements and apprenticeships for local people, creating sustainable opportunities from a strong partnership base which are embedded in social value ethos.

To meet the requirements of the Council's workforce development needs and minimise outsourced agency costs by providing a robust in house recruitment process that will help shape services, target our resources and prioritise our efforts in aiding the local community to flourish. This proposal aims to provide equality of opportunity for all by upskilling local employees through vocational and non-

vocational qualifications. Through in work support and on the job training it focuses on developing 'future skills' by supporting learning that enables young and adult employment opportunities. By entwining a healthy learning environment with a supported 'Digital Skills' programme we can deliver on the promises laid out in the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 manifesto.

Context

The skills agenda is fundamental to the economic development & economic prosperity of the nation, Cardiff Capital Region and Caerphilly County Borough.

Employability skills are the core skills and traits that are needed in nearly every job. These are the general skills that make individuals "employable". They are soft skills that allow an individual to work well with others, apply knowledge to solve problems and fit into any work environment. These skills are then complemented by professional skills that enable an individual to be successful in the workplace for a given role(s). In recent years, skills & training delivery has been based upon learner demand as opposed to strategic needs across the region. This has contributed to a mis-match between learner choice and employment opportunity with the consequence that key skills subject areas, including priority sectors and digital skills are under subscribed at all levels.

The lack of evidence and guidance for young people in the region combined with the under-supply of young people interested in doing apprenticeships or pursuing careers in priority sectors has the potential, to further exacerbate the region's skills mismatch. Moreover, the uncertainty for skills supply associated with Brexit, automation and the increasing significance of digital skills enhances the imperative for intervention to deliver an employer led skills system.

It is therefore fundamental that any strategic approach to skills development must respond to the region's current & future strategic need. Key elements of this approach should:

- Eliminate the gap in unemployment and economic inactivity rates across Wales and the UK and reduce the number of young people who are not in employment, education and training.
- Address the skills gaps and shortages in priority sectors.
- Develop higher level skills to future proof the workforce.
- Promote the retention of a skilled labour force.
- Provide skills that meet the needs of key sectors and key infrastructure investment.
- Improve perceptions of apprenticeships and increase the number and range of quality, all age apprenticeship opportunities, including higher and degree apprenticeships linked to national and regional priority and growth sectors.

- Strengthen employer engagement, including the marketing of career opportunities and pathways.
- Improve the links between local and regional employment opportunities and the key employment support programmes.
- Improve employer skills, utilisation and tackling under-utilisation.
- Promote STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and digital skills.
- Improve graduate recruitment and retention and enhancing the appreciation of graduate's value.

The Welsh Government Economic Action Plan (“Prosperity for All”) sets out a number of key themes, including:

- **Prosperous & secure** – an economy which spreads opportunity and tackles inequality, delivering individual and national prosperity and enabling people to fulfil their ambitions and enhance well-being through secure and sustainable employment.
- **Ambitions & Learning** – instilling in everyone a passion to learn throughout life and making education, from the earliest age the foundation for a lifetime of learning and achievement

‘Prosperity for All’ notes that local authorities working in partnership to reform economic development and skills provision to work on a regional basis will be crucial to delivery of the agenda. This paper therefore sets out the approach to the improving skills agenda, including current and past provision, successes and deficiencies and sets out an action plan for the future.

Apprenticeships offer considerable benefits to society and the economy. They provide people with the opportunity to develop job related competencies, technical skills, numeracy and literacy skills and self-esteem. They also play an important role in tackling youth unemployment. Skills developed through Apprenticeships contribute to higher value-added economic activity. They are good for growth and social mobility.

Apprenticeships will support individuals of all ages to get the skills they need to enter the labour market and, importantly, progress through it into higher skilled work. Research tells us that the jobs of tomorrow will require far higher levels of competence than in the past. Data projections tell us that by 2024 the proportion of those in employment who need to be qualified at Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) levels 4 – 6 is projected to almost double from 22 per cent to 40 per cent.

Caerphilly CBC has the fourth highest rate of unemployment in Wales and there are particularly high rates of economically inactive 16 to 24 year old people. The demography of the Council Workforce also reveals a ‘succession time – bomb’ as 30% of the population are aged over 50, so it is important to have an educated workforce who can be ready for work. In addition, there are sectors within the Council that are already finding it difficult to recruit; for example Engineering, Building Control, Procurement, etc. In addition, Caerphilly Homes and partners are acutely aware that they do not have the skills within their existing workforce or their supply chains to build a new generation of Council homes at scale and pace to meet the needs of communities. The demand to deliver affordable homes using modern methods of construction (noted in the Affordable Housing Review commissioned by WG) that are near zero carbon requires a completely different skill set within the workforce that does not currently exist.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is the Lead delivery Body for a number of externally funded employment support and community learning programmes sitting across the Communities, Education and Corporate Services directorates. It is proposed that these could be aligned to respond to the requirements of the training and apprenticeship programme and meet the Council’s workforce development and wider labour market needs.

The Cardiff Capital Region Regional Skills Partnership vision is to develop the social and economic potential of the region, supporting people and businesses to deliver a high performing prosperous region that stimulates inward investment. The Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Partnership Plan 2019 – 2022 has identified 7 key sectors, each of which has a cluster group of business, education, training providers and Welsh Government to ensure that training provision and facilities meet current and future needs of business and learners. To understand skills gaps and shortages particular to those industries:

- Advanced Materials and Manufacturing;
- Compound Semi-Conductors
- Construction;
- Creative;
- Digital and Enabling Technologies
- Human Foundational Economy;
Education, Health, Social Care and Childcare
- Human Foundational Economy;
Hospitality, Retail and Tourism

A public training, skills and apprenticeship scheme within Caerphilly CBC would be synergistic with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and its aim to create a range of apprentice opportunities to satisfy the needs of industry, business and commerce in SE Wales. It will ensure these priority sectors are targeted to maximise opportunities from the Cardiff Capital Region and support the growth sectors in the region, whilst

assisting the Council with its own workforce planning issues and provide opportunities across a range of demographic and socio economic profiles.

Why

To provide a holistic employment support, training and apprenticeship programme for all ages to meet the current and future skill requirements of the Council and the wider county borough to make a significant impact on reducing levels of inactivity and unemployment amongst local residents.

To ensure skills and adult education provision aligns to the needs of the Employment Support programmes, apprenticeship provision and labour market needs.

To support schools to provide work experience placements and offer alternative provision for those who do not wish to follow a traditional attainment pathway.

To support the local communities fight against poverty, improve the lives of residents, providing sustainable employment opportunities.

How

CCBC Gateway to Employment Model (Appendix 1)

Introduction

The intention of the Gateway to Employment model is to provide appropriate employment pathways for participants aged 16 and upwards. By introducing a holistic employment pathway, we can provide a high quality service that not only meets the requirements of the participants, but fulfils corporate commitments in respect of the employability and skills & apprenticeships agendas.

The model recognises that, as an employer, CCBC has a social responsibility to recognise and realise the potential of diverse people with a range of qualifications and experience, including those who may be long term unemployed through accessing authority-run employment support programmes. It is recognised that there are many people within our local communities, who, whilst not necessarily having the required levels of qualifications and/or experience for a role, might nevertheless have much to offer in terms of transferable skills or life experience; and indeed, it should also be acknowledged that merely having a desired level of qualification does not necessarily mean that an individual has all of the skills and attributes required to be successful in a given role. As one of the largest employers within the County Borough, CCBC should be leading the way in terms of providing opportunities, whether they be work experience, placements or fully paid jobs, to unemployed people from a range of backgrounds, including those with complex barriers (see section below on Barriers to Employment). This responsibility includes a commitment to support and upskill those members of the local community who may not have the usual level of qualifications and experience, but who may show potential and willingness to progress under the academy model; and it is the overall

ambition of this model that CCBC departments will commit to a certain proportion of opportunities being made available and preferably even ring-fenced to people who fall within this category.

We recognise that for most managers within the Authority, this approach will represent a diversion from usual recruitment practices. It may also raise additional responsibilities for managers and teams with regards to the support that academy participants may require, particularly during the initial weeks, when in the workplace. Although we would hope that all CCBC staff will recognise the value of providing this additional support in terms of the investment in the local community, the model also makes provisions to mitigate these issues through the availability of mentors, who will be available to guide new employees and managers through their first 12 weeks in post/placement. It is essential that this support is focused on both the participant and the manager, as the overall aim will be to equip managers (and all CCBC staff) to support the individual's progression within their role (rather than relying solely on the mentors), as a means of ensuring sustainability of employment on a long term basis. As part of the model, managers (and team members) from all departments will also be invited to attend regular briefings to raise awareness about the model, some of the barriers that participants may have, ways that they can be supported to address these barriers and the benefits of offering opportunities in this way. It is hoped that these briefings, alongside the ongoing support available, will help to remove any reluctance or concerns that managers and teams may have. By raising awareness and breaking down barriers across the entire workforce in this way, it is hoped that CCBC will show itself to be a truly forward-thinking employer in terms of its approach to addressing unemployment and social inequality across the County Borough.

Initial conversations have also taken place with Remploy regarding the provision of opportunities for disabled participants, including those who may have progressed from the Work and Health programme, whereby, as a partner in the programme, Remploy would be able to refer customers into the Academy model and would be able to provide additional support for those customers in relation to disabilities. Depending on the number of opportunities offered, this may also qualify CCBC to become a Disability Confident Leader, with support from Remploy's Disability Confident Team.

CCBC Academy (Appendix 2)

The Academy will incorporate existing services currently delivered by CCBC to provide a universal employment support service for residents of the borough:

- ***Communities for Work***
Unemployed 16-14 year olds living in deprived areas
25+ years unemployed for over 12 months who live in deprived areas
- ***Communities for Work Plus***
Unemployed who are not eligible for any other programme

- **Bridges into Work**
25+ years unemployed for over 12 months who live in non-deprived areas
- **Inspire to Work**
Unemployed 16-24 year olds living in non-deprived areas
- **Working Skills for Adults**
Upskilling low-skilled workers
- **Nurture Equip & Thrive (NET)**
Upskilling low skilled workers and increasing earning potential
- **Community Education Training**
- **Legacy**
- **Business, Enterprise & Renewal Team**
- **CCBC Schools**

Strong working partnerships will also be formed with Coleg-y-Cymoedd and Caerphilly Business Forum to broaden training and employment opportunities for participants and pupils.

Referral Process

Referrals into the Academy will primarily be received from the below partners:

- CCBC Schools;
- Careers Wales Gateway;
- DWP, Job Centre Plus;
- Participant Self-Referrals;
- Coleg-y-Cymoedd;
- CCBC Recruitment (Apprenticeships);
- Partner Support Programmes (Internal & External).

All participants referred to the Academy will follow a step-by-step process to assess the needs of the participant and determine the most appropriate level of support:

1. Participant referred to Triage;
2. Triage to undertake eligibility checks with participant;
3. Participant will be sign-posted to most appropriate programme and mentor;
4. Mentor will undertake a Needs Assessment with participant to determine if:
 - Participant needs intensive support (**Red**)
 - Participant requires upskilling (**Amber**)
 - Participant is work/apprenticeship ready (**Green**)
5. Participant will then be sign-posted to appropriate gateway

This approach will ensure that all active participants are supported to become work-ready (Green) over their time in the Academy in order to achieve sustainable employment through accessing appropriate training and support services. In the

majority of cases, participants will be claiming benefits throughout their journey while being supported by their mentor to find suitable job opportunities and may leave the Academy at any time.

Should a participant be deemed not ready to enter employment due to varying issues, a further referral to a more appropriate support service will be made to ensure the participant receives the best possible support.

Training & Mentoring

Following on from the referral process and the assignment to an appropriate programme and employment mentor, Red and Amber assessed participants who are not yet equipped to enter the job market and/or are deemed to have numerous barriers to overcome will be enrolled into the ***Development Academy*** gateway. The Development Academy will provide intensive training alongside day to day mentoring support in order to upskill and nurture participants to a work-ready level. An appropriate package of training will be tailored to each participant, addressing any barriers that currently prohibit them from advancing to sustainable employment. Training will be sourced from the catalogue of opportunities currently offered by Community Education, Coleg-y-Cymoedd and external providers. This aspect of delivery is essential to the running of the Academy in order to achieve sustainability through fully utilising pooled resources.

Green and Amber assessed participants, who will be deemed to be closer to the job market will be directed to the ***Work Ready*** gateway whereby they will be supported by their employment mentor to upskill where appropriate to find sustainable employment. Any barriers prohibiting participants to advance will also be addressed. As above, training will be sourced from the catalogue of opportunities currently offered by Community Education, Coleg-y-Cymoedd and external providers.

At the time participants are assessed to have reached work-ready status, if appropriate, they can graduate on to further supported opportunities either within CCBC or with partner businesses in the area.

Participant Opportunities

Further opportunities within the Gateway to Employment model will include:

- Apprenticeships;
- Work Experience (Year 10 & 12 Pupils);
- Work Placements & Tasters.

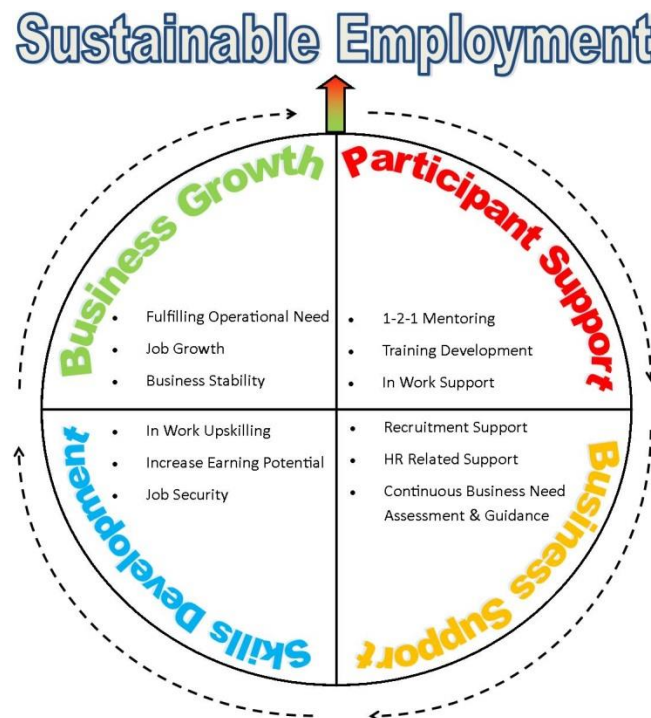
Throughout this process, participants will continue to be supported by their employment mentor and also the Business Liaison Officer, who will be responsible

for sourcing placements to address the needs of both CCBC and the needs of local employers.

Sustainable Employment

At the point where participants find sustainable employment, they will continue to receive full mentor support for 12 weeks. This includes help with barriers such as travel costs, childcare, workwear and equipment. Support is also extended to the employer in terms of recruitment, HR advice and guidance as well as ongoing growth through training, upskilling and continual assessment of business need.

This approach will help create a reciprocal dependency in developing sustainable employment opportunities. (As per wheel diagram below)



Providing Employer Support

- Pre-screening of all applicants
- Arranged interviews and location provision
- In-work support services
- Bespoke employment route ways into work
- Candidate sifting
- Awareness sessions
- Meet the employer sessions
- Work trials available
- PPE provision
- Travel costs covered and better off calculations

- Zero recruitment costs
- Extra training and funding available for upskilling employees
- Links to local colleges (Coleg-y-Cymoedd & Coleg Gwent)
- Untapped talent pools

Barriers to Employment

There are numerous complex barriers participants face on a day to day basis when entering the job market. There is no definitive list and in many cases, no answers to the issues faced. Currently as a team, we are working to address many of the barriers listed below, but require stronger interdepartmental links and corporate buy in to make a generational difference:

- **Poor Mental Health** - low mood, low confidence
- **Drug & Alcohol Abuse** - access to reliable services locally
- **Childcare** - affordability and availability
- **Transport** - poor links to Cities & Towns, affordability
- **Food Poverty** - affordability to support families
- **Workwear** - affordability and access to local outlets
- **Housing** - affordability
- **Qualifications & Training** - lack of recognisable achievements & experience
- **Social Isolation/Exclusion** - generational behaviours
- **Basic Skills Needs** - lack of basic life skills
- **Digital Exclusion** - affordability, lack of skills/knowledge, broadband availability

Appendices:

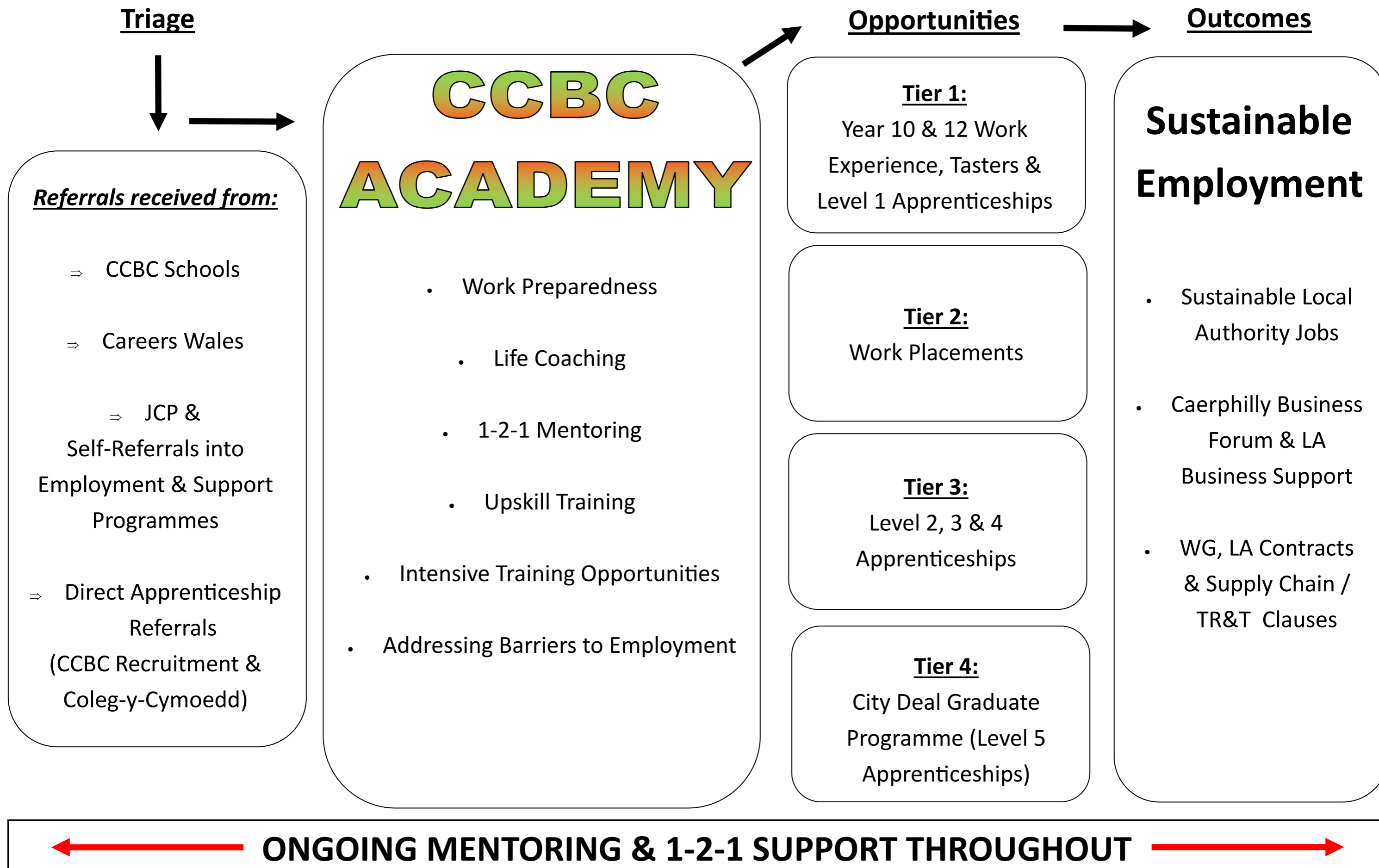


1. Gateway to Employment Model.pc



2. CCBC Academy Model.pdf

GATEWAY TO EMPLOYMENT



CCBC ACADEMY

STEP 1: Participant referred to Triage

STEP 2: Triage to undertake eligibility checks

STEP 3: Participant sign-posted to programme/mentor

STEP 4: Mentor to undertake Needs Assessment to determine:

- **Red** : Participant needs intensive support
- **Amber** : Participant requires upskilling
- **Green** : Participant is work/apprenticeship ready

STEP 5: Participant is sign-posted to appropriate gateway

DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

Day to Day Support

- 1-2-1 Mentor Support
 - Life Coaching
 - Basic Skills
 - CV Writing
- Interview Techniques
- Addressing Barriers *

Intensive Training

- Community Education Training Suite
 - Coleg-y-Cymoedd Gateway
- External Providers (Procurement Led)

WORK READY

Day to Day Support

- 1-2-1 Mentor Support
- Addressing Barriers *

Upskill Training

- Community Education Training Suite
 - Coleg-y-Cymoedd Gateway
- External Providers (Procurement Led)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work Experience & Tasters
 - Work Placements
 - Apprenticeships
- City Deal Graduate Programme

* Extensive list of participant barriers explained within report