

Initial Transport Services London Underground : Initial steps to employment

London has some of the largest areas of deprivation in the UK. Around 30 per cent of residents are not in work and 41 per cent of children live in poverty. Getting more people into paid work can contribute to reductions in crime, poverty and benefit payments, as well as improving people’s general health and wellbeing.

The GLA group’s role

Against this backdrop the Greater London Authority (GLA) group¹ spends more than £7bn through its supply chain to support London’s fire, police and transport services. To ensure value for money and enable Londoners to benefit from GLA group spend, key suppliers are required to make employment, skills and training opportunities more accessible to the communities they serve. To achieve this, the GLA group has adopted a pioneering procurement approach – Strategic Labour Needs and Training (SLNT) – to support these suppliers in creating positive training and employment opportunities.

Through SLNT, the GLA group’s Supplier Skills Team (SST) supports suppliers in achieving their SLNT contractual requirements. Facilities Management has been a particular focus for the SST, as this industry can offer a wide variety of roles from entry level to technical specialists and managers. The SST has been working closely with the GLA group’s suppliers and procurement teams to introduce SLNT requirements within this category.

The Total Purchase Service (TPS) contract was the first in London Underground to include SLNT requirements. Awarded in 2009 to 12 suppliers, the contract delivers a range of support services on the Underground including station, fleet and track cleaning, litter picking, security, vegetation control, fencing and grounds maintenance. Initial Transport Services is one of the companies delivering these services.

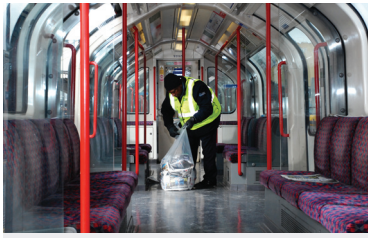
¹ The GLA group includes the Greater London Authority, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority, Metropolitan Police Authority and Transport for London.



‘The SLNT requirements prompted us to review our existing recruitment and training practices and the innovative activities that we are now engaged with have enabled us to access new talent pools, engage with the local community and provide even more effective development to our frontline staff.

We were initially cautious about how this could practically be embedded into our business, however with the support of the SST we were able to not only deliver against the Mayoral priorities but also develop a new approach to recruitment and training which we are now presenting to other areas of the organisation as business as usual.’

**Vicky Jones, HR Partner,
Initial Transport Services**



The journey and its outcomes

During the bidding process, Initial Transport Services set a clear objective to explore how SLNT could benefit Londoners and businesses. Working with the SST, the company engaged with local communities and discovered the opportunities available to unemployed people. In order to make its recruitment processes as accessible as possible, Initial Transport Services amended its assessment process to focus on employee competency and capability rather than previous experience. The SST, using its strategic relationships with government employment and training programmes, identified two suitable partners to support this new approach.

JobCentrePlus (JCP) provided the mechanism to give unemployed Londoners access to job opportunities. Pre-employment support was provided by LEAP (Local Employment Access Project) which specialises in supporting long-term unemployed people into work. As a result of this partnership, 377 unemployed Londoners were recruited onto the TPS contract by Initial Transport Services in 2010/2011.

Research has shown that people who have been long-term unemployed may find the transition back to work challenging, putting them at risk of falling back into unemployment. To prevent this and to continue its supportive approach, Initial Transport Services engaged Entrepreneurs in Action to provide mentoring support to new staff members.

Through this project, Initial Transport Services has not only helped unemployed Londoners into work, but has also secured a positive business outcome. Research carried out by Asset Skills (the sector skills council for facilities management) shows that the average staff turnover in cleaning roles is between 75 and 100 per cent. Around 80 per cent of staff who started work through this project are still with Initial Transport Services 12 months later. This helps with service continuity and reduces recruitment and re-training costs.

Following a successful recruitment campaign, Initial Transport Services is now working with the SST and the National Apprenticeship Service to implement a new apprenticeship programme. To date, 43 staff have been enrolled onto apprenticeships, recognising the opportunity this offers for developing staff skills and productivity. Other parts of the business are also being reviewed as future areas for apprenticeship schemes. New horticultural apprenticeships have been since created.



‘The TPS contract provides a vital service on the Underground, ensuring that the environment our customers enjoy is safe and well maintained. The quality of this service is underpinned by the skills, capability and stability of the workforce, and I have been delighted to see Initial Transport Services making employment opportunities available to Londoner’s from all backgrounds, and developing their staff through apprenticeship schemes.’

Philip Hufton, Asset Performance Director, London Underground

‘I have been unemployed for eight years and was finding it difficult to find employment. When I heard about the job with Initial Transport Services through LEAP and the JCP I was delighted. I was given all the support and help to prepare me for the interview and the job from LEAP.

Getting this job has changed my life. I am now able to support my family, I have a much better social life and I am now gaining qualifications through the apprenticeship which will help me in the future.’

David Oyet, Cleaning Services.