

THE BOROUGH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

COLLABORATING WITH LONDON'S BOROUGHES TO PROVIDE APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Background

The Greater London Authority (GLA) Group and the London boroughs have a target between them of employing (directly or through their supply chains) 5,000 apprentices between 2009 and 2012. Recent research has indicated scarce skills in areas such as traffic and highways engineering and a need for new resource to replace an increasingly ageing workforce.

In the light of this, TfL's Borough Partnerships group is working with several London boroughs and 'Construction Skills' the sector skills council for construction to pilot an apprenticeship programme in the field of transportation.

Key themes

The programme, which is managed through the GLA Group's Supplier Skills Team, is focusing on Highways Technician apprenticeships. The three year structured training programme covers a broad range of highway engineering activities, supporting the borough's traffic and highways team to ensure that London's road network is maintained and operated effectively. The apprentices will achieve their BTEC National Certificate in Civil Engineering and an NVQ L3 in Construction Contracting Operations. By the end of the scheme the trainee will have achieved or be close to achieving Technician membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

This programme provides boroughs with the opportunity to enhance the skills of their workforce and to engage with their local community in a sector where skills shortages are prevalent. Five boroughs - Hillingdon, Hounslow, Lambeth, Redbridge and Tower Hamlets - are participating in the pilot, each putting two apprentices on the programme. Involving a group of boroughs opens up opportunities for the apprentices to participate in cross-working and group training.

Outcomes

Ten apprentices are now in post. Typically, one day a week is spent at college, with four days work per week at an engineering site or in an office environment. The apprenticeship lasts for three years, with the technical training facilitated by Construction Skills. >>



-“These apprenticeship positions are a fabulous opportunity for young people to receive a solid, accredited qualification doing something they really enjoy. The two apprentices we have taken on have so much enthusiasm about working and learning. We are really pleased to be part of this and to make it work.”

Julia Fitzgerald

Business Forum Manager London Borough of Hillingdon



Stephan Cuff, Lambeth

One of the apprentices is Stephan Cuff, aged 23. Stephan began working in the highways department at his local council in Lambeth in April 2010.

Stephan heard of the opportunity from a friend, who had seen the apprenticeships advertised at Job Centre Plus. With the help of the Prince's Trust and Construction Skills, who provided interview training and personal advice, Stephan applied for the apprenticeship, was asked for interview, and was accepted into the scheme.

"I've started working in the transport department in a team of seven. There's another apprentice here in the highways team and we see a lot of each other. We also get to meet the apprentices from the other boroughs at our one day a week at college. I'm working towards my NVQ level 3 and a BTEC qualification".

Stephan is currently working on computer-aided design programmes linked to planning for road projects. He has always been interested in IT, and may continue to pursue opportunities in this area. "But", he says, "there are lots of possibilities ahead, and other departments to work in over the next three years. So I hope I can see what else there is, and then decide where to focus".

Michael Salter, Hillingdon

Another apprentice, working at Hillingdon borough council, is Michael Salter. Michael left school in 2008, taking a number of short-term jobs before seeing the apprenticeship programme as a great chance to develop his experience and qualifications, at a time when the recession made jobs scarce and skills all the more valuable.

"The apprenticeship here is a real opportunity to learn and develop my skills. It's structured, and we are getting experience in a range of departments. I'm getting trained on-the-job, and being given really good guidance from the managers in charge of the programme."

As Michael himself testifies, the scheme is really enjoyable. But, more importantly, it is providing opportunity. "It is by far the best job I have done. I'm learning, and enjoying it. And I know that if I do well, I can use the experience and the qualifications I gain here to do a range of other things in future".

The Future

This innovative programme has for the first time brought together a partnership of London boroughs, Construction Skills, the college and TfL, to develop and implement an apprenticeship programme that meets scarce skill requirements whilst providing local residents with life-changing employment and training opportunities. Building on the success of the programme, it is planned to expand the scheme to other boroughs and across different sectors, increasing the employment and training opportunities available to young Londoners.



"The training that this scheme provides is both challenging and intense, with delivery over a three year period. Having the other boroughs involved provides wider possibilities for the apprentices; giving them the opportunity to share facilities and experiences.

They can also meet regularly to provide peer support. It's also a great opportunity for them to receive training and work towards qualifications.

Three years is a good length of time, and this initiative is helping them get them on the right path for the future."

Liz Mayers

Recruitment Strategy Manager
London Borough of Lambeth

For any additional information on this case study or other TfL related work in this area, please contact the supplier skills team at supplierskills@TfL.gov.uk.