



Association For Public Service Excellence, Skills, Apprenticeships & Training For Front Line Services

Apprenticeships and Trainee Schemes
“The Cardiff Experience”

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Running Order

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Parks & Sport – Service Profile

- Sport, Leisure & Culture Portfolio
- 1,600 hectares of Public Open Space
- Parks and Open spaces
- Sport Pitch Management
- Highway Maintenance
- Bedding Plant Production
- Tree and Woodland Management
- Conservation and Bio Diversity
- Landscape Design
- Sports Development
- Revenue Budget - 7 million
- Capital Budget - 3.5 million
- 235 fte staff

Apprenticeship & Trainee Schemes - Background



- History of Apprenticeships up until the late Seventies
- Effect of Compulsory Competitive Tendering
- Internal Review in the Spring / Summer of 2002 – Improvement Group
- Parks & Gardens Apprenticeship Scheme launched in Spring 2003





The Issues

Employment Conditions Committee April 2002

“It is widely recognised throughout the Industry that there is a shortage of individuals practicing traditional horticultural skills. Historically, Councils have been the main trainers of amenity horticulturalists but this is no longer the case. Indeed very few school leavers are now interested or are encouraged to pursue a career in public sector horticulture. The problem has been compounded by the lack of career path opportunities presented and by the flat-cap image that gardening sometimes portrays”

The Issues

- Ageing Workforce
- Erosion of Skills base
- Inability to recruit
- Absence of a succession plan
- Poor perception of the Industry
- Not talking / fear
- Budget cuts / Absence of funding



The Approach

- Horticultural Apprenticeship – 4 year scheme linked to National Certificate in Horticulture / National Diploma in Horticulture
- Trainee Arborist – 2 year scheme linked to National Certificate in Arboriculture
- Managed through a Panel
- Provision of external work placements
- Ring fenced vacancy arrangement
- Give them responsibility – gradually
- Set stretching targets
- Make them feel special

The Outcomes

- 8 Horticultural Apprenticeship Posts
- 2 Trainee Arborist Posts
- 100% Retention Rate / Progression
- Halting erosion of skills base / contributing to succession plan
- More competitive work environment
- Future Supervisors and Managers
- 4 Individual APSE Awards – Horticultural Apprentice of the Year
- 4 APSE Employer Awards
- Secured 12,000 Euros through Leonardo Funding Programme

Next Steps

- 2012 / 13 Review
- Designate Co-ordinator
- Develop Diversity
- Embrace Pathways to Apprenticeship Scheme
- Develop structured NEET programme
- Increase engagement with Schools / Educational Establishments



