



Department for Work & Pensions

A Huge Success for Coventry!

Engaging Our Schools Programme Summary

Staff at Department for Work & Pensions in Coventry have recently completed their first 'Engaging Our Schools' programme, which ran from 1st June 2015 to 15th July 2015.

Ten staff took part from across Coventry, this included staff from District Office, Work Coaches from Tile Hill, Cofa Court and a member of the Recruitment Team. They worked with twelve year 10 pupils from Foxford School, which is a local school and community arts college.

Students were invited into Cofa Court and six two hour sessions were held over six weeks during the Summer Term.

The project provided staff with an opportunity to work as part of a cross district team, developing project management, leadership, mentoring and coaching skills and building confidence.

With the support of the Project Manager, the staff designed and delivered sessions, planned fun activities and mentored students on a 1:1 or 2:1 basis. Sessions centered on the skills required to gain and retain employment, with the aim of building the students aspirations and preventing students becoming 'not engaged' or unemployed.

Student's ideas around future careers were challenged and appropriate speakers were invited to reinforce messages. They attended a mock interview with a senior manager; although the students found this a daunting but really useful experience they all gained useful feedback.

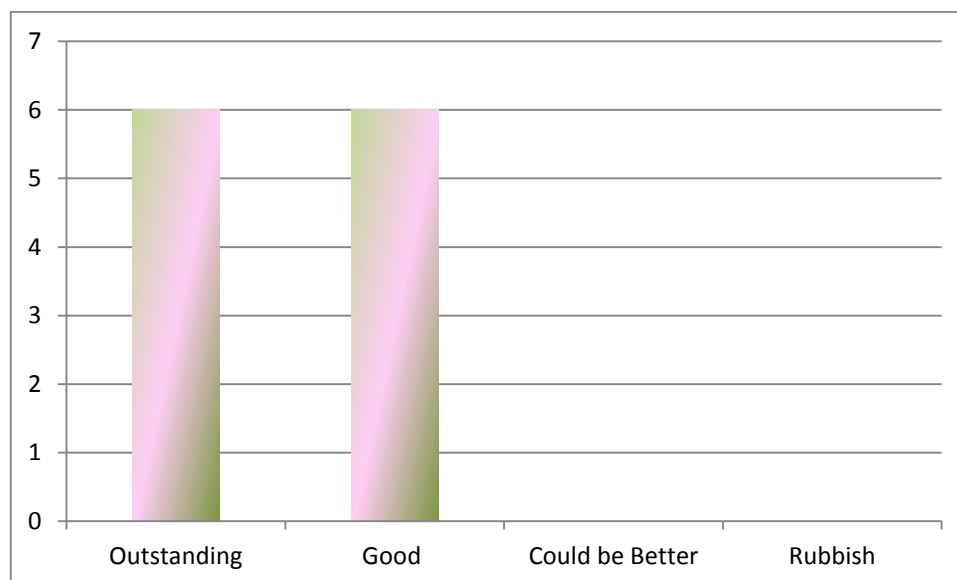
The Programme has been a huge success, feedback from students, teachers & staff has been very positive. It has given our staff the chance to develop many new skills, a chance to work and connect with a different audience within our local community and to promote the work of the Civil Service to the wider community.

In order to run the Programme and to provide a gift for the students, the staff engaged in a range of fund raising activities with colleagues in their local teams and offices. Dress down days, cake and samosa sales were held and staff promoted the Programme to colleagues. This not only engaged staff but built up interest in future events.

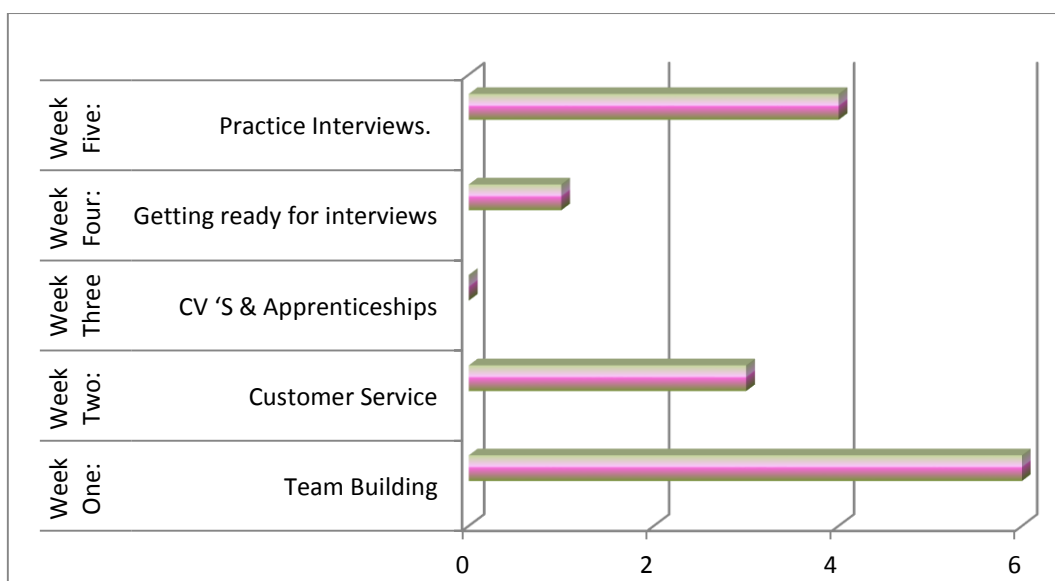
The Programme culminated with a celebration event to which Ruth Williamson, the school Head Teacher was invited. Each child was presented with an interview portfolio, pen and USB stick and a copy of their CV and ended the Programme with a buffet put together by staff.

At the end of the Programme, students were asked to give their feedback on the Programme. The results are given below:

1. 50% of the students rated the 'Engaging Our Schools' Programme as outstanding, with the other 50% rating the Programme as good.



2. Students were asked which week was their favorite and why. The responses were varied. Some students found it difficult to choose just one week and selected more than one. Team building and practice interviews were the firm favorites.



Comments included

Team Building

"Was great because it helped me get to know people more and I learnt how to work as a team"

"Because it taught me how to work as a team with people I do not know, it helped build my confidence"

Interview Skills

"It was my first interview and I learnt a lot from it"

"It was good practice and it felt like a proper interview"

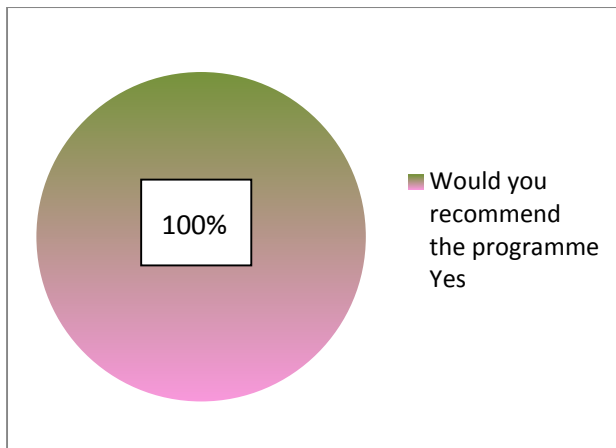
- Students were asked about their mentor, feedback highlighted we have some very talented staff. All the comments were very positive and spoke about feeling comfortable with their mentors.

Comments included:

"She supported me in positive way, she was kind and helped me produce a good CV, and she also helped me with things I was unsure about"

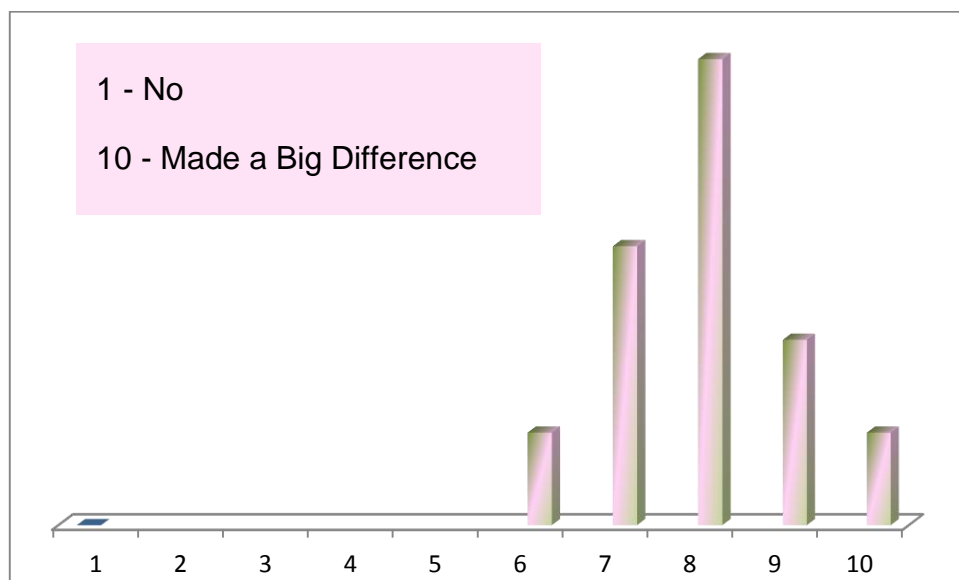
"My mentor supported me by researching into the career I want to pursue. They found out what I need to do to get there"

My mentor was really nice; she supported me with everything I was unsure of"



4. 100% of students would recommend the Programme to other students.

5. On a score of 1 to 10, has the programme helped you to think about your future career choices?



6. Students were asked what they would tell their family about the Programme, there was no negative feedback and some really positive information was ascertained.

"I would tell them that it is a great Programme and that I really benefitted from it"

"That it was very worthwhile, I picked up a lot of skills from it"

"That it is amazing and helps us with what we want to be when we are older"

7. We asked students what we could have done better. The majority said nothing but a few of the other comments were:

“Nothing – keep it the same”

“You could have given us ice cream when it was really hot!!”

“Nothing – you did everything really well”

“You could give us practical work”

8. During the six weeks, we had three speakers come in to talk to the group, Henley College and AAA spoke about training opportunities and apprenticeships. In addition we had two members of staff from Coventry City Council, Refuse Collection department. (This was because during the first session we asked students what their best and worst careers would be, overwhelmingly students rated “bin man” as the worst possible career and we wanted to challenge their thinking).

Students were asked which speaker was best and why?

“Coventry City Council - made being bin people more fun”

“All of them were useful and I learnt a lot”

“Coventry City Council because it changed my view of a bin mans job”

Overall the Programme has been a great experience for both students and staff. The staff has also completed an end of Programme questionnaire and the comments have been really amazing.

“It was a rewarding experience”

“This is an experience of a lifetime – changing people’s lives 100%”

“A great way to engage with other colleagues. Understand your local community, broaden your horizons and have some fun!”

“It encourages you to think outside the box and working with young teenager’s means you can make a real difference”.

In summary we have thoroughly enjoyed the whole Programme and are now looking at how this may be extended across Mercia District.

Mary Dunleavy

Project Manager

28th July 2015





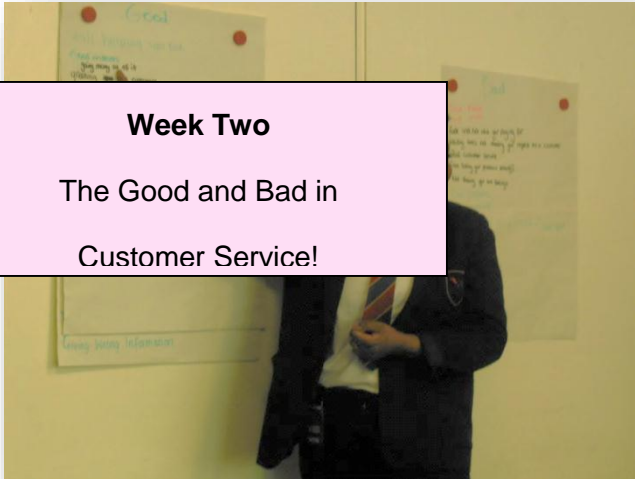
Week 1

Team Building

The “Marshmallow Challenge”



Week Two
The Good and Bad in
Customer Service!



V
ive work





Week 4

Preparing for interviews

Designing the Careers of your
choice on a Cookie!



**Week 5 -Challenging
Perceptions and interview
practice.**

A discussion with Ryan Simms
from Coventry City Council
Refuse Department.





Week 6 – Celebration Week

Mentors arranged a number of fund raising activities across Coventry to raise money to buy each student an interview portfolio, USB stick and Pen. Copies of CV's and Attendance Certificates signed by the District Manager were also presented.



A Big Thank You

Students	Mentors
Sandip Jandu	Julie Ranger
Rebecca Thompson	Sarah Holmes
Josh Avery	Wendy Crayton
Adan Shariq	Bev Morton
Hollie Warnock	Chan Purewal
Charlie Clarke	Julie Ranger
Michael O'Donnell	Birgitt Ison
Haroon Ishtak	Nuala Rees
Quianne Williams Hall	Birgitt Ison
Takya Kalam	Tracy Chinn
Chloe Curley	Bev Morton
Lewis Malin	Dan Cubitt