

Our
future.
It's in
our hands.



Changing Attitudes to Apprenticeships

Best Practice Guide



Contents

To help you find what you want quickly use the contents list to navigate around this document.

Introduction

Introduction	4
--------------	---

Creating the right conditions

Creating the right conditions	6
-------------------------------	---

Accessing young people

Accessing young people	9
------------------------	---

In schools	10
------------	----

In communities	11
----------------	----

Role models	12
-------------	----

Mentoring	13
-----------	----

Working with partners

Working with partners	15
-----------------------	----

Communications and marketing

Planning	17
----------	----

Publications & printed material	18
---------------------------------	----

Advertising	19
-------------	----

Media and PR	20
--------------	----

Stakeholders	21
--------------	----

Website and e-communications	22
------------------------------	----

Consultation	23
--------------	----

Appendices

Appendices	24
------------	----

About us

About us	25
----------	----

Introduction

Introduction

The Changing Attitudes Project aims to change perceptions among young people in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and areas of deprivation about work based learning, specifically Apprenticeships.

An initial pilot was delivered in Leeds and the project was then extended to include Sheffield. We worked in partnership with local organisations to deliver a range of initiatives aimed at engaging with and informing our target audiences.

This toolkit has been developed from evaluation and lessons learnt from the project. While it was delivered only in the two areas, the best practice and principles identified in this toolkit are relevant to any organisation in any area wishing to increase engagement of young people, parents, community leaders and other professionals from BME communities in Apprenticeships.

IN EACH SECTION THERE IS:

- **Overview** – a brief summary of initiatives and experiences from the pilot project and lessons learned
- **What works well** – this gives recommendations and highlights best practice found to be the most effective and considerations for the future
- **Examples** and samples of material and other relevant information are included wherever possible for use in future communications and marketing of Apprenticeships

Creating the right conditions

Creating the right conditions

Previous research carried out on behalf of the LSC (Promoting Ethnic Diversity in WBL and Apprenticeships; report to LSC Yorkshire and Humber; produced by SHM, April 2008) identified a series of eight conditions which were defined and needed to be in place to help BME learners succeed in work based learning.

The Changing Attitudes Project has addressed each of these eight conditions – a summary of how the project did this is given over the page. From this a programme of best practice given in this guide has been developed to enable other organisations to also create the right conditions.



THE RIGHT MEDIA CHANNELS

Research was undertaken with young people, family members and community representatives to identify what are the best ways to inform and engage with the specific groups. A range of marketing tools were used including advertisements in specific media.

THE RIGHT INFORMATION TOOLS

Young people's focus groups also examined what materials and tools were likely to have the most impact and credibility. Research included examination of images, messages and wording. A variety of information tools were produced and tested during the pilot.

THE RIGHT ROLE MODELS

A range of role models were identified through working with partners and employers. These reflect the range of types of Apprenticeships which are available and are also directly relevant to the target group in terms of age, background and ethnicity.

THE RIGHT COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Contact was made with community centres and, through partners, targeted initiatives and information was delivered into the communities.

Consultation with community leaders gave valuable insights into how best to reach different communities.

THE RIGHT PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN AGENCIES

The project was managed through a steering group made up of key partners, including community, business and education sectors. Engaging partners in delivering initiatives was essential to be effective and efficient.

THE RIGHT EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Through partners in the business sector and learning sector, employers were engaged and involved in events and initiatives.

THE RIGHT GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Working with schools and colleges was key to engaging and providing relevant support and guidance for young people, through meetings with key staff and delivery of events. Mentors were also identified who are able to offer ongoing support to young people who take up Apprenticeships.

THE RIGHT PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Parents and other family members were engaged through events in schools and in the wider community. Consultation with female family members highlighted best ways to promote Apprenticeships to this group.

Accessing young people

Accessing Young People

OVERVIEW

Schools, youth centres and community centres were engaged in the project and a range of initiatives delivered to gauge the most effective ways of accessing young people.

Schools could choose from a matrix of activities so they could select what they felt was most appropriate for their school. The choice of events ranged from parents evenings, presentation in assemblies, class discussions and attendance at wider events in schools such as career fairs. Attendance at parents evenings was the least effective as these events tend to be focused on parents meetings with teachers, to discuss their child's progress.

Local events were held at community centres and there was also participation in the major careers event held at Leeds Armouries.

Role models have been recruited, trained and used at events. The role models are diverse in terms of background and vocation and all are from the local area. There is high impact and interest when role models attend events in schools. However one issue has been the support of employers in allowing the role models time to provide this practical support.

Ten mentors have been identified and trained. Mentors are highly successful individuals from different professions and ethnic groups in Leeds. This initial part of the project focused on recruitment, screening and training of appropriate mentors. A training pack, handbook and arrangements for deployment have all been developed.

In Schools

WHAT WORKS WELL

Key to accessing young people in schools is developing a positive relationship with key staff such as careers or heads of year. Opportunities need to be offered well in advance to enable schools to incorporate them into their calendar and they may well fit in with other events planned throughout the year. The Autumn and Spring terms are particularly good for working with Years 10 and 11 to help their decision making about career options.

Many schools welcome up to date and comprehensive information about Apprenticeships. If possible it is valuable to have a briefing session with relevant staff, this may need to be an annual event.

The most successful events are lively and interactive, eg a session combining a short presentation, DVD, and Q&A session with a role model gives a thorough and effective way of engaging with young people.

Incentives should be used eg giveaways like USB sticks, to encourage young people to ask questions or register with the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service.

Events included delivering sessions in assemblies, at options evenings, in PHSE lessons, to whole year groups, and to smaller groups.

An effective way was to hold two sessions. Firstly a presentation to a whole year group after which students would be asked to fill in a form if they were interested in finding out more. The team revisited the school for a more indepth session with those pupils who had highlighted their interest. The second session involved pupils meeting employers in the industry they were interested in, a demonstration of using the Vacancy Matching Service and the opportunity to have discussion with a role model who had experienced an Apprenticeship.

EXAMPLES

The schools matrix of events can be found [here](#)

A presentation for use in schools is [here](#)

A session plan is [here](#)

In Communities

WHAT WORKS WELL

Parents, families and other community members have a big influence on the views of young people and can be best reached by holding events in community settings.

Such community events can also reach young people who are not so engaged in school or who are not in education, employment or training.

Community events were held in high footfall places eg the Mela Festival, Party in the Park, to raise awareness to a large audience as well as much smaller more targeted events in community centre and faith centres. It is important that as many relevant venues are identified as possible to ensure reaching various different communities.

Events must be appropriate to the audience, you will need local knowledge of communities to decide whether a translator is required or if printed material will need to be translated. Needs vary from community to community. Be aware too if you are showing a DVD this may need subtitles or be slowed down to a more understandable pace.

Ideally have a speaker from that community which helps with language barriers and can also have a more immediate impact on the audience.

Be aware of holy days and other events and avoid having sessions at these times, for example Friday Prayers.

It is vital to get community leaders and workers on board, set up a community representative forum so they can help advise and deliver engagement with and information to different BME communities. They are the experts in knowing the best ways to communicate within their own community and can help deliver the messages.

Sometimes community groups can be wary of one off or ad hoc projects, it is better to build a long term and sustained relationship which will be more effective and will develop trust and understanding.

EXAMPLES

[The full report of the focus group with community representatives is here](#)

Role Models

WHAT WORKED WELL

Role models are a highly effective way of engaging with young people and members of BME communities. Role models should be identified from similar backgrounds and communities as the target audience. Young people who had undertaken Apprenticeships and gone on to be successfully building careers in the local area were recruited for the project.

National role models were felt to be too far removed from the young people but ones recruited from the locality had a high and positive impact.

It is important that role models are recruited who can be used in a number of ways from giving presentations and hosting small discussion groups to being profiled in PR and acting as spokespeople.

Full briefing and support should be given to role models. During the project role models received small incentives for their involvement, a certificate of achievement and a reference which they could add to their CV. They also grew in confidence and gained valuable skills in presentations and communications.

Full support from their employer is needed as many events have to take place during the day and role models will need to be allowed time off to attend.

EXAMPLES

[Role model profiles can be seen here](#)

[A certificate for role models is here](#)

Mentoring

WHAT WORKS WELL

Mentors can give the additional support needed to young people in Apprenticeships. For the project, mentors were recruited who had experience of Apprenticeships, who now had a successful career in their chosen career, and were from the same locality and background as the young Apprentices they would be mentoring.

A training programme and handbook were developed to give an effective and comprehensive package to prepare those people who volunteered to be mentors.

Most Apprenticeship providers include support for Apprentices. The provision of additional support from trained mentors enabled a wider range of needs to be addressed.

EXAMPLES

[The Mentors Handbook can be viewed here](#)

Working with partners

Working with partners

OVERVIEW

It is essential that the right partnerships are developed to engage with the key audiences, and so that duplication effort is avoided.

Versa established a steering group, chaired by the representative from the Yorkshire Employer Coalition and which includes representatives from all key stakeholders - education, training and business communities.

Versa has worked closely with members of the steering group and its two main delivery partners, the Asian Business Development Network (ABDN) and Leeds College. Inputs from these two key partners have been essential in the success of the project. In Sheffield we worked closely with Sheffield College, Somali Cultural School and the Local Authority.

At a more operational level further identification of individual organisations such as schools, community centres and others was undertaken as appropriate to link into specific initiatives or engagement.

Employers have been engaged in a variety of ways: encouraging their attendance at careers events; engaging their support to identify and recruit mentors and role models; supporting National Apprenticeship Week. Engaging employers has been challenging especially in the current economic climate. Sector Skills Councils were not able to provide support.

WHAT WORKS WELL

Identifying the right stakeholders from across the variety of networks which have an interest in Apprenticeships is essential. Engaging key partners who are already established and have well respected links and networks in the local area and communities is instrumental in delivery of the programme.

Engagement with employers in their workplace, working with them to provide mentors, role models and liaising with them through networks and events is key to ensuring relationships with them are developed and they are encouraged to look to the BME communities for future recruits.

EXAMPLES

[Stakeholder map of all partners involved](#)

Communications and Marketing

Planning

OVERVIEW

Focus groups were held with young people to examine their views and opinions. These gave the opportunity to get young people's views on a range of issues including current perceptions of Apprenticeships, frequently used communication and information channels, and preferences for use of images, words and messages,

Further focus groups examined the views and perceptions of family members and community leaders and representatives from BME communities. These gave valuable information on the best tools and channels to use to get information to and engage with these groups.

The full focus group report are in the appendices; there are a number of key findings highlighted and eight recommendations to be taken into account in future marketing and communications activity. The findings are incorporated into the following sections

WHAT WORKS WELL

Appropriate use of a wide variety of communication and marketing channels are recommended to ensure that the right messages get to the right audience

An effective mix for a campaign should raise awareness, target information and involve and engage the key audiences. Each of these can be achieved through a variety of elements as illustrated opposite:

	Raise awareness	Target information	Involve & engage
Advertising	◆		
PR	◆		
Case studies	◆		◆
Role models	◆		◆
Publications	◆	◆	
Events	◆	◆	◆
Websites	◆	◆	◆
Emails	◆	◆	
Social networking	◆	◆	◆
Consultation			◆

'Local' and 'real' are the two key elements to engaging young people in a specific area in Apprenticeships:

- Local because they are focused on their area and local neighbourhood, want very local access to information and events, and pay more attention to information and case studies which are relevant to their own interests and area.
- Real because the highest impact and influence occurs through seeing or hearing about a real person from their local neighbourhood who has been through the experience – whether this is via word of mouth or through promotion of local people in case studies.

Nationally there are a range of NAS information and marketing tools which should continue to be used but these should be supplemented and complemented by localised marketing and communication campaigns which raise awareness, target information and involve and engage young people using messages and images which are local and real to specific areas.

Publications and printed material

OVERVIEW

There are a number of relevant publications and material produced by the NAS to promote Apprenticeships. To complement these, material and promotions which are targeted, local and relevant (eg in terms of geographical area, peer group) have been found to be most effective in reaching young people from BME communities. These may be advertising specific events, general awareness raising or give focused information which addresses key concerns such as how to apply and what kind of Apprenticeships are on offer.

A range of materials were developed and the focus groups examined young people's views of what made the most effective materials.

WHAT WORKS WELL

The preferred size for leaflets and printed material is A5 format.

Content should be concise, informative and ideally laid out in a Q&A style. Content should address young people's key issue of 'what's in it for me'.

Examples of real local people and case studies should be included. Straplines and messages should offer incentives or hooks to have impact

Images should show real Apprentices young people can relate to. Photographs are preferable to illustrations or cartoons.

Publications should be professionally produced as 'amateur' versions are critically dismissed.

Publications should signpost where further information can be found – websites are preferable to telephone numbers or helplines.

Distribution of publications should ensure that they are issued through key local venues eg youth centres, leisure centres, supermarkets, local shops, community centres, schools, businesses. Partners can be engaged to distribute through their local networks.

EXAMPLES

[You can see examples of Fact Sheets here](#)

Advertising

OVERVIEW

Advertising helps raise general awareness of Apprenticeships and can also complement national campaigns. To be most effective it needs to be targeted and again take account of the local and real focus needed for localised communications. A comprehensive advertising campaign should use elements to reach the specific audiences – eg BME communities, parents and families – as well as young people themselves.

WHAT WORKS WELL

Although young people tend not to be regular readers of local newspapers, those 16+ are more likely to buy a local paper on the day it publishes a jobs section. Young people will pick up the free newspapers eg the Metro which are available in most urban areas.

Parents are more likely to read local newspapers on a regular basis.

Young people are unlikely to proactively tune into local radio stations but networks like Galaxy are likely to be heard in households.

BME specific media eg Asian Express, Asian Fever, has good take up within local communities among older people.

Advertising on local buses, shelters and outdoor sites eg billboards, is most likely to be seen by young people. This should be as localised as possible eg into specific neighbourhoods and postcodes to ensure it is targeted.

When designing advertisements, the issues raised in terms of messages, content and images discussed above need to be taken into account.

EXAMPLES

[You can access press adverts here](#)

[You can play a radio advert here](#)

Media and PR

OVERVIEW

Local media can be engaged as a key partner as well as being utilised to deliver information. PR is a low cost effective way to raise awareness and deliver key messages. Local newspapers often see themselves as being at the heart of the community and are keen to publish news stories which highlight local people and successes.

WHAT WORKS WELL

Identify local media and the different angles and stories which may interest them. Target the PR effectively eg a daily newspaper has capacity to publish more stories than a weekly one, something for local TV will have to have a strong visual element to gain coverage.

Develop a rolling PR plan, engage key media in various ways not just for news coverage eg get local spokespeople on radio chat shows or phone ins, offer a regular Apprentice column to a local paper that has a jobs focus.

Identify stories through work with employers and partners, they should have a news angle or hook eg case studies featuring local Apprentices, unusual Apprenticeships, local people who have succeeded against the odds, etc

A PR template can be used and distributed to case studies, partners, employers, and others who are involved in Apprenticeships and who may be able to identify good news stories which can be used in PR.

Key spokespeople should be identified who can be used in PR eg successful apprentices, young people, representatives from businesses and other partners. They should receive training, guidelines and support to enable them to be confident in dealing with the media and to ensure key messages are consistent.

EXAMPLES

[You can see an example PR here](#)

Stakeholders

OVERVIEW

Partnership working is key to delivering the required engagement and communications and a range of organisations will be engaged in various ways eg delivering events.

Partners organisations and other stakeholders also give the opportunity of utilising their existing communication channels and tools to reach the target audiences. Channels which could be utilised for example include publications which go out to residents, young people or businesses, organisations' own websites, existing events which are being planned and delivered by stakeholders.

WHAT WORKS WELL

A stakeholder communications mapping exercise should be undertaken to identify relevant organisations and their associated communication channels.

A timeline should be developed and agreed with stakeholders which maps channels including publications, website updates, events, marketing campaigns which can be used to promote Apprenticeships.

Standard articles, PR and information should be drafted in the appropriate style for use in stakeholders communications.

Stakeholders can also be utilised for distribution of material eg leaflets or posters through their own networks.

Website and e-communications

OVERVIEW

Young people are likely to look at websites to get further information – but only if they are aware of the url and take an interest in the topic initially. They are mistrusting of adverts on websites and regularly use only those sites which they know of and are trusted. Websites from large well established organisations are trusted eg government or councils, but often not well used.

The most frequently used sites tend to be those which are for social networking and research has identified both Facebook and YouTube as the most popular in current trends.

Given the popularity and the amount of time young people spend on the internet and social networking sites it is essential that this media is utilised to inform and promote Apprenticeships.

Currently there are a handful of groups or sites on Facebook which have very few members and most have not been updated for some time (insert screen shot)

Local information, case studies and local opportunities and employers were the key issues young people wanted to know about, and this should be taken into account when developing any e-marketing.

WHAT WORKS WELL

The NAS's website www.apprenticeships.org.uk will be the main for young people to be directed to and has a host of useful tools including the vacancy finder. Case studies from different areas can be placed on here.

More localised information could also be placed on stakeholders websites, eg employers websites or local websites aimed at young people (eg football and other sporting clubs). In particular young people want to see what peers from their local areas have achieved.

Facebook should be utilised for local information eg Apprenticeships Leeds, and can be set up as a group or as a page. A group is more under the control of its members, whereas a page allows control of the space but requires someone joining as a 'fan'. The essence of social networking is its immediacy and constant updating and any site will need to be regularly fed with information and news. It allows more interaction and potentially reaching the target groups. Role models and mentors could be involved and recruited to administer the site eg answering questions, offering tips.

Filming should be undertaken to help promote Apprenticeships, this could feature role models at work in their current Apprenticeships, show a range of different Apprenticeship options or capture promotional events and activities. These films can be placed on DVD, websites or channels like YouTube and used for promotion and marketing to young people, their families, and employers.

Consultation

OVERVIEW

Research with young people can be carried out in a variety of different ways, consultation can help provide data for monitoring and evaluation, identify specific local issues, and inform development of marketing and communications.

Consultation with young people needs to be in an environment they feel comfortable in and delivered in a way which will get honest and individual views.

Consultation with parents, family members and others from BME communities is key to examining views and gaining information about the best ways to engage with them and shape their perceptions.

WHAT WORKS WELL

Focus groups undertaken in youth centres or community centres are likely to get a high response, in particular with young people not in employment, education or training, who cannot be reached in schools.

Consultation sessions such as focus groups should involve young people working in smaller groups and be as interactive as possible.

Young people should be involved in developing and user testing communications and marketing material. This can be done through schools or colleges, or workshops in community centres.

The most appropriate setting for family and community members is in an environment they feel comfortable and are familiar with, eg a community or faith centre. Gaining the trust and confidence of participants in a focus group is vital for them to be able to express their views.

EXAMPLES

[The report of the focus group with young people is here](#)

[The report of the focus group with Asian women is here](#)

[The community leaders focus group report is here](#)

Appendices

[The schools matrix](#)

[Schools presentation](#)

[Session plan](#)

[Role model profiles](#)

[Role models certificate](#)

[The Mentors Handbook](#)

[Stakeholder map](#)

[Fact Sheets](#)

[Press adverts](#)

[Radio advert](#)

[Press Release](#)

[Young people's focus group report](#)

[Asian women focus group report](#)

[Community leaders focus group report](#)

About us

Versa Professional Services

Versa Professional Services was formed in 2006 by a group of consultants and professionals with considerable experience of the Post-16 Learning and Skills sector.

Versa provides cost effective consulting support to organisations in the public sector; providing services that combine fresh thinking with practical know how in order to deliver measurable improvements in performance.

We provide a range of services to organisations at local, regional and national level, including:

- support with performance improvement, organisation design and project management
- the review and evaluation of existing activities
- the design of new programmes and initiatives, and
- support with strategic, operational and business planning.

Our clients have included non-departmental government bodies, national and regional agencies, local authorities and providers in FE, ACL and work-based learning.

For further information please visit: www.versa.uk.com

If you would like to speak with Versa about this project or to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can support your work, please contact:

Les August on 07838 383 996 or email les.august@versa.uk.com

