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APPRENTICESHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: FINAL CASE STUDY

Mental Health in Apprentices: Counting the Cost

South Devon College with City College Plymouth & The South Devon Health Partnership

3-hour Mental Health Awareness workshops
Additional & specific questions asked at review points by Assessor Coaches

City College Plymouth

Distribution of electronic and paper-based summer support sheet
Additional & specific questions asked at review points by Assessor Coaches

PETROC

As a large organisation, it can sometimes be difficult to see the bigger picture due to people working in 'silos. With consideration to the project findings, it is imperative that we undertake a strategic review of apprenticeship provision to address quality improvement which focuses on how we reconsider apprentices at the heart of our provision and how we address the myriad issues raised in this project going forward. Whilst we went into this with a focus of mental health, there are many issues causing withdrawal that would effectively be more manageable under increased core support for apprentices.

The emerging impact on apprentices is improved mental health support leading to increased retention on apprenticeship programmes. There is already an improvement to the recruitment process, and to their access to wellbeing support that was not as visible before. There is also a lot of thought going into raising awareness of the resources available so it is not only the full-time students who can easily find help when they need it.

As a result of the project, all partners are beginning to look at a potential restructure of apprenticeship delivery to introduce significant focus on core skills, personal development and support available to equip apprentices with the skills and personal attributes required to successfully complete their apprenticeship. We recognise there is a challenge here for employers, as their focus is on productive staff and therefore core apprenticeship training. To ensure that employers are on board with a changed approach, it is vital to help them understand the value in investing in apprenticeship retention rather than continuing to accept a 40% withdrawal rate and all the business interruption and inconvenience losing an apprentice entail.

Project Outputs

The tangible outputs of this project have been;

- 1 collaborative MS Teams platform (not needed as ETF created one – we used SharePoint instead)
- Concise monthly monitoring
- 1 data analysis document (with categorised breakdowns)
- 3 case studies including best practice reflections (one from each college) – best practice reflections have been inputted into a separate document, forming an additional output.
- 1 suggested approach guidance document for other practitioners on how they could use the findings of our project.
- 1 document which includes the type of support that is currently available which will be shared with apprentices, employers, and other practitioners. (we have created several resources instead of just one)
- 1 business case presented to each project members senior leadership.
- 2 short formative evaluation reports during the project
- 1 final summative evaluation report in September 2023

Future Activity

This project has uncovered an unexpected outcome; 'employer led' withdrawals are alarmingly high. Further work and investigation into this is urgent, possibly branching into a new direction for apprenticeship development / future funding opportunities. Further investigation into employability related apprentice withdrawals is highly recommended. The projects team will be searching for possible funding streams / future rounds of this project to research and develop recommendations to mitigate this issue. Initial ideas would suggest the development of a pre-apprenticeship employability / induction programme to include 'workplace behaviour skills. In the longer term, this

A collaborative partnership has ensured that the project was successful, co-designing the planning and delivery as well as the survey, tangible outcomes, and interventions.

25 managers and 15 other members of staff across the three colleges have an improved understanding of factors affecting apprenticeship withdrawal.

25 managers across the three colleges have an improved understanding of the key factors required to run an organisation effectively regarding quality, financial viability, legislative compliance, and ethical considerations.

40 members of staff (including teachers) across the three organisations have built positive and collaborative relationships with internal stakeholders.

15 teachers across the partnership have continued to promote and support positive learner behaviour, attitudes, and wellbeing.

45 members of staff have improved their understanding of how to promote learner well-being.



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