

REPORT FOR: Employees' Consultative Forum

Date of Meeting: 31st January 2013

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT – Xcite Graduate Programme**

Responsible Officer: Caroline Bruce Corporate Director
Environment and Enterprise

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out to outline the performance of the Xcite Gradplan, which has provided unemployed Graduates into work placements, and then supported them into employment.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Harrow Council entered into a competitive bidding process to secure funding from Jobcentreplus' s Flexible Support Fund. The council's project titled "Gradplan" provides unemployed graduates with work experience in the council and the voluntary sector. The programme is unique to Harrow and is not a service commonly delivered. The Gradplan is one of the routes to help young unemployed Harrow residents into work.

Under the contract with Jobcentreplus, Harrow Council could secure up to £48,000 in grant funding. The contract was entered into in May 2012 and expires March 2013. .

The graduate is provided with work experience, work related training and dedicated job search support during their placement. The placement is between 6-10 weeks is unpaid and can be with Harrow Council or voluntary sector organisations.

The graduate intake was split into 3 recruitment rounds over the 2012/13 financial year. The Economic Development Unit implemented a novel way of matching graduates to placements. Speed dating events were held, allowing managers an opportunity to outline the placement on offer and graduates an opportunity to state how their skills met the needs of the placement. The process proved popular with both parties.

The programme had a target of finding placements for 48 unemployed Graduates and helping 20 into paid employment. The programme exceeded its profiled target and provided 60 work placements and to date has helped 40 clients into paid work. The last of the graduates have now completed their placements, and support will continue to be offered to them in this financial year. It is therefore expected that further clients will be supported into employment before the end of the financial year..

Section 3 – Further Information

The table below summarises profiled targets, actual performance.

	Work placements	Job entry
Profiled performance	48	20
Actual performance	60	40

The range of paid employment secured by clients included 16 in local government (Harrow Council, Watford District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Council, Basildon Council), 4 employed in schools, 3 in retail, and the remainder in engineering, finance, legal, energy, and voluntary sector employment.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

The project was externally funded. Jobcentreplus money funded the IT, Health and Safety, and the equivalent of 1 Full time equivalent officer post. claims are submitted to Jobcentreplus, the claim is verified by Environment and Enterprise Business Partner.

The delivery of Gradplan in 2013/14 will be dependent on a further successful funding bid for Flexible Support Funding.

Section 5 - Equalities implications

An equality impact assessment was undertaken.

Section 6 – Corporate Priorities

Please identify which corporate priority the report incorporates and how:

- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need. The project provides support to workless residents. The Gradplan project complements the work to promote Apprenticeships for young people. The apprenticeship programme offers support to unemployed young people with qualifications below NVQ 2 and 3. Graduates qualifications are NVQ 4 and above and therefore they are not eligible for apprenticeships.

Name:Kanta Hirani



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 7 January 2013

Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mark Billington, Head of Economic Development and Research, 0208 753 6533

Background Papers: Application to Flexible Support Fund, Monitoring Reports, Performance Tracker.