

Milton Keynes Council

Accessing adult social care careers targeting local schools to promote social care careers

A survey of care organisations in Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire in 2012 failed to identify any recruitment from schools and colleges in the area.

They found that the profile of adult social care was much lower than childcare or healthcare. The general opinion of young people was working in the adult social care meant providing basic personal care such as washing and toileting, and working solely with the elderly.

The Milton Keynes Council Accessing adult social care careers project was set up in 2013 to confound these stereotypes. It offered local schools and colleges practical support to deliver health and social care curriculum courses that incorporated expertise from the local care economy and inspired young people to make a career in the sector.

They hoped this would support future recruitment into the sector.

Here, they tell us what they did.

What we wanted to achieve

The project aimed to:

- identify the schools in Milton Keynes that offer BTEC qualifications in health & social care
- build relationships with teachers and careers officers in these schools
- offer students work experience opportunities in care settings.

The project also wanted to signpost young people to Apprenticeships and other work opportunities in the area.

We wanted to offer meaningful work experience opportunities for young people in care settings so that they could see the variety of the work available and get a sense of the job satisfaction that comes from working in social care.

We also wanted to build a clear career pathway between schools and colleges and adult social care employers, to attract young people with the right values and behaviours to the sector.

What we did

In Milton Keynes 11 schools offered health and social care qualifications.

We offered 5 days work experience with the Council's Learning Disabilities service & Independent Learning Disabilities providers, for students in years 11-13.

To do this we:

- identified local schools who offered BTEC & GCSE in health and social care
- developed relationships with careers advisors and health and social care teachers
- identified suitable work experience settings (inside and outside of council services)
- trained mentors to provide 1:1 support throughout the placement
- provided basic health and social care skills training to students (including communication,

- safeguarding, learning disabilities awareness)
- completed a risk assessment for each setting
- supported the application process required from prospective participants
- interviewed all applicants with a service user representative
- provided a key worker for pastoral support throughout the placement.

Following the work experience we offered:

- signposting to Apprenticeship opportunities in Milton Keynes
- support to private & voluntary care agencies to establish Apprenticeship posts
- signposting to job vacancies
- ongoing support from the key worker with the young people for a year to support them to find work in the social care sector.

What we achieved

Of the 34 students who attended the 2014 scheme

- 2 have been offered Apprenticeships in health and social care
- 1 is working for a private care provider in Milton Keynes
- 5 are doing a social work degree
- 5 are doing a nursing degree (with a learning disabilities specialism)
- 14 still have to complete their schooling but we remain in contact with them through the school
- 1 is doing a degree in physiotherapy
- 6 have decided to pursue careers in different sectors.

For us it is as valuable for young people to recognise that a career in adult social care is not for them as it is to inspire those who want to progress.

Communication skills, listening skills and team working are life skills that will support them in whatever career they choose to pursue and a better understanding of disability and treating everyone with dignity and respect will be of benefit to them and society as a whole.



This is a fascinating project which allowed my students to get relevant, hands on experience in the social care field which they would otherwise never have hoped to achieve. At least one of my students is considering a career direction change as a result of her experience. The confidence which students gained cannot be measured.



Health and social care teacher, The Radcliffe School

What we learnt

There have been lots of benefits and learning from this project.

- It's important that there is an identified worker from care organisations who are responsible for liaising with schools and young people prior to, during and after the work experience.
- People who need care and support's involvement in the interview process has been invaluable. Their instincts for who has the right values and behaviours for care work have been very insightful.
- Young carers and those who have been in care themselves have shown great interest in the programme and have demonstrated outstanding skills.
- Mentors within work settings need to be identified and trained before the work experience begins. This helps differentiate this programme from the year 10 work experience programme schools are required to support.
- Younger service users really enjoyed the involvement of people their own age in their day activities.
- Staff who trained as mentors really enjoyed the experience of being able to highlight the positive aspects of their work and inspire the workforce of the future.
- Schools careers officers and teachers fed back on how beneficial the work experience had been for their students and are keen to develop the project in their schools.

For more information please visit

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www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/adultsocialcaretraining

Skills for Care Recommends

Skills for Care produces a wide range of products and services related to recruitment and retention within the adult social care sector including;

Finding and keeping workers

This online toolkit has a wide range of practical recruitment and retention resources from Skills for Care and other organisations.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/findingandkeepingworkers

I Care... Ambassadors

I Care...Ambassadors are people who work in social care who deliver activities to promote careers in social care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inspire

Think Care Careers

This website provides careers information for people interested in social care and teachers and careers advisors.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/carecareers

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