

Newsletter

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Aiming High for Children



Dear Colleagues,

The Bradford Offer – Investing in our Workforce

You probably heard me say more than once that it is “people who change people”. The difference a teacher, social worker, youth worker, a frontline worker who works with children or people can make to their lives, in my book, is often understated. For Bradford to be successful we want the very best teachers, social workers and frontline staff and also the very best leaders to deliver on our ambitions.

When I first arrived in Bradford I spent some time speaking to Chief Officers from all of the public services, including headteacher colleagues and recruitment and retention emerged as a common key issue. I quickly identified this as a key priority and set about developing the concept and product of a ‘Bradford offer’ which we could use as a tool to attract, recruit, develop and retain staff and leaders within Bradford. There has been full support from the political leadership within the Council and also from key partner colleagues. We have developed a product initially prioritising teaching and leadership. At the Public Forum for Education on the 25 March, the significant investment of the Council to invest in the pathways for teachers and leaders from pre-qualifying to post-qualifying teaching for aspiring leaders and headteachers was announced. This has been facilitated by Sara Rawnsley, a headteacher seconded into the Council to lead on this area of work and also in collaboration with our Teaching Schools. I believe this is quite a unique proposition and we are developing marketing and communication products to help publicise this offer and disseminate it far and wide.

In Children's Social Care we are working to get the best and brightest to Bradford and support them in that important first year in practice. I am pleased to let you know that the Yorkshire and Humber bid to host another cohort of ‘Step Up’ students was successful. Step Up to Social Work is an intensive full-time training programme that covers everything trainee social workers need to know in 14 months. Training for cohort 4 (the fourth intake) of the Step Up to Social Work programme will start in January 2016. In Bradford we have agreed to take 4 students and other neighbouring authorities will also be hosting students. Last year as a region, we hosted 54 students overall and received over 600 applications.

It is vital that social workers are well supported in their first year of practice. The assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) is designed to help newly qualified social workers develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence. It provides them with access to regular support during their first year of employment. This year we have taken on 38 ASYE's in children's services. This requires the time and care of their team manager but also help from the

more experienced Level 3 social workers. They co-work cases, share their knowledge and experience and guide them through the role. Thank you for supporting such a big cohort this year.

The second strand of the Bradford Offer extends to a leadership programme for people working across the public sector. We have been in discussion with representatives from Bradford University and their renowned business school, Bradford University School of Management, to develop a common leadership programme bespoke to Bradford and accessible to leaders working in the public sector. It would build upon the important networks with our public service partners, business and community leaders. This is in development and we would aim to share a product whereby other public services within Bradford buy into and it becomes a common 'offer' across the place.

In terms of leadership, I do believe that we are starting to make inroads into the changes required around the education offer and how we work with our schools and our partners to support the very best practice and challenge when we need to. We are also seeing the benefits of the development around the New Deal workstreams, including the Early Years offer and the alignment of post-14 education with Employment and Skills and Get Bradford Working. There is a raft of activity and programmes across all our services which will put Bradford in a stronger place moving forward.

There are many examples across the District of the positive impact made by leaders and staff. I recently visited Allerton Primary School and was struck by how the outstanding Head had developed a culture of not only believing that every child will succeed but the key to that success was by investing in the development of her staff. Sharon Lambert's innovative approach to recruitment and retention was compelling. In the world of social care, the impact of investing in the adoption service and the workforce has paid dividends resulting in children moving into more secure, permanent arrangements in a speedy and timely manner.

Finally, senior officers, including Elected Members, have reviewed their pledge for children in care. My pledge is simply to expect that all staff have the same ambition for children in care as they do for their own and always ask the question "is it good enough for your own child?".

If we continue to believe passionately about the outcomes we want to achieve, what difference we can make and continue to develop and invest in Bradford as a place and its people then surely Bradford will reap the benefits.

I would like to thank you for your continued efforts and commitment.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Jameson