

Annex B: Partner Case Studies

This annex contains case studies of skills and employment initiatives submitted by partners that were recently delivered in the Coast to Capital area.

Full STEaM Ahead Project - Coastal West Sussex Partnership



Geographical areas covered: West Sussex

Priorities: All

The **Coastal West Sussex Skills and Enterprise Group** is a collaboration of schools, colleges, training providers, universities, local authorities, LEPs and employer groups which exists to inspire more young people and adults into local, meaningful work, apprenticeships and long-term employment across Coastal West Sussex. This group gave their support for the Full STEaM Ahead (FSA) project which was essential for securing money from the West Sussex Strategic Investment Fund.

The Full STEaM Ahead project had a business led steering group which included representatives from Red River Software, Thales, Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, Inpress Plastics, Allergy Therapeutics, St Wilfrid's School, Chichester College Group, and the Coast to Capital LEP and Enterprise Advisor Network. Representatives from Thales and Red River Software also sit on the Skills 360 Board.

There was increasing evidence to show that to improve economic performance, young people needed Science, Technology, Engineering, digital and creative technologies and Maths skills (STEaM) as it is these skills which are needed by business to support growth.

After much work and consultation, the CWS Skills and Enterprise Group secured £420,000 from the West Sussex Strategic Investment Fund to deliver the Full STEaM Ahead project. The project aimed to inspire and build confidence with both young people and adults and encourage them to pursue studies and build careers based on science, technology, engineering, creative and digital technologies and maths.

In March 2020, the project was just moving to contracting stage when the global pandemic hit and schools closed except to key workers. This meant that delivering the

project in the way intended was impossible. It was decided that the FSA project should be put on hold and that the money should be redirected to support those workers, young people and those already in the workplace, who had been affected by Covid 19. Work is now in progress to decide how that money should be used. However, so that people are able to move into new roles and new industries, STEM and STEaM skills remain absolutely critical.

The project secured £420,000 that will still be used to support the skills agenda in West Sussex even though this won't now be through the Full STEaM Ahead project, and created much greater collaboration across networks and with employers – businesses were keen to be involved with the STEaM agenda as there was a realisation about how important STEaM skills were for growth.

The project also strengthened collaboration with Coast to Capital and the Enterprise Advisor Network as the Enterprise Coordinators were identified as a direct route into schools.

Defining how the money will now be used is still in progress. With multiple initiatives coming through DWP and the Department for Education, defining a project where there is a gap is challenging. However, from early work, the following remain a high priority:

- STEM and digital skills,
- Supporting our growth sectors
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
- Upskilling and reskilling the current workforce

Sector-Based Work Academy Programme - Govia Thameslink Railway

Partner/delivery organisations: East Sussex College

Geographical areas covered: Hove to Littlehampton

Priorities: 1a. Finding out about work, 1b. Starting out in work, 1d. Getting back into work

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) is committed to building a culture where it attracts, develops and retains talent that represents wider society. A key part is to attract people who've been adversely affected by the current economic climate and to help those in society that may be at risk of exclusion.

GTR recognises the importance of local partners to help access these communities and in November 2020, the company undertook its first Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) in partnership with East Sussex College, using its Southern brand. This gave individuals the opportunity to learn essential employment skills as well as being interviewed for three permanent roles. Using the college's expertise, Southern worked with them to tailor the four-week course. Candidates were then identified by Jobcentre Plus branches to support people at risk of long-term unemployment.

Learners were given an overview of the organisation, including the roles and the culture. Southern had planned to host two site visits so learners could shadow staff, but these were cancelled due to lockdown. However, one of Southern's Operational Trainers held a virtual session to help learners further understand the role requirements and give them the opportunity to ask customer and role-related questions.

The aim was to not only support those who had lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19, but help others who may be disadvantaged by age, low-level skills and demographics (including areas impacted by the pandemic). With a broad skills focus including work readiness, inclusion and customer service, the course was designed to ensure participants gained experience of the world of work and learn transferable skills to improve their future career prospects.

This focus on transferable skills meant everyone who completed the course was presented with a qualification in Employability and a Level 2 certificate in Equality & Diversity. In addition, those who completed the course

received a bespoke Southern training certificate on managing customer relations, ensuring their transferable skills are recognised.

A range of people attended the course aged 18 to 58, with 12 out of the 13 attendees successfully completing it. They were all interviewed by GTR to provide valuable interview experience and received constructive feedback. The quality of candidates was very high, and three people were offered permanent positions at GTR, aged 19, 23 and 39. A further five were recommended to Southern's employment agency.

GTR is now looking at ways to further expand schemes such as these across the network. With six years' experience of running employability programmes with The Prince's Trust and now East Sussex College, GTR understands the importance of training, skills development and mentoring for anyone entering the world of work for the first time, or the first time in a while. In partnership with East Sussex College, GTR is looking at additional employability training and mentoring opportunities for young people via the Kickstart scheme.

Angie Doll, Managing Director for Southern & Gatwick Express says:

"We are continuously looking at ways to attract and retain a diverse workforce. It is more important than ever to help those that may be at risk of exclusion which is why the work delivering the SWAP with East Sussex College and Jobcentre Plus has been so valuable."

"Over the coming months, we look forward to expanding such employability programmes across more communities to meet local skills needs. We are a passionate advocate of employability schemes and want to support and encourage other businesses to adopt them to fulfil their own recruitment needs, as well as help drive social mobility in their communities."

Think Futures



Lead organisation:

West Sussex County Council

Partner/delivery organisations:

Brighton and Hove City Council and previously Surrey County Council

Geographical areas covered:

West Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Think FUTURES is a joint government and European funded programme led by West Sussex County Council, partnered with Brighton and Hove City Council and previously Surrey County Council.

The Think Futures project aim is to help young people to get the advice and support they need by working with our Careers Advisers to gain access to meaningful employment and education opportunities.

The priority group is 16-18 year olds who are NEET - not in education, employment or training - or up to 25 for those who have an Education, Health & Care plan.

Year 11 at risk of NEET young people are identified using Roni indicators with school's pastoral teams. Young people will have complex needs and may be hard to engage with, due to a range of factors such as disaffection, poor attendance, SEN, CLA, mental health issues, exclusion. Young people or agencies can also self-refer by phone or email. Careers advisers link with Youth Justice Team, family support workers, youth emotional support team, youth homeless team, SENAT.

Advisers support young people with barriers through a range of activities. An action plan is developed for each young person which can include referrals for apprenticeships, study programmes and traineeships, or a choice of job hunting packages depending on each young person's needs.

Advisers have regular reviews with participants to monitor their progress. Additional support advisers offer

include contacting admissions departments at colleges to negotiate on entry qualifications and advocate on behalf of young people where they do not meet the entry requirements, attending college interviews, visits or open days and meetings with young people as required, and supporting participants to attend in first week of college or work placement with telephone follow up to identify and resolve issues.

Between September 2018 to November 2020 in Brighton and Hove and West Sussex are 1337 NEETs signed up to Think Futures Project. 619 of these young people have left the project so far and successfully joined education, employment or training (EET).

In addition to these outcomes many young people have been placed onto short engagement programmes, voluntary work, or taken part time education programmes which mean they cannot be classed as EET but have made a huge difference to them in terms of building confidence, basic skills and employability skills.

An application is currently with DWP Managing Authority to access ESF Reserve Fund money to temporarily extend the project due to its success. Other funding opportunities continue to be explored.

We are about to trial a virtual help desk on the Your Space WSCC young people's careers guidance page with live chat facility in order to reach more young people.