

Apprenticeship Learners Focus Group

Level 7

25rd November 2021

Background

In order to develop our apprenticeship offer to learners and ensure we meet their needs going forward, as well as to discover our impact on learners, we scheduled a focus group with employers in November 2021.

Despite inviting over 50 learners, we had 5 people confirm attendance, we had 5 attendees on 25rd November 2021.

We asked 4 questions:

- What have you found to be the most helpful or the most positive thing about your experience on the programme?
- What impact has the programme had on you and your organisation?
- What would you like to see improve on the programme?
- What do you think is missing from our provision, as an employer?

Attending

For NCE:

- Rachel O'Halleron
- Ben Barton
- Andy Greene

Level 7 Learners:

- Sara Marshallsay, Head of School
- Alex Rawlings, Head Teacher
- Nicola Arkinstall, Deputy Head
- Seeta Mepani, Regional Manager
- Sally Boden, COO

Roundtable Summary

What have you found to be the most helpful or the most positive thing about your experience on the programme?:

- Learning days really insightful
- Bookclubs and podcast
- My tutor
- Content separated out clearly was useful – high quality and well-structured.
- Understanding the why about leadership including with evidence.
- Provided me with lots of models about leadership and development.
- The ability to take time to reflect on leadership and my role
- Working in peer learning groups (WomenEd) has been invaluable.

What impact has the programme had on you and your organisation?:

- Importance of communication and getting feedback from stakeholders.
- Given me a better understanding of my governing body
- Looking into the future.
- Change to my provision of support and my practice as a leader.
- A clear focus in the organisation on psychological safety.
- Use of leadership language has helped me in dealing with leadership team.
- Developed a wellness group at school based on psychological safety.
- Got advice on a new hire from one of my colleagues on the programme
- Power of moments now punctuates parts of the term at school.
- The learning in context is really helpful, so that learning can be applied in school straight away.
- Conversations have more weight because I have more evidence from my learning.
- Project management skills mean I am able to take on more projects.
- Moved into a new job across the MAT (COO across 5 school MAT from Headteacher)
- Supporting staff using psychological safety and also stakeholder management.
- Given me the ability to take on more (presenting, running a teacher radio, sharing essays across school)

What would you like to see improve on the programme?:

- The Initial communication could be improved.
- Having a one-to-one with PLM/SLT before starting and getting formal on the programme.
- More detailed pre-reading list.
- Having an alumni talk through what its like on the programme and dealing with the practical issues (finding the time)
- More support for writing the first essay and in particular, seeing an example essay.
- Examples of good apprenticeship learning and evidence would be useful too.
- Sometimes felt that WomenEd was getting more support. – So more Peer Learning Groups
- Moving between the academic and the apprenticeship is sometimes quite hard.
- Support for managing off the job would be helpful
- Help in doing the Harvard referencing.

What do you think is missing from our provision?:

- More support for off the job – examples and models
- Meeting protocols should be established earlier (especially online meetings)
- Too much chat online means you miss everything.
- Offer recordings with closed captions if possible.
- Residentials
- How to move from reading academic articles to putting them into essays.
- Provide any slides with recordings on the podcast or zoom recordings.

Recommendations and Actions

- More support for early stage learners
- Technical details about essays and essay writing
- More help with apprenticeship OTJ
- Residentials.