

SUBMISSION TO THE 'SPEAK FOR CHANGE' ORACY ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY ACTION GROUP

Written evidence submitted by Eloise Rahman on behalf of WhiteHat Group

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Summary of WhiteHat

1. WhiteHat is a tech startup democratising access to the best careers. We believe in the prioritisation of apprenticeships as a pathway to empower young people. We are committed to developing critical business and digital skills in career starters. We currently deliver to over 400 career starters (apprentices aged 16-24 on business, digital marketing, accounting, or software engineering courses) and almost 400 career builders (existing employees upskilling on people leadership, project management, and data analysis courses).

Supporting Talent

2. A key piece of our offer is recruiting and coaching candidates to attend interviews with our business partners. Our mission is to hire diverse talent to create the next generation of future leaders and with this diversity comes varying levels of prior oracy education.
3. After application to our online platform, candidates are assessed for eligibility for the programme that they've applied for, and supported with resources to prepare for

application if they're not yet ready. Once a candidate is ready for their programme, they are invited to a 'Kick-Off Day', where they are coached and prepared for interview.

4. These are some of the ways that oracy is supported specifically:
 - Candidates are required to make a video for application to jobs. Model videos are presented in the sign-up flow so that candidates know what to say and how to say it. The talent team provide advice and a space to complete these videos on 'Kick Off Day'
 - The talent team hold interview coaching calls to support candidates for interview.
 - Candidates are rated on interpersonal skills at 'Kick Off Day' so that support can be given to those who are fantastic candidates but score low on interpersonal skills.
 - We partner with Smart Works, who provide free interview preparation for women, and Resurgo Spear, who provide a free 6 week training course on interview skills and confidence.

Case study on oracy support

5. Candidate A has applied to a software engineering apprenticeship at a leading non-traditional investment bank. In her first one-to-one, she was unable to look the the Head of Talent in the eye, but it was clear that she had fantastic technical ability. She was coached through to interview by our specialist technical coach, and the account manager liaised with the company to arrange for her to attend a preliminary meeting to build confidence before she met the key decision-makers. Candidate A was then able to succeed at interview and accepted a job offer at the company.

On-Programme Oracy

6. It is important to us that all our apprenticeships develop oracy skills. Here are insights into how our Business Administration and People Leadership Programmes do this:
7. Our Business Administration programme is the most popular apprenticeship with our younger career starters. It is a wonderful qualification to acquire general business knowledge and skills, and can be applied to a wide variety of entry-level roles. It is especially important to us that oracy is a part of the business programme to support the transition into a career, which is often challenging for young people. In our mission to hire and train diverse talent, we also need to consider that prior oracy education (or lack thereof) may not have prepared apprentices for employment success; this is now our role as their training provider.
8. Oracy is developed within the Business Administration curriculum in the following ways:

- Assignments that the apprentices complete (e.g. visions/missions and organisational values presentation)
 - 'Masterclass' seminars, which all involve discussion-based activities
 - Monthly objectives
 - Debates
 - Mock interviews (see paragraphs 13-15)
9. Our People Leadership programme is our largest programme, aimed at the development of new managers. We understand the importance of structured training for new management and the impact this has on organisational culture. It is important for managers to be able to communicate to a range of stakeholders, especially as we would like them to go on to hire and manage diverse talent through our Career Starter programmes.
10. Oracy is developed within the People Leadership Programme in the following ways:
- Seminars
 - Presentations
 - 'Working Out Loud' sessions, where best practice is shared across teams
 - Conflict resolution sessions
 - Communication sessions
 - Mock interviews

Apprentice Leadership and Influencing

11. We want our apprenticeships to feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in their community and be empowered to use their voice. Part of this strategy involves apprentice leadership and influencing positions: we have a President, Vice President, and a team of 'Hacktivists' and 'Influencers'.
12. This team are given public speaking and media training, and are encouraged to lead events, visit schools to speak on behalf of WhiteHat, write articles about their experiences, and post about their opinions on platforms such as LinkedIn and twitter. These are some of the activities that apprentice leaders partake in:
- School presentations
 - School fairs
 - Corporate event panels
 - Leading events and activities
 - Buddying up with new apprentices
 - Training new leaders
 - Being interviewed for press and PR (see [here](#) and [here](#))
 - Writing blogs and creating vlogs
 - Being stammer ambassadors (see one of our two Stambassadors [here](#))

Mock Interviews

13. All apprentices will need to complete an interview as part of their End Point Assessment to demonstrate their competencies and development alongside a prepared portfolio. We recognise that talking about one's own professional competencies is challenging, and is a skill that must be learned. To support this development, we have put two Mock Interviews in place for all apprentices, one at 6 months, and one at 12 months. We believe that we may be the only apprenticeship provider that has put such early support in place.
14. A mock interview will consist of a WhiteHat assessor reviewing an apprentice's portfolio, and then asking a series of questions from a selection of their course's competencies. Here are some examples of questions that could be asked in a Business Mock Interview:
 - How do you use IT effectively in your role?
 - How do you demonstrate effective communication in your role?
 - What are some of the political and economic factors that affect your company?
 - How do you demonstrate professionalism at work?
 - Can you give an example of when you have had to adapt to a change at work?
15. We promote and give feedback on the usage of a STAR narrative structure, confidence of delivery, depth of knowledge and giving appropriate context. There is a coaching element to this mock interview. Feedback is given throughout, and apprentices are encouraged to take ownership of their development and take pride.

Summary

16. As champions for applied learning and on-the-job training for diverse talent, we see oracy as a key part of our mission and it is embedded into every part of our work with apprentices. If you would like any more information about what we offer, please contact Eloise Rahman at eloise.rahman@whitehat.org.uk, and we will gladly provide it.