



Equalities Committee
6 December 2016

**Report from the Head of
Employment, Skills, and Enterprise**

For Information*

Wards affected:
ALL

**Employment, Skills and Enterprise Team: Summary of
Available Support for Vulnerable Residents**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of employment and training support commissioned and / or delivered by the Employment, Skills and Enterprise team for vulnerable residents, including those with a disability. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that paid employment can foster a greater sense of independence, have a positive effect on mental health and personal wellbeing, reduce reliance on traditional support services and reduce reliance on welfare benefits. The Employment, Skills, and Enterprise team hopes to use this evidence base to increase appetite for joint working across council services and other public / voluntary sector organisations.
- 1.2 Across all projects the dominant theme is that of integration and partnership working - ensuring that services work together to maximise their joint impact, collaborating to provide holistic support to vulnerable residents with multiple or complex needs.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of the following report.

3.0 Detail

4.0 Place-based approach

The Employment, Skills, and Enterprise Strategy identifies six priority neighbourhoods where unemployment has remained consistently above borough average over the years. Taking a place-based approach (developing

holistic interventions around a certain geographic area) allows resource to be focused on these priority areas, reducing economic and social exclusion of those who are furthest from the labour market.

4.1 The Living Room

The Living Room is an employment support project based in St Raphael's estate - an area of Brent with particularly high unemployment and economic inactivity rates. 46% of claimants on the estate receive either Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefits indicating a high rate of health issues and disability. The prevalence of mental health issues is supported by anecdotal evidence from front line staff.

The project is led by a core team consisting of staff from the council and Job Centre Plus. It aims to deliver improved employment outcomes by addressing residents' wider concerns, issues, and barriers to work, including health problems. This means drawing on and coordinating support from a wide range of partners – including local VCS organisations, Brent Housing Partnership and the Citizens Advice Bureau – who work towards maximising social integration across a range of different indicators.

The first stages of the independent evaluation shows that job outcomes are consistently above target. Case studies and qualitative data gathering show that the place-based model, which requires significant partnership working to 'hide the wiring' so that interventions work around a person, has been successful in moving people into work or closer to employment via basic skills provision.

Outcomes to date:

Outcome	Target (year to date)	Actual (year to date)
Engagements on programme	105	129
Job Starts	25	39

4.2 Specialist Mental Health provision

The Employment, Skills, and Enterprise team have also just commissioned a specialist organisation, Training Attention, to work alongside the core team to provide engagement, motivation and confidence training to those residents who are furthest from the labour market, have mental health problems and are struggling to engage with the current offer.

Frontline workers at The Living Room identified a need for specialist provision around mental health – noting that many customers lacked the emotional capacity to move forward with job-seeking activity. Following identification of this need for specialist intervention, funding was successfully obtained by bidding for money from the Job Centre's Flexible Support Fund and Training Attention were appointed following a competitive procurement exercise.

Training Attention's staff are all trained to reduce resistance, passivity and conflict while engaging the most disengaged, and in working with adults with

mild/moderate to enduring mental health issues. They also bring training in neuro-diversity (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, Autistic Spectrum and other neurological differences) and expertise at supporting those with hidden learning disabilities to access (and stay in) the workplace.

The project aims to deliver the following outcomes over a 12 month contract:

- 100 'starts' on the programme (engagement and confidence/motivation support)
- 22 job outcomes

4.3 Harlesden place-based approach

The Employment, Skills and Enterprise team secured grant funding from Job Centre Plus's Community Budget to further the place-based approach in Harlesden – another priority neighbourhood. The council bid on behalf of CVS organisation Crisis who are leading on the development of this approach in the Harlesden area.

The project aims to deliver the following outcomes over the course of a 12 month contract:

- Starts on the programme: 200
- Job starts: 40

5.0 **Mental Health and Employment**

The recent Outcome Based Review on Employment identified Mental Health as a priority for the following reasons:

- Of the working age population in Brent, 12,500 (5.6%) suffer from depression, learning problems, mental problems and nervous disorders
- Of these 12,500, 32.5% are currently in some form of employment (lower than London - 34.9%)
- The unemployment rate in Brent for these individuals is 8.2% (compared with 7.0% for the overall working age population)
- Unemployed people with mental health needs account for 8.4% of the total unemployment figure in Brent

Whilst there is some existing provision – Troubled Families team works with this cohort, NHS Trusts have employment specialists embedded in care teams – improved partnership working between ASC, health and Employment is key to making progress with this priority group.

5.1 Mental Health Trailblazer

The Trailblazer is a pilot project seeking to integrate mental health and employment support, linking the traditional remit of the CCG with that of councils and Job Centres to provide a bespoke service to job seekers with common mental health problems.

The project is funded and commissioned at sub regional level across West London boroughs by the West London Alliance but will be rolled out differently in each borough according to local needs and existing local services.

The project aims to link two key public sector services:

A) Improved Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT); a mental health service commissioned by the CCG to support those with low-medium level mental health problems. It focuses on providing evidence-based support for those with anxiety and depression. The service is provided by CNWL in Brent.

B) Job Centre Plus (JCP) who administer out-of-work benefits and are often the first point of contact for people who are unemployed and job-seeking. Claimants of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) will often have disclosed a mental health problem, and will therefore be eligible for the programme.

Because this is a pilot project which seeks to demonstrate to DWP and Treasury whether more intensive and holistic interventions are effective for clients with multiple or complex barriers, the project will operate under a very strict eligibility criteria in order to run a randomised control group concurrently. The randomised control trial will be run by DWP using data collected by the provider from each local borough.

The programme aims to support Brent residents who:

- Have a diagnosed common mental health condition or meet IAPT's own eligibility criteria
- Live in the wards of Tokyngton, Wembley Central, Barnhill or Preston
- Are unemployed and claiming out-of-work benefits (e.g. Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance)

The outcomes the programme aims to deliver in Brent are as follows:

- 152 clients engaged on the programme
- 53 clients to gain paid employment (35%)
- 26 sustaining employment for 26 weeks
- 65 people in Randomised Control Group

6.0 Welfare Reform Response

Since the first wave of Welfare Reform, the council has sought to provide a coordinated response to changes in the welfare system including the bedroom tax, overall benefit cap and universal credit. Part of that response includes employment and skills provision.

6.1 Job Brokerage contract

The council's use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to fund employment support programmes is regarded as an example of innovation and best practice by other West London authorities and by Job Centre Plus. The programme seeks to ensure residents who are affected by the Overall

Benefit Cap can retain their tenancies and ultimately move into sustained employment, thus becoming exempt from the cap.

Residents who engage with the programme (delivered currently by Reed in Partnership) receive a payment (also funded by DHP) to cover the cost of their rent shortfall until they either find a job, or disengage with the project.

Outcomes	Number to date
Engaged on the programme	65
Job starts	11

6.2 Brent Start Welfare Reform courses

In anticipation of the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), Brent Start have developed a course specifically designed to assist effected residents adjust to the changes in how they access their benefits. This course was designed with vulnerable residents in mind, trying to minimise the risk of financial exclusion under UC by ensuring residents have the requisite computer skills and infrastructure around them to access their benefits once UC begins to roll out in Brent.

7.0 **Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD)**

The employment rate for individuals with a learning difficulty in Brent is 2%, well below the London average of 7%. Evidence from service mapping, benchmarking and consultation suggests that people with learning disabilities find it difficult to compete with people without those disabilities for mainstream job vacancies, even when they have received extensive support in CV-writing, interview technique and vocational training. Therefore, bespoke support is needed to engage with employers to create bespoke vacancies through extracting appropriate roles and responsibilities from existing job descriptions.

7.1 Brent Works LD contract

The Employment, Skills and Enterprise team have used New Homes Bonus funding to commission specialist employment support for those with learning disabilities after this was identified as a priority for Adult Social Care colleagues.

Following a procurement exercise, Royal Mencap Society have been appointed to deliver a job/apprenticeship brokerage service for this particular cohort, working alongside Brent Works to ensure a coordinated approach to employer engagement. Staff from Mencap will co-locate in the Civic Centre, receiving referrals from the Learning Disabilities team in Adult Social Care as well as linking to Brent Start's courses designed for this particular cohort (see 7.2 below).

The programme aims to deliver the following outcomes over the course of a 12 month contract:

- 50 engagements on the project
- 15 job starts

7.2 Brent Start courses for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities

Brent Start offers four different programs aimed at learners with a learning difficulty or disability. These courses run for the duration of the academic year and are all delivered from the Stonebridge Centre (NW10). At the time of writing, there are 25 learners accessing one or more of the four programmes.

The courses currently available are as follows:

Course	Learner numbers*
Café and Enterprise	6
Café Project	6
Skills for Work	15
Towards Employment	9

*Note: a learner may be enrolled on multiple courses

8.0 **Care Leavers**

The council owes a duty of care as corporate parent to those residents in care; supporting Care Leavers into employment education and training remains a priority as outcomes for this group lag behind those of their peers.

8.1 WLA Care Leavers project

The Care Leavers employment pilot was commissioned by the West London Alliance, using funding from Brent, Ealing and Hounslow in addition to Job Centre Plus Flexible Support Fund monies.

The programme, delivered by Future Paths, provides bespoke employment support to individuals identified through the council's Leaving Care team. In Brent, Future Paths are co-located in the Civic Centre and work together with the Care Leavers team and a dedicated worker from Job Centre Plus to source customers and move them closer to work whilst addressing wider barriers.

The project aims to deliver the following outcomes over the course of a 12 month contract:

- 40 clients engaged onto the programme across Brent and Harrow (priority to go to Brent)
- 16 job outcomes
- 7 sustainments at 13 weeks
- 3 sustainments at 26 weeks

To date, the project has successfully engaged 29 people from Brent, and supported 3 Care Leavers into paid employment.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 Across all the programmes detailed above, the intention is that by providing holistic support with employment as an end-goal, demand on future services will be reduced as people's financial/economic status improves, saving money to the public purse via early interventions and access to employment/training.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 n/a

11.0 Diversity Implications

11.1 This report outlines a number of projects aimed at supporting diverse groups, including those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010.

12.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

12.1 n/a

Background Papers

n/a

Contact Officers

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