

16 February 2017

Youth Employment Initiative (IMPACT) and Walsall Works Apprenticeship Programme Update.

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr R Burley – Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services
Cllr L Jeavons – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Transport

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a request from the Scrutiny Committee to receive information on the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) IMPACT and Walsall Works Apprenticeship programme, with particular regard to the engagement in the YEI IMPACT programme and the undertaking of apprenticeships by Looked After Children. The purpose is to enable Committee members to be fully aware of performance and participation so far and to facilitate discussion, scrutiny and challenge to delivery and outcomes, particularly for Looked After Children.

Reason for Scrutiny:

The report sets out the work and achievements so far against both the IMPACT and the Walsall Works Programmes. This enables the Scrutiny Committee to be fully aware of the range of activities available, the progress and impact achieved so far and the involvement and outcomes achieved particularly by Looked After Children. Scrutiny Committee will challenge and hold the Council and Partners to account for the delivery of good outcomes.

Recommendations:

That: Scrutiny notes the contents of the report and uses the information to scrutinise, challenge and assess progress.

Background papers:

- Walsall Works Management Group progress reports and data bases
- IMPACT programme monitoring reports and data bases.

Resource and legal considerations:

None arising directly from this report.

Citizen impact:

The delivery of effective services that support our young people to achieve and be engaged in meaningful education and training has a direct impact on their welfare, wellbeing and chances of a sustainable economic future.

Both the IMPACT and Walsall Works programmes link directly to the Corporate Priorities to improve Health and Wellbeing and Safe, Resilient and Prospering Communities and the Children's Services priority that all children and young people in Walsall are safe, happy and learning well.

Environmental impact:

None arising directly from this report.

Performance management:

Monitoring the effective delivery and impact of services to children young people and their families is essential so that the Council can be assured that the resources at its disposal are being used to maximum impact. The performance management process operating through the Council and with its key partners ensures that data, intelligence and evidence are available to assess and drive performance improvement.

Equality Implications:


The Council's equality of opportunity policy and procedures are operated by all parties throughout the Council involved in these programmes. Any issues of inequality are challenged and addressed by staff and the respective management Boards.

Consultation:

Regular consultation with parents/carers, staff, children and young people are included as part of both programmes, with the evidence and information presented to the appropriate performance / management board.


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1. Report

1.1 The IMPACT Programme (The Youth Employment Initiative)

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was launched by Government as part of the 2014 – 2021 EU programme for the UK, to provide additional resources for areas where youth unemployment was above 20% in 2012, with the Black Country qualifying as one of these areas.

The YEI aims to support young people aged between 16 and 29 who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) into positive opportunities and outcomes.

Walsall Council led the approach to the development of the bid which was then submitted into stage 1 of the process and subsequently approved. Totalling some £51million, the £17million of match funding required will lever in £34million of new funding for the Black Country as for every £1 we find as match, it then generates £2 of new funding we can spend on eligible activities.

Following this initial success, Dudley Council stepped forward and was appointed as Accountable Body for the IMPACT programme, to lead on the second stage application, which was subsequently approved.

The appointed delivery partners are the 4 Black Country Councils and the Talent Match programme operated by the voluntary sectors. Talent Match provide tailored services for those clients most distant from the labour market including; specialist outreach, enhanced mentoring / advice and guidance and access to specialist services.

Due to delays on the part of the Managing Authority DWP (the Department for Work and Pensions) the contract did not begin until July 2016 and with a two year operating period is currently programmed to complete in July 2018, however due to these delays a 1 year extension has been requested.

1.2 The targets agreed for the programme are:

	Walsall 16-18	Walsall 19 - 24	Walsall 25 - 29	Walsall Totals	Total Programme
Starts on Programme	1402	1226	876	3504	16754
Completion of Activities	505	720	516	1741	9013
Offer of Outcome (Education or Employment)	245	482	346	1073	5689
Outcome sustained 26	494	511	0	1005	4391

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1.3 To meet these targets, from the total allocation for the Black Country (£34million) Walsall's allocation is £6.1million, which will fund a mix of new staff including 25 new client facing Advisers, together with required management and support together with 'Smart Money' available to commission or fund services that meet individual clients needs.

1.4 IMPACT delivery includes:

- Collaborative working across all Directorates, delivered by Children's Services, Regeneration and Development, Adult Social Care and Money Home Job.
- Wider Partnership working with Public Health.
- Over 100 staff working on the programme, including 25 new advisers posts.
- Eligible Participants will be supported by Specialist Advisers throughout their journey into training and employment.
- Not delivering "more of the same" but building on existing services and approaches to maximise added value.

1.5 IMPACT delivery model locations for advisers include:

- Broadway North
- Transition and Leaving Care
- Teenage Pregnancy Service
- Youth Offending and Police/Probation Service
- Job Centres (all four sites)
- Early Help localities (Walsall Central, East, North and West)
- Debt, Crisis and Homeless
- Walsall Disability Hub
- Education and Training Institutions including Walsall College and Walsall Adult and Community College

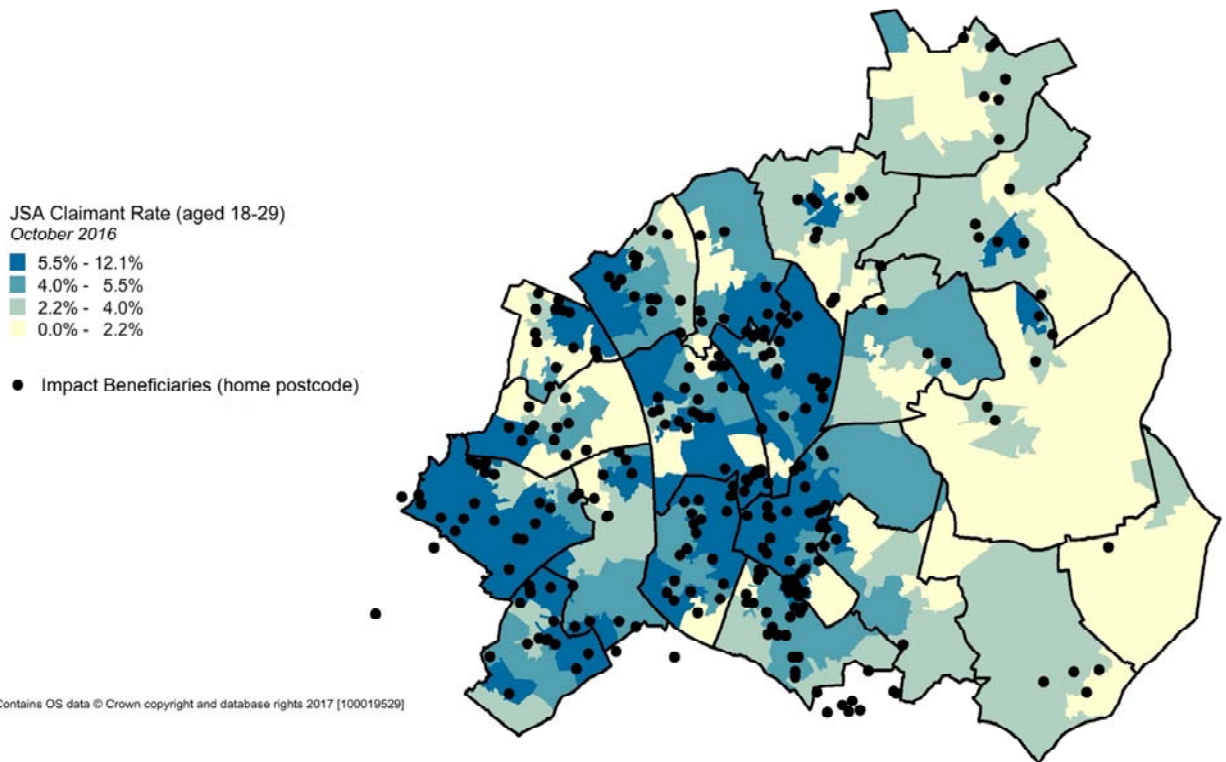
1.6 IMPACT referral routes include:

- Self Referrals
- Mental Health Services
- Talent Match
- Community Organisations
- Education and Training Organisations
- WHG and Housing Providers
- Building Better Opportunities and other External Funded Programmes e.g. ESF
- NHS Transitional Teams
- Libraries
- Internal Services

1.7 The IMPACT programme is steadily building momentum with the following recruitment figures up to the 31st December 2016.

- 380 participants recruited (183 male, 197 female)
- 125 between 16 and 18, 178 between 19 and 24 and 77 between 25 and 29.

1.8 Recruitment is largely following the patterns of unemployment as indicated in the following Walsall Map, with each person recruited indicated.



1.9 In terms of outcomes, it is early in the programme's development but so far the 380 beneficiaries have achieved: 150 Interventions (e.g. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) sessions, elements of training and support) completed, 6 placed into employment and 13 entering training, including 3 securing an Apprenticeship.

There is a clear focus within the IIMPACT project to provide targeted support to our vulnerable groups within Walsall including those young people who have been through the youth justice system; the care system and teenage parents. IAG Advisers have therefore been co-located within these teams to provide that bespoke support as well as within the Early Help hubs to support teams working with vulnerable families and young people.

Looked After Children (LAC) feature as one of the key priority groups we aim to support through IMPACT. To achieve this the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) action group meetings (held monthly) review the LAC that feature on the NEET list aged 16 – 24 and target them for interventional support. So far 23 LAC have enrolled and are currently receiving support through IMPACT. We continue to drive this forward to maximise the numbers ultimately benefitting.

There are 25 young people engaged on the IMPACT project who have offended and 15 of these young people have engaged as a direct result of the IAG Adviser being co-located within the youth justice team.

Figures up to December show that 20 participants engaged with the Project identify as pregnant or teenage parent, 14 of these have been directly engaged through the co-located IAG Adviser.

This close working within these teams is clearly benefitting the most vulnerable groups of young people in Walsall.

Whilst young people have to be NEET to be eligible for the Impact Project close working with schools is established through the Careers Education Information Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Network which ensures that young people have access to relevant information and support and can be referred to the Project as soon as they leave school if they become NEET. Presentations have also been made to School Forums to develop support with schools for young parents who are eligible for the Project.

Publicity events are planned throughout the year, including during school holidays to market the opportunities available for all young people aged 16-29.

1.10 IMPACT is beginning to make a difference through:

- Additional team members adding value and having time to spend with individuals
- Providing Advice and Guidance that matters
- Creating opportunities for young people through additional support for complex needs, tailored training and access to employment and skills.
- Breaking down silo working barriers across Directorates – a real opportunity to work together and make a significant difference to the lives of our young people

2 The Walsall Works (WW) Programme

2.1 The Walsall Works Programme began in July 2012, managed, administered and driven through a small team in the Economy & Environment Directorate and supported by a large local network of key partners. It aims to utilise the £2million of funding allocated by the Council to increase the numbers of Apprenticeships within Walsall for participants aged between 16 and 24 years of age.

2.2 It soon became apparent that two of the key barriers preventing or limiting the take up of Apprenticeships locally were:

- The gap between skills and ability held by some local people and the entry level expected by employers and
- Employer's reluctance to take the financial risk and recruit an apprentice.

2.3 In response to these two restricting factors the WW team;

- Commissioned a range of Pre-Apprenticeship programmes to support local people to gain the entry level skills required by employers in a number of identified key sectors (Health & Social Care, Financial, Professional & Business, Construction, Manufacturing & Engineering, and Logistics etc.).
- Put into place a grant system for employers (grants up to £6000 dependent upon circumstances) who were willing to take on Apprentices as a contribution towards the salary costs. Payments are based on stage payments linked to outcomes and longer term sustainability, with 25% of the grant payable at the

end linked to completion and retention of the apprentice as a full staff member for at least a further 6 months.

- 2.4 To ensure that participants could benefit from the programme fully and employer's commitment was tested, a minimum wage level for participating employers was established. This being the national minimum wage payable for their age group and not the national minimum Apprenticeship wage which is much lower. Those not signing up to this approach could then not qualify for the WW grant payments.
- 2.5 With the team building active links with local employers it became apparent that another missing link was the ability to match local young people with employer ready skills directly with jobs and other training available throughout Walsall. The team established this additional job matching strand as part of the WW programme.
- 2.6 The following sets out Walsall Work's successes so far since July 2012;
- 470 young people have so far entered a Pre-Apprenticeship programme.
 - 638 young people have succeeded in securing a full Apprenticeship place.
 - 1227 young people have achieved other outcomes, including 622 into work.
- 2.7 The WW programme supported where possible Looked After Children (LAC's) with the following recorded;
- 84 LAC's registered on WW
 - 18 into Pre-Apprenticeships
 - 8 into full Apprenticeships
 - 26 placed into employment
 - 32 achieving other outcomes (training course etc.)
- 2.8 The WW programme is continuing and still has some of the original funding left. One of the principles of the programme was to lever in resource so any complementary grants or programmes have been used to support WW participants. This, in addition to some funding committed as part of the Council Economic Growth Programme (EGP), will currently continue this programme through to 31.03.2019.

3. Areas for Further Development

- Continue and build on the active joint working across directorates
- Build up the commissioned services through the 'Smart Money' to maximise the aid for participants
- Develop and improve the direct services deliver through the Council
- Utilise and gain the most from services provided by key partners that can maximise the successes for participants
- Ensure that the benefits are maximised for our Looked After Children, increasing the numbers participating and achieving through both schemes.
- Development of active dashboard reporting that improves real time reporting etc.
- Improving the positive marketing across Walsall and beyond.