
Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 2 March 2018

Subject: **Employability, Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To consult the Panel on the work to progress the priorities and actions in the “Employability, Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan.

2 Information

Advisory Group Report

- 2.1 The group met on 7 February. Verbal updates were provided on the following activity:
- Social prescribing pilot
 - DWP work and health green paper
 - Apprenticeship levy
 - Development of higher level skills provision
- 2.2 The group welcomed the commencement of the social prescribing pilot and discussed the issues faced by individuals who are on sick leave from work along with positive changes that employers could make.
- 2.3 Discussion took place about the apprenticeship levy, how businesses can be supported to use this money and the role of the public sector.

Social Prescribing Pilot – Work Wellness Service

- 2.4 The Social Prescribing Pilot – The Work Wellness Service, officially launched in February 2018 within two GP surgeries in York. The 2 surgeries are located within adjoining Holgate and Guildhall wards. The pilot will run for one year.

- 2.5 The service is being delivered by a Work Wellness Advisor who receives referrals directly from GPs. The surgeries involved have demonstrated their commitment by integrating this post fully into their practice, including room space and access to patient records. Reception staff are also proactively supporting the pilot by recommending a review of 'Fit Notes' issued to consider any potential referrals.
- 2.6 The aim of the project is to see a minimum of 10 people in target demographics (50+ and in-work) and to enable them to remain in work or return to the workplace, if already within a period of sickness absence. Support will also be provided to individuals, where appropriate, to find suitable alternative employment.
- 2.7 In addition, it is envisaged that the pilot will demonstrate a range of benefits such as:
- 2.8 To patients
- Improved health and wellbeing
 - Health and lifestyle changes
 - Improved self-esteem and confidence
- 2.9 To GP practices
- Reducing frequent practice attendance
 - More appropriate use of GP time
 - Easy referral
 - Provides links between the VCS and primary care
 - Increased range of practical services
- 2.10 Cost savings overall
- Decreased reliance on GP's
 - Decrease in clinical prescribing
 - Decreased need for acute services
- 2.11 A thorough evaluation of the pilot will be undertaken in real-time with a narrative outcome expected for each case. Case studies and a range of statistics will be developed throughout the duration of the project.

DWP Work and Health Green Paper: Improving Lives – The future of work, health and disability

- 2.12 Published in November – the report sets out the Government response to the Green Paper consultation (Improving Lives Green Paper – October 2016) and actions, focussed on:
- A sustainable welfare and employment support system
 - Workplace setting: the important roles of employers, managers and supervisors

- The role of health services.
- 2.13 The actions in these areas focus on activity over the next 2-3 years. This is important as ill health among working age people costs the economy around £100 billion a year.
- 2.14 The report includes a vision for a society in which all disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are able to go as far as their talents will take them.
- 2.15 A key part of this is the partnership approach – this will require a concerted focus and effort from local authorities, LEPs, health services, patient and peer support groups, education and training bodies, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, and businesses.
- 2.16 The Government’s ambition is to see one million more disabled people in work over the next ten years. This replaces the previous pledge to halve the disability employment gap – reason being it is more quantifiable.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5 Staffing Implications

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6 External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the progress of the Work Wellness Service and the progress made against the “Employability, Accessing Jobs and Realising Potential” priority of the Employment and Skills Plan.

8 Background Documents

None.

9 Appendices

None.