
Report to: Employment and Skills Panel

Date: 27 November 2019

Subject: **Employment and Skills Programmes**

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1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the progress of delivery of LEP-led employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.
- 1.2 The Panel is asked for their help in raising awareness of the Apprenticeship Levy transfer service among their networks.

2 Information

School Partnerships

- 2.1 The **Enterprise Adviser Network** and the Combined Authority's Enterprise Coordinators are currently engaged with 182 (90%) of secondary schools and colleges. From April 2019 to September 2019 the network has delivered over 106,228 employer encounters and 12,594 employer encounters for pupil premium learners, 7,870 of whom have had at least two employer encounters as part of the network.
- 2.2 As reported at the last meeting, 16 projects have been awarded through the **Raising Aspirations pilot** to give schools and colleges the opportunity to trial innovative approaches to supporting their most disadvantaged young people. These projects will support 6500 disadvantaged pupils to have multiple encounters with local employers with a focus on employers in skills shortage sectors. The projects awarded will deliver the outputs by July 31st 2020. An independent evaluation will assess the impact of these projects including case studies on what behaviour change has taken place with the pupils benefitting from the project.

- 2.3 The Kirklees **Careers Hub** is making good progress in supporting hub schools and colleges to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks of good careers guidance. The average number of benchmarks achieved by the 33 secondary schools and two colleges in the Hub is 4.27, against a national average of 3.9. This includes six secondary schools fully achieving all Gatsby benchmarks, of only 99 nationally.
- 2.4 The **Special Educational Needs and Disability** (SEND) Hub officially launched in September 2019. The hub is geographically based in the bordering local areas of Calderdale, Leeds, Wakefield and York and includes 29 schools. Two key themes have been identified for the Careers Hub with a focus on; improving positive destinations and increasing employer engagement. The Hub will develop a joined up and collaborative approach, allowing more young people to gain access to the relevant support. Schools will share best practice with each other and will prepare students for employment by providing meaningful encounters. The aim is for students – who are currently significantly disadvantaged in the labour market – to make a successful transition into the world of work.

Careers

- 2.5 In October the **FutureGoals** careers campaign re-launched as an all-age inspiration platform enabling individuals of all ages to access high quality Labour Market Information. The website <https://futuregoals.co.uk> now features a sector based presentation pack including inspirational videos from regional business role models, employer profiles and regional facts to inspire and support individuals to make better, more informed careers decisions.
- 2.6 In the first two weeks of re-launching the campaign, the website has reached over 500 new users and had over 4,000 page views. Resources have been distributed through the Leeds City Region Enterprise Adviser Network reaching 200 schools and colleges and 6 district level careers networks. A briefing session with local publically funded partners, careers providers and Universities will take place in early November to increase usage of FutureGoals resources within the local careers landscape.
- 2.7 The FutureGoals campaign re-launched at Skills Yorkshire along with the rollout of the **Creative Industries Toolkit** <https://futuregoals.co.uk/> sponsored by Burberry Foundation. The LEP sponsored a 'Creative Zone' which convened businesses from across the region into an interactive zone to inspire young people, teachers, parents and carers to consider careers in the creative sector, businesses from textile manufacturing, digital, gaming and screen were represented. This is the region's largest skills show aimed and young people, educators and parents and carers. The event was attended by 62 educational institutions and had over 5500 visitors over two days.
- 2.8 The Combined Authority's adult re-training programme, **[re]boot**, part-funded through European Social Funds (ESF), has commenced with delivery through West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges and Leeds Trinity University.

The programme is targeting career changers, under- employed and unemployed graduates. It offers individuals over the age of 18 the opportunity to upskill, gain new qualifications and employment within shortage sectors, particularly Digital and Creative, Construction and Engineering.

- 2.9 Despite a delayed start, delivery is profiled to accelerate throughout the final quarter of 2019/20. The first courses have commenced through Bradford College and have focussed on digital skills and have engaged 41 individuals. A further 25 individuals are expected to enrol on a TV production course, entirely taught by industry professionals run through Leeds Trinity University in November.

Apprenticeships and Employment

- 2.10 The **Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE)** programme will close to new applications in November 2019. As previously reported, applications for the grant have been lower than anticipated with only 26 applications being received in the final phase of which only 10 have been eligible for the grant so far. Final grants will be processed by the end of March 2020.
- 2.11 An important factor that has resulted in the recent low level of demand for the devolved AGE grant is a national shortage of core funding for SME (non-levy) apprenticeships (see section below).
- 2.12 As previously reported, during summer of 2019 the LEP/Combined Authority was contacted by a number of training providers who have reported that they are turning away non-levy paying businesses and potential learners (up to 300 in autumn 2019) because of a shortage of core apprenticeship funding. The Combined Authority has surveyed providers and found that the vast majority have run out of funding for SME apprenticeships, or are soon to do so. This issue was raised at the LEP Board July meeting and officers were charged with finding solutions for this issue in the immediate and longer term.
- 2.13 Further to the discussion at the LEP Board, the following approach has been taken to respond to the issue over the summer period:
- Large (levy-paying) companies have been approached directly, prioritising those that the LEP/CA is already engaging with/supporting to seek and support transfers of any unspent levy;
 - On a pilot basis, provide a brokerage service between levy-paying employers and training providers for the purposes of levy transfer.
- 2.14 Although the biggest challenge has been identifying levy-payers with unspent funds, where these can be identified, the response has been very positive, with a key message about keeping money in the region really resonating. The vast majority of levy-payers weren't aware that they could transfer up to 25% of their levy to SMEs. A company has finalised levy transfer of £60k per annum for three years to support 12 engineering apprentices. Officers are working with a group of levy-payers to support 32 apprenticeships in a priority sector, with a value of £1.2m.

- 2.15 Following a successful pilot phase which has demonstrated levy-payers' willingness to engage in transfer and their need to be hand-held through this process, an impartial brokerage service has now been launched. The service is reaching out to a larger number of levy-paying companies to utilise up to 25% levy transfer opportunities to support SMEs and their apprentices. <https://www.the-lep.com/for-businesses/skills-and-training/apprenticeship-levy-support/>
- 2.16 The **LCR Employment Hub** programme, launched in January 2019, is being delivered in partnership with Local Authorities and will support over 6,000 young people aged 15-24 to access apprenticeships and employment. At the end of September 2019 the programme had:
- Engaged 892 15-24-year-old participants against a profile of 1,125 (79%). Of these 262, against a profile of 119 (220%), were recorded as being from ethnic minorities and 193 declared they had disabilities against a target of 92 (210%)
 - Engaged with 622 businesses against a target of 1029 (60%).
- 2.17 It is anticipated that the programme could be impacted by the funding issues reported above. Many companies being contacted by the programme are not prepared to commit to any form of additional/new recruitment or training in the current economic and political climate.

Skills for Business

- 2.18 As previously reported, the Combined Authority has submitted a bid for funding through a recent ESF Skills for Growth call, a decision is expected in autumn 2019. The proposed programme will support businesses to engage with the full breadth of the education landscape, and is currently progressing through the Combined Authority's internal approval process.
- 2.19 Officers of the Combined Authority are working closely with the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges to ensure that its ESF funded skills programmes respond to current economic challenges and opportunities, in particular:
- Supporting businesses to prepare for Brexit through export training and cross-referrals to the broader business support offer;
 - Developing an editor training offer, to support local companies to take advantage of the opportunities associated with the relocation of Channel 4's national headquarters to Leeds City Region

Work Wellness

- 2.20 The Work Wellness pilot project continues to be an extremely popular and valued addition to the Medical Centre Team and their patients. This quarter has seen an increase of clients successfully moving on into employment, education and training. 344 Clients have been supported since the start of the project of whom only 40 of these actually required a GP/Medical appointment.

- 2.21 As indicated at the last meeting, the evaluation of the Work Wellness social prescribing model in York will be considered by the next meeting of the Inclusive Growth and Public Policy Panel.

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 delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.
- 7.2 The Panel is asked for their help in raising awareness of the Apprenticeship Levy transfer service among their networks.

8 Background Documents

None.

9 Appendices

None