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**Report to:** Employment and Skills Panel

**Date:** 23 February 2021

**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 and how they have been adapted to support COVID-19.

## 2. Information

### Apprenticeships and Employment

- 2.1 As part of the Combined Authority response to COVID-19 we continue to operate the repurposed **Employment Hubs**. This model provides a 'one stop shop' for job seekers of any age and for employers recruiting or making redundancies. As at 29 January, we have supported 602 individuals and 114 businesses (59 of these business enquiries were regarding the Kickstart scheme), which were referred to our Employment Hub programme delivery partners for support. Support and progression will be dependent on any additional lockdown measures. The repurposed element of Hub programme is being continued with the support of part of a £13.5m Strategic Investment Funding COVID-19 employment and skills package from the Combined Authority. Discussions are ongoing with delivery partners (local authorities) around how the funding will be utilise to enhance their resources to offer support to an increasing number of individuals who are unemployed, furloughed, at risk of redundancy or seeking alternative employment/career routes to access training/retraining and employment support.
- 2.2 The main ESF Employment Hub programme reports on a quarterly basis and therefore quarterly figures for end of 2020 were not available at the time of writing the report but will be reported at the next meeting.

- 2.3 Interest in the **Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Service** from pledging Employers continues to grow as the service develops. Businesses realise the contribution they can make to the economic recovery with over £1.3 million pledged to date which is being allocated against available Apprenticeship opportunities.
- 2.4 Levy transfers mean that apprenticeship training fees will be covered 100% by the transferring company. Apprenticeship starts are low in this current climate, we anticipate that many businesses will begin taking on apprentices again from Spring 2021 subject to lockdown restrictions.

#### School Partnerships

- 2.5 Our Enterprise Coordinators have completed a successful first term, working virtually with schools in the **Enterprise Advisor Network**. Engagement is high and action planning carried out with members; focusing on improving and/or achieving specific career outcomes and positive impacts on young people. This includes our **The Special Educational Needs and Disability Careers Hub** (SEND) and **Bradford Opportunity area**. The team have coordinated 17 events/ workshops – key ones included SEND alumni training with the University of Derby, our first Regional CEIAG delivered with over 60 delegates attending and EAN workshops.
- 2.6 **Raising Aspirations** project changes are now formally agreed (Business Rates Pool funded) with grant variation letters issued, extending the outcome end date to July 31 2021.
- 2.7 The **Kirklees Careers Hub** has successfully launched the new Parental Resources in November. The aim of these is to inform, educate and empower those that influence young people when at the crucial decision-making age for pathways beyond year 11. Promotion on social media across Leeds City Region, has already reached over 38,500 people.

#### Careers

- 2.8 As part of the investment from the Burberry Foundation, the careers team are developing an interactive **next steps toolkit** that will be hosted on the FutureGoals website. Due to the pandemic access to careers support has been limited in schools and colleges. The aim of the toolkit is to support young people to understand their options and help ease anxiety about the uncertainty of their future. The toolkit will signpost young people to local and national support, provide resources and tools to empower and prepare them for the world of work, higher education or Apprenticeships. The resources will be launched in National Careers Week at the beginning of March.
- 2.9 To help our stakeholders and partners understand and make better use the **labour market report**, we are developing an interactive platform that will enhance the FutureGoals website. The platform will utilise information from the report and create accessible, interactive information for stakeholders.

The resource will increase usability of the information and make it easy for stakeholders to access relevant information and align their work to the report findings. The resource will be launched at the end of March 2021.

- 2.10 The FutureGoals **virtual work experience** project will launch in March with the first of 4 resources featuring key sectors: creative and digital, manufacturing and engineering, construction, and health tech. The resource is aimed at students in year 10 and 11 (15 and 16 years old) who are unable to access work experience opportunities due to the pandemic.

### Adult Training

- 2.11 Following a successful bid in October 2020, the CA were awarded £1.3million from Department for Education (DfE) to act as lead partner and deliver a **Digital and Technical Skills Bootcamp Pilot**. Insights will help inform the development of the National Skills Fund offer and identify programmes to support the achievement of our COVID-19 recovery plan aims.
- 2.12 The pilot went live in January 2021 and will run until March 2021, it will engage with 600 learners during this time. There are 4 delivery partners delivering the training element of the pilot. There are ten bootcamps being delivered that have been influenced by employers and will test delivery models in a small, directed way to develop innovative and highly responsive courses that link directly to local digital and technical skills needs. Guaranteed interviews will be aligned to potential job outcomes for participants. Provision is not bound by existing accreditation and has the flexibility to meet needs of employers directly, building on the success of existing programmes and relationships.
- 2.13 The bootcamps support individuals from disadvantaged groups such as BAME, women and those unemployed due to COVID-19 or those looking to upskill. They create an opportunity to develop innovative and responsive adult training that addresses the needs of unemployed adults and those who need additional skills to progress in their current employment.

### Reboot

- 2.14 The Combined Authority's adult re-training programme, **[re]boot**, is part-funded through European Social Fund (ESF) and gives adults the chance to upskill, gain new skills/qualifications and improve their employment options particularly within key regional sectors, focused on construction, digital, manufacturing and engineering and the fast-growing creative sector. Since its launch in November 2019, the programme has supported over 450 individuals to upskill.
- 2.15 COVID restrictions continue to impinge on face-to-face training. Tougher restrictions have resulted in the closure of colleges and training centres. This will halt the hands-on, practical courses such as the Hybrid Vehicle, and some construction training. Other courses that migrated online are continuing at a good pace with Level 3 courses proving most popular with

learners.

- 2.16 The [re]boot courses and content are accessed on the FutureGoals website. In December [re]boot careers changers page received 1,117 page views; 12.66% of all website traffic.
- 2.17 Through support of part of a £13.5m Strategic Investment Funding COVID-19 employment and skills package from the Combined Authority and bidding to other external funding programmes the Combined Authorities adult training offer will be expanded and extended (see Paper 6).

#### Delivery Agreements

- 2.18 **Delivery agreement** reports have been finalised for our 7 colleges for performance in 2018/19 and will be accessible on the Combined Authority website in March. New Delivery Agreements will be negotiated in 2021/22.

#### Skills for Business

- 2.19 The **Skills for Growth** programme has engaged 36 businesses in the first quarter of the programme. Each business has completed an Education Engagement Plan which outlines how they would like to engage with skills provision and education in the region. Business Partnership Advisers are working closely with each business to support them to link with education, particularly Higher Education, to address skills gaps and recruitment needs. Businesses are also being referred to other support programmes, for example, the Employment Hub, the LEP Growth Service, and the Enterprise Adviser Network, to provide bespoke support based on businesses' immediate and long-term needs.
- 2.20 The Skills for Growth Steering group has been formed with representatives from local authorities and GHWY. The first meeting was held in January and will take place each quarter. The group will provide advice and guidance on barriers and opportunities to engagement. This will include current lockdown concerns for businesses and potential lack of uptake in the programme.
- 2.21 Skills for Growth team are working with the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges (WYCC) to engage businesses with their High Performing Workplaces Programme. The programme includes export and innovation training which is relevant the Combined Authority EU Transition work.
- 2.22 We are currently discussing with Combined Authority Leaders re funding for an Entrepreneurship package, as part of the Economic Recovery Plan, to meet current gaps in provision and address inequalities. This includes a community based entrepreneurial development programme to promote self-employment as a careers choice and provide prestart-up support.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

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

#### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

4.1 There are no inclusive growth implications directly arising from this report.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

#### **7. Staffing Implications**

7.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

#### **8. External Consultees**

8.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

#### **9. Recommendations**

9.1 The Panel is asked to note and comment on the progress of delivery of employment and skills programmes in the Leeds City Region.

#### **10. Background Documents**

None.

#### **11. Appendices**

11.1 None