

Achievements from the inclusive growth project

Under the leadership of the project director, partners from across the City Region have come together to put inclusive growth at the heart of the collective agenda and share information and learning about where there is chance to go further.

The main report describes how the expanded policy framework and local inclusive industrial strategy drive better living standards, particularly in the most deprived communities. In addition to this, the inclusive growth project has resulted in some major changes for the City Region:

1. To harness the power of anchor institutions we have:

- Secured commitment from 20 major anchor institutions across West Yorkshire and York to examine how they can become inclusive organisations.
- Shared good practice on No Silver Bullet across the network Impact on over 100,000 workers, stretching take home pay of the lowest paid by the adoption of inclusive employment and pay policy and practice.
- Prompted the Combined Authority and local authorities to understand how public procurement can deliver more social value.

2. To share learning about how partners can best address poverty and put communities at the heart of inclusive growth we have:

- Drawn out lessons from previous anti-poverty work and initiatives across the region, including the Single Regeneration Budget, New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.
- Run workshops for stakeholders to develop potential standards for authorities to consider implementing, including maximizing take-up of benefits to which families are entitled.
- Organised and held mini-conference with voluntary and community service organisations across West Yorkshire and also Locality, exploring barriers to community enterprise and engagement.

3. To understand the potential for good work to improve productivity we have:

- Commissioned 'Timewise' to evaluate flexible working in the City Region - *'Making good jobs flexible and flexible jobs good'* and share learning about good practice.
- Added stretching and proportionate inclusive growth criteria to the Business Grants Programme, including a more stretching threshold for higher paying jobs.

4. To ensure low paid workers in councils are supported we have:

- Prompted local authorities to agree to treat low pay as if it were a protected characteristic.
- Supported councils to meet the living wage foundation benchmark for the lowest paid staff – currently 8,000+ employees, including apprentices and agency workers.

- Launched discount programmes to help provide savings for the same cohort which stretch take home pay by more than £900pa.
- Prompted efforts to increase the take-up of pension membership amongst low paid staff.

5. To challenge the Combined Authority to be as ambitious as it might be we have:

- Asked the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and project director to review the Strategic Economic Plan and associated projects and programmes and advise about they might be refocused to drive inclusive growth outcomes. This has consisted of:
 - Operational changes that have been or are being made;
 - Policy changes that require a decision but where there is consensus about what is required – such as to grants conditions, procurement, ticketing or socio-economic policy;
 - Ideas that are more complex and need further consideration/policy development. This includes, for example, incorporating the living wage into all contracts, incentivising employers to offer opportunities to people with ill health (esp. mental health problems) and targeting disadvantaged groups in our engagement and consultations.
- Explore how the devolution of powers and funding might be pursued in a way that drives inclusive growth.