

REPORT TO: Employment Learning and Skills and
Community Policy Performance Board

DATE: 28th June 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community &
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills and
Community

SUBJECT: DWP Restart Programme

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- provide information to the PPB regarding the introduction of the Government's Restart Programme;
- advise the PPB that Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning & Skills Division will deliver the programme on a subcontractor basis.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report be noted; and it is noted that the Council's ELS Division will deliver the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Restart Programme on a sub-contractor basis**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Scale of the Restart programme

- 3.1 The new £2.9 billion Restart scheme was announced at the Spending Review on 25 November 2020.

Introduction to DWP's Commercial Agreement for Employment and Health Related services (CAEHRs) Framework and Restart programme

- 3.2 In 2020, DWP launched the new CAEHRS five-year (2020 to 2025), framework-style agreement that looks to incorporate elements of a Framework and a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). As part of the CAEHRS Framework DWP announced the national Restart programme. The Restart programme will provide intensive and tailored supported to unemployed people.

In April 2021, G4S were awarded the Restart programme prime contract for CPA3 (North West).

- 3.3 The programme commenced at the beginning of this month (June 21).
- 3.4 The Restart programme will provide up to 12 months of tailored support for each participant. Early access will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Discussions with Job Centre Plus Work Coach colleagues suggest that this is the most appropriate route for the individual.
- 3.5 Referrals will be made over a 3-year period from June 2021 and Restart will benefit approximately 5449 Halton Universal Credit claimants who are expected to look for and be available for work but have no sustained earnings.
- 3.6 HBC will tailor our offer to local conditions and work closely with employers, internal council departments and other service providers to identify skills gaps and growth sectors to complement our programme of support.
- 3.7 Advisors will be required to maintain regular contact with all participants, to develop a strong understanding of individuals' employment history, skills, aspirations and support needs to develop the right package of support to help each participant succeed. This might include referrals to bespoke training within a growth sector or enable participants to access support to get the certificates/qualification to take up a job in a different industry i.e. CSCS/construction, SIA/security, food hygiene/hospitality and catering.

Performance/achievement

- 3.8 The programme offers 'Payment by Results', which are received on achievement of sustained job outcomes.

All providers will be incentivised to help as many people as possible into sustained employment: the more people helped to sustain employment, the more outcome payments they will receive.

21% of starts on programme (1165) will be paid the 'standard' outcome rate when they reach the sustained outcome point (i.e. meet the DWP earnings threshold).

33% of starts on programme (666) will be paid the 'accelerated' outcome rate when they reach the sustained outcome point (met the DWP earnings threshold)

The Earnings Performance Indicator for outcome payments is calculated by the Contracting Body/DWP in accordance with the HMRC PAYE Data.

3.9 DWP has designed robust Customer Service Standards with contractual force, which will ensure two key measures are achieved:

- regular contact with all participants using a variety of methods and channels
- a personalised offer for all participants, tailored to individual and local need.

Income and expenditure

3.10 The maximum contract package available is £6.7m for programme delivery from June 2021 to February 2026 (referrals will be made by Jobcentre Plus between June 2021 and June 2024 and outcomes can be claimed up to February 2026).

3.11 Income and expenditure will be closely monitored, through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Employment, Learning & Skills is one of Halton Borough Council's key strategic priorities. The ELS Division ensures its activities align with key Combined Authority and national DWP/government strategies and policies.

4.2 At peak delivery, the Restart programme will require 25 Advisors, in addition to Managers/Team Leaders and a number of support staff. Securing this 5-year contract (up to £6.7m) will enable the council to be a key deliver of DWP's Welfare to Work provision across the borough.

The Restart Programme will also provide opportunity for staff working on other programmes/contracts such as Work and Health Programme/Ways to Work to apply for relevant posts as those contracts come to a natural end.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The total contract package available to HBC through a sub-contract arrangement with G4S is up to £6.7m

Programme delivery will be from June 2021 to February 2026 (referrals will be made by Jobcentre Plus between June 2021 and June 2024 and sustained job outcomes can be claimed up to February 2026).

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Some Restart Programme customers also engage with the CYP services including Troubled Families and these projects complement each other in supporting local residents with a range of issues.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The programme aligns very well with the wide range of employment, learning and skills programmes already being delivered through the Division. The Restart Programme will build on the fantastic achievements that are achieved through similar programmes such as Work and Health Programme/Ways to Work delivery by Halton Borough Council. Supporting a significant number of local residents into paid work is a very positive outcome for the local economy.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In Halton, high levels of unemployment and poor skills continue to be a negative factor, which acts as a drag on the potential of the local economy. 7.4% of residents are on Universal Credit. The economic activity rate in Halton is higher than the NW and England figures. Halton has a high proportion of residents with no qualifications. 71% of residents have a Level 2 qualification compared to a UK average of 74.6%. The impact of Covid 19 and the subsequent job losses will further contribute to this negative picture.

6.4 There is clearly a need to support residents to improve their skills and support them into employment. The Restart programme delivered through the ELS Division will offer individualised support to local unemployed people to help them maximise their potential and achieve transferable skills, as well as supporting them to seek a sustainable job. The overall aim will be to help reduce worklessness, poverty and deprivation in Halton's most deprived communities and wards.

6.5 A Safer Halton

None

6.6 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.1 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The management of the Restart Programme contract will involve close monitoring both internally and externally to ensure any risks if identified are carefully mitigated, with clear action plans in place to address any underperformance, quality and compliance factors.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The impact of Covid on job losses has been huge, and another 450,000 redundancies in the UK are forecast in the next quarter, according to recent research (*Institute of Employment Studies*).
- 8.2 The Restart programme targets individuals aged 18 and over, who have been claiming Universal Credit for 12 months or more, and are at risk of becoming long term unemployed. The Programme will support different cohorts including NEET young people, claimants aged over 50 etc.
- 8.3 The Team will also use its CRM system and links with communities, as well as good working relationships with JCP colleagues, to target priority groups including BAME, care leavers, ex-offenders, people with disabilities and health conditions.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

'None under the meaning of the Act.'