

Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Scrutiny Panel

Work and Health

(link between pre-employment/employment support and mental health services)

Aims and Objectives

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The aim of the review is to support the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB to determine if:

- (a) the links between pre-employment/ employment and training support being provided in Halton and mental health services is adequate;
- (b) sufficient mental health provision is available in Halton to meet the increasing need from customers/learners accessing ELS services
- (c) sufficient awareness is being raised with employers to encourage recruitment and retention of individuals with health conditions (including mental health)

Context/Background

Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills (ELS) service delivers a range of programmes that support local residents who are looking for work or want to improve their skills including:

- Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) – a number of DWP/ESF funded programmes i.e. Ways to Work, Restart, JETS, Work and Health Programme and Kick Start
- Halton People into Jobs (HPIJ) – employer engagement and free job matching service for

local employers including access to funding i.e. Kick Start, ILMs

- Adult Learning – a range of ESFA funded provision i.e. maths, English, IT, employability, wellbeing, arts, child care, sector specific training
- Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team – raising awareness of access to apprenticeships across the Liverpool City Region
- Supported Internship Programme – co-delivered between HPIJ and HBC’s Adult Learning service supporting 16-24yr olds to undertake a 12 month unpaid internship programme

Over the years the ELS service has developed and enhanced its employment, learning and skills offer to include a more holistic approach to help address or remove significant barriers faced by the learners and customers accessing our provision. Such barriers can include issues of debt, housing, substance misuse etc but more increasingly the need to support individuals with accessing mental health services or supporting them to better manage their mental health conditions to be able to take up and retain employment.

Through delivering new programmes such as the DWP Work and Health Programme we have seen an increase in the numbers of customers we support displaying mild-moderate and severe mental health conditions. Similarly, in the last 3 years, the % of adult learners that have disclosed they have a mental health issue has increased from 12 to 15%, suggesting that Covid-19 could be the possible cause of this increase .

Our enhanced and holistic offer that supports with mental health and wellbeing includes courses such as confidence building, coping with stress, relaxation and mindfulness.

We have developed links with other council services to better signpost customers/learners displaying mental health conditions i.e. Health Improvement Team, Mental Health Team, Bridge Builders etc. We have also developed links with external services to signpost and fund access to other mental health services i.e. counselling.

	<p>Mental health for customers/learners has been further impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are now in a position of trying to re-engage with and support customers/learners back onto our programmes to help them undertake training or gain employment; however, the increased levels of anxiety, social exclusion, self-confidence and motivation means individuals are often more challenging to engage.</p> <p>When individuals do engage in our services, it is critical that they are being signposted to appropriate provision in a timely manner to ensure mental health conditions are being addressed and they are not left in a position where their condition could worsen or lead on to further health conditions.</p> <p>A key element of our service is our work with employers, who are offering employment or work experience opportunities for our learners/customers. We work with our employers sympathetically to help them understand that some of the individuals we put forward for interview or work experience may have additional barriers to overcome. Educating employers around mental health and its impact is really important; it also helps us to raise awareness of the Disability Confident Employer initiative. We have a range of employers who actively support recruitment of individuals that present with mental health or other health related issues and these employers are key to our employment programmes being successful.</p>
Methodology	
Timescale	<p>It is proposed that this review will be conducted during the period 18th October – 19th November 2021 with a view to submitting a report/ recommendations to the ELS&C PPB meeting in December 2021</p>

	<p>It is proposed that the review will comprise 3 meetings, covering topics set out below, followed by a final session (meeting 4) to consider the content of the Scrutiny Topic Group Report and recommendations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How does the Employment, Learning & Skills Division operate to ensure individuals with mental health conditions are being supported with accessing appropriate mental health provision; 2) The perspectives from the wider Halton Borough Council and external providers point of view; 3) The employers' perspective; 4) Final session to consider the content of Scrutiny Topic Group Report and recommendations. <p>Following endorsement by the ELS&C PPB, it is anticipated that the final Work and Health (link between pre-employment support and mental health) Scrutiny Topic Group report and recommendations will be submitted to a meeting of the Executive Board.</p>
<p>Scrutiny Topic Group Session 1</p>	<p>Date of meeting: Tbc</p> <p>Purpose of the session: To provide a clear understanding of current links to mental health services for customers/learners accessing provision across the ELS service</p> <p>Expert witnesses: Wesley Rourke - Operational Director, Economy Enterprise & Property Siobhan Saunders – Employment, Learning and Skills Lynsey Carr – Head of Welfare to Work</p>
<p>Scrutiny Topic Group Session 2</p>	<p>Date of meeting: Tbc</p>

	<p>Purpose of the session: To consider the proposals being considered by Halton Borough Council's Mental Health Team for future provisions</p> <p>Expert witnesses:</p> <p>Katie Bazley – Public Health Team Karen Riley – Head of Quality & Learner Experience (Adult Learning Team) Melanie Dodd – Apprenticeship Support by Be More Team</p>
Scrutiny Topic Group Session 3	<p>Date of meeting: Tbc</p> <p>Purpose of the session: To consider the employers' perspective on mental health support for prospective/existing employees to support with recruitment and retention</p> <p>Expert witnesses: selection of employers to be confirmed</p>
Scrutiny Topic Group Session 4	<p>Date of meeting: Tbc</p> <p>Purpose of the session: To consider and agree the review's final report and recommendations.</p>
Potential outcomes	
Expected outcomes	<p>It is expected that this review will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the ELS service in reflecting on current practices to support customers/learners with mild-moderate and severe mental health conditions in accessing adequate

	<p>provision and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the Division in putting any additional measures in place that may come out of the findings of the Topic Group.
Measuring success	<p>Any recommendations arising out of the review will be considered by the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community PPB and once agreed presented to the council's Executive Board. Subject to Executive Board approval, recommendations will be implemented and monitored.</p>
Officer/Member involvement	
Members	<p>All Members of the ELS&C PPB will be given the opportunity to be involved in the Scrutiny Topic Group review.</p> <p>Chair of the scrutiny topic group – ??</p> <p>The Scrutiny topic Group will be supported by the following council officers:-</p> <p>Other officers and guest speakers will be invited to participate in the Scrutiny Topic Group as appropriate.</p>