

REPORT TO: Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 17th November 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment Learning, Skills and Community

SUBJECT: Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT)

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the DWP Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background to the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer (YGT)

In August 2025 Halton Borough Council were commissioned to deliver the DWP/LCRCA Youth Guarantee Trailblazer which is aimed at supporting care leavers and young people aged 18-21 that are not in education, employment or training (NEET). There are 8 UK Youth Guarantee Trailblazers being piloted nationally. The YGT areas are: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, East Midlands, **Liverpool City Region**, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, and two in London.

- 3.2 YGT is delivered by HBC's Employment, Learning and Skills Division (jointly delivered by Halton People into Jobs and Halton Adult Learning and in close collaboration with the council's Post 16 Education to Employment and 16-25 Young People's Pathway Teams).
- 3.3 Year 1 of the programme is contracted to run from September 2025 – March 2026. Funding for subsequent years may be available.

3.4 There are four separate funding streams within the YGT:

1.1	Support for care leavers and care experienced young people aged 18-21.
1.2	Tracking young people aged 18 and 19 not in Employment,

	Education and/or Training (NEET)
1.3	Employment and Employability Support for young people aged 18-21 (NEET)
1.4	Employer engagement and incentives for recruiting young people aged 18-21 (NEET or care leavers)

- 3.5 Halton's YGT was launched on 9th September 2025 at the DCBL Stadium, which was a positive step towards supporting young people that may not engage with services. To make the Trailblazer a real success and to maximise the funding that is available in year 1 it will require all services that have a role in supporting NEET young people and/or care leavers to work collaboratively.
- 3.6 The aim of the Trailblazer is to try new and innovative approaches to engage with NEET young people and/or care leavers. Funding can be used more flexibly to help remove barriers that are impacting on young people accessing training, employment, or self-employment.
- 3.7 YGT supports the work of the Council and Corporate Parenting Board by providing care leavers access to a wide range of opportunities to help them progress (both inside and outside of borough).
- 3.8 All referrals to the Trailblazer are triaged through Halton People into Jobs to ensure that the right referral is made at the right time for each young person. Employment Specialists provide a tailored programme of practical support and signpost to appropriate services where specialist advice is needed e.g. housing, debt, mental health etc. This wrap around support is provided throughout their time on the programme and continues when they move into work to ensure they have the best chances of sustaining employment.
- 3.9 Halton Adult Learning, funded by devolved Adult Skills Budget, offers a range of programmes to support Halton residents aged 19+ (due to specific funding criteria). YGT can provide opportunities for young people to upskill and to engage in activities and interventions for young people that are aged eighteen who would not ordinarily be able to access these services through Adult Learning.
- 3.1 Effective employer engagement is a key element of the Trailblazer. Sourcing employers who can provide paid opportunities that young people want is vital. Financial incentives of £3,000 can be offered to employers who are recruiting a young person that is eligible and has signed up to the Trailblazer.
- 3.1 **Performance/achievement**
- 1 Contract delivery commenced in September 2025. Performance is comprehensively managed and monitored through a

range of internal and external measures.

3.1 Performance to date (year 1 Sep 25 – Mar 26)

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YGT Funding Strand	Programme	Target to achieve in year 1	Performance as of 22 nd Oct 25	Number supported into paid work
1.1	Care Leavers Support	42 care leavers supported	8 care leavers supported	3 care leavers offered paid employment
1.2	Tracking Project	Engage with 32 young people	Project to go live in Nov 25	N/A
1.3	Employment and Employability Support (NEET)	32 NEET young people to be supported	28 NEET young people supported	6 NEET young people into paid work
1.4	Employer Incentives	16 grants to be issued	3 grants committed	N/A

3.1 Key Successes

3 Collaborative working across HBC and other external services has resulted in a strong number of referrals being made to the Trailblazer meaning more young people are gaining access to the support they need to improve their prospects and find paid work.

3.1 9 young people have secured employment as part of the Trailblazer
4 since the launch on 9th September 2025.

3.1 Key issues

5 Engagement from young people can sometimes be inconsistent. Employment Specialists are finding that in some cases it can take up to three appointments for the young person to attend. Innovative ways to improve referral to attendance rates are currently being explored further.

3.1 Early identification of who our NEET young people and care leavers are
6 in the borough is crucial. Involvement in the care leavers Pathway Plan process will ensure that teams are working together to achieve the best outcome for the young person.

3.1 Concluding comments

- 7 The teams that deliver the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer have worked hard to improve the lives of the young people across the Borough. The Trailblazer compliments the work undertaken by the wider Employment, Learning & Skills Division and allows for the provision of a tailored package of support which will progress the care leaver/young person in a way that works for them.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Key policy implications have related to Safeguarding Children & Young People. Policies have been reviewed and continue to be updated in line with guidance to keep young people safe.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer is externally funded by DWP via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. A Grant Funding Agreement is in place between the LCRCA and Halton Borough Council.
- 5.2 Financial claims are submitted to the LCRCA to draw down the income to cover project expenditure retrospectively on a quarterly basis.
- 5.3 Income and expenditure are closely monitored through a combination of internal and external mechanisms, to ensure that contracts are delivered efficiently.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

NEET young people and care leavers will be signposted to various health and wellbeing initiatives that are delivered by Halton Borough Council and other external agencies including the Health Improvement Team to support individuals with a range of complex health barriers, resulting in greater independence.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The fantastic achievements that have come out of the various programmes delivered by Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division have led to increased qualification levels and many residents gaining employment - positive outcomes for the local economy.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports young people aged 18-21 (including some young people with SEND). Key elements of the Trailblazer will help young people develop a wide range of skills that help in the workplace.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports vulnerable young people that need support to access paid employment, self-employment, or training to upskill. The HPIJ team liaises with Halton Employers to tackle inequality and source equal access to placements for care leavers.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The Youth Guarantee Trailblazer supports young people aged 18-21 (some with SEND) to access opportunities and support in the community. Placements can be offered in community venues such as Halton Adult Learning to add value to the community.

7.0 Risk Analysis

- 7.1 The management of the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer will be meticulously and closely monitored both internally and externally to ensure any risks 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 None.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None

**10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF
0 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’