

REPORT TO: Local Economy Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26th January 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Employment Learning, Skills and Community

SUBJECT: Youth Hubs (Halton People into Jobs)

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on HPIJ/DWP Youth Hubs
- 1.2 To provide opportunities to members to raise any questions with regards to the Youth Hubs

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background to the Youth Hubs

In December 2025 Halton Borough Council were awarded a grant by DWP to deliver two Youth Hubs, one in Runcorn and one in Widnes which are aimed at supporting young people aged 18-24 that are unemployed and in receipt of Universal Credit.

- 3.2 Youth Hubs will be delivered by Halton People into Jobs in collaboration with DWP/Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches.
- 3.3 The grant to deliver Youth Hubs has been awarded for one year. The Youth Hubs will be based at:
 - Halton People into Jobs, Church Street, Runcorn
 - Halton People into Jobs, Kingsway Learning Centre, Widnes
- 3.4 Youth Hubs will 'go live' from 5th January 2026.
- 3.5 The aim of the Youth Hubs is to try and engage with unemployed young people aged 18-24 and/or NEET care leavers outside of the normal Jobcentre Plus environment.
- 3.6 Referrals can be made to the Youth Hubs/Halton People into Jobs through a range of sources including self-referrals, Work Coaches,

HPIJ community engagement, HBC services and other third-party organisations etc (list not exhaustive).

- 3.7 Youth Hubs support the work of the Council by providing unemployed/NEET young people and care leavers access to a wide range of opportunities to help them progress.
- 3.8 All referrals to the Youth Hubs will be 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 will signpost to other appropriate programmes such as Youth Gurantee Trailblazer and other specialist advice services that are needed e.g. housing, debt, mental health, dependency 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 Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches will be co-located with Halton People into Jobs for a minimum of 3-days per week at each Youth Hub.

- 3.1 Effective employer engagement is a key element of the Youth Hubs.
 - 0 Sourcing employers who can provide paid/unpaid opportunities that young people want is vital.

3.1 **Performance/achievement**

- 1 Delivery commences 5th January 2026. Performance will be comprehensively managed and monitored through a range of internal and external measures.

3.1 **Performance targets from 2026 – 2027:**

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Target	Runcorn Youth Hub	Widnes Youth Hub	Total
Provide a unique package of support to young people	100	100	200
Provide intensive case loading and mentoring support to young people (e.g. care leavers, hostel dwellers, ex-offenders, unaccompanied care leavers as required)	25	25	50
Intensive case loading and job search support for 40 NEET young people acting as a job broker to move them into employment or matched to be mentored within self-employment to move them along into starting	20	20	40

their own business			
A minimum of 100 different sessions delivered to 200 young people across Halton, e.g. - careers talks/mentoring circles in different sectors.	50 sessions (100 young people)	50 sessions (100 young people)	100 sessions (200 young people)
30% into work	30	30	60
10% volunteering	10	10	20
10% into work experience	10	10	20
10% educational outcomes	10	10	20

3.1 **Key Successes**

3 Collaborative working across HBC, DWP/Jobcentre Plus and other external services has already resulted in a strong number of referrals being made to other programmes such as Work and Health Programme, Pioneer Programme, Ways to Work and the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer meaning more young people are gaining access to the support they need to improve their prospects and find paid work.

3.1 **Key issues**

4 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. Work Coaches will be able to support and encourage engagement to help young people maximise the service and funding available to them.

3.1 **Concluding comments**

5 The teams that deliver the Youth Hubs have worked hard to improve the lives of the young people across the Borough. Youth Hubs will complement 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 young person/care leavers 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 Hubs are externally funded by DWP. A Grant Agreement is in place between the DWP and Halton Borough Council.
- 5.2 Management information and financial claims will be submitted to DWP to draw down the income to cover project expenditure retrospectively each month.
- 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 Hubs will support young people aged 18-24 (including some young people with SEND). Key elements of the Youth Hubs 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 Hubs will support vulnerable young people that need support to access paid employment, work experience, volunteering, self-employment, or training to upskill. The HPIJ team liaises with Halton Employers to tackle inequality and source equal access to placements for NEET young people and care leavers.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The Youth Hubs will support young people aged 18-24 (including some young people with SEND) to access opportunities and support in the community. Placements can be offered sourced in a range of community venues to add value to the community.

7.0 Risk Analysis

7.1 The management of the Youth Hubs 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.'