

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 29th March 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To share with the Executive Board the outcomes from the recent Ofsted Survey Inspection of the Employment, Learning & Skills Division

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- (1) notes the successful Ofsted Inspection of Employment, Learning and Skills; and**
- (2) endorses the actions arising from the Inspection.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The last full Ofsted inspection of the Employment, Learning and Skills Services was in June 2009 and the service was awarded a Grade 2 – Good.**
- 3.2 The Ofsted Survey Inspection took place over 3 days (2 days in November 2011 and a day in January 2012). The final report will be published on the Ofsted website and it may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.**
- 3.3 The evidence was collected in a number of ways including interviews with staff, participants, employers; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of four learning sessions. Additionally, the inspector selected four individuals to take part in a longitudinal survey**

3.4 Key findings from the Survey Inspection were as follows:

- **Very good** strategy for reducing unemployment and assisting local residents to secure employment.
- **Good** collaboration with employers to ensure that they offer jobs to unemployed local people.
- **Effective** tailoring of provision to support participants with multiple barriers to employment.
- **Good** participant skills to help them sustain employment.
- **Very good** initial assessment of literacy and numeracy which continued throughout the programmes.
- **Areas for improvement** focused on greater access to work experience and trials. The setting of smarter individual employability goals. The further development of the Employment, Learning and Skills database to monitor participants' progress and job outcomes.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Government has recently consulted on proposed changes to the Common Inspection Framework, which is used as the basis for Ofsted inspections.
- 4.2 Additionally, the Skills Funding Agency has streamlined adult learning funding and will retain a proportion of funding, which will be released dependent upon evidence of qualifications achieved and sustainable job outcomes.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Ofsted Survey Inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website and the results of it may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The inspection focused on 19+ provision

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

- 6.2.1 The Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection focused on employability and the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained

employment. The Employment, Learning & Skills Division provides a range of programmes and interventions aimed at upskilling individuals with core employability skills and supporting them to obtain employment.

6.2.2 The survey inspection identified key findings in relation to how Halton Borough Council is responding to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

6.2.3 The outcomes from the survey inspection will demonstrate how the Council is meeting inspectorate requirements as well as those of the funding agency and will be used to enhance future employability provision.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There is a clear link between positive employment and good health.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The delivery of employability provision and subsequent sustainable job outcomes will be dependent upon the Division maximising forthcoming regeneration schemes. For example, the construction of the Tesco Extra store is part of the wider development around Widnes Retail Park/Widnes Waterfront, which has regenerated previously unused industrial land and created new employment opportunities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Risks associated with poor inspection grades can include removal of funding, re-inspection, potential loss of provision and a damaged reputation. The opportunities associated with a good inspection grade can include additional contracts being awarded, a reduced inspection regime and an up take in places.

7.2 The areas for improvement identified from the Survey Inspection will be translated into a quality improvement action plan – see appendix 1.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Survey Inspection judged the Division's Equality and Diversity standards to be outstanding.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.