

Project: European Social Fund Ways to Work Project HALTON

Conditions:
Local context: 6% of residents are unemployed. The economic inactivity rate is around 1% higher than national figures. Employment rates are 1% lower than national rates. 13.3% of residents are workless, this compares to 9.1% nationally. Long term unemployment at 38.9% is 11.2 percentage points higher than the national figure. Halton is ranked 27th most deprived Local Authority nationally as recorded in the Index of Deprivation 2015.
Policy context: Welfare reform is placing a greater requirement on people to seek work. Those people furthest away from the labour market through disadvantage and long-term unemployment face further isolation and require more targeted intervention. Skill levels need to be improved to meet the employment demands of local businesses.
What needs to be in place for change to occur: Many employment projects are based upon specific claimant groups. We feel this does not maximise the potential flexibility of EU funding and would miss an opportunity for localised provision to be based on individual needs. Our experience indicates that claimant group does not wholly indicate participants' history, skills levels or needs. Given the changes we are currently seeing in the nature and type of employment, such as the increase in the use of temporary and call-off contracts, we need the flexibility to take better account of these changes.
 Our focus is on placing people into the right opportunities for them, to enable their longer term sustainability, and providing those who need it with tailored assistance to enable them to retain work and progress in employment. We will target participants who are locked into a pernicious cycle of labour market churn and equip them with improved skills and awareness to navigate towards more sustainable outcomes. We will also use our influence with employers using our recruitment support to offer viable and realistic opportunities for our participants.
 The Ways to Work Programme will be open to any ESF eligible group. Many people in our communities are at risk of being left behind as the economic recovery gains pace, and they would benefit from more integrated local services.

Intended Impacts:

- A reduction in the claimant count and a closing of the gap with the UK
- A reduction in unemployment and a closing of the gap with the UK
- A reduction in young people not in education, employment or training and closing the gap with the UK
- An increased employment for all and a closing of the gap with the UK
- An increase in the number of residents ready for work
- An increase in the number of residents gaining basic skills
- Improved financial and personal resilience for participants

Programme Objectives:

- Target our offer at economically inactive individuals and those receiving welfare benefits;
- Align provision in partnership with JCP and DWP providers to ensure we are delivering additionality and not duplicating existing services available in Liverpool City Region;
- Work closely with employers to prepare people for viable opportunities within the local labour market and work with participants to upskill them in the areas that employers have identified gaps;
- For those furthest away from the labour market, provide more intensive support interventions including enhanced information, advice and guidance;
- Work with people who continuously churn in and out of work;
- Target those with ongoing physical and mental health problems to find new ways to support them towards employment;
- Maximise the scale of influence across Liverpool City Region to ensure that employability plays a greater and more influential role in wider support;
- Use our influence to encourage and incentivise employers to respond to the latent talent of people currently outside the workforce;
- Offer bespoke and innovative interventions for those residents with specific barriers to employment and ensure action plans are personalised and realistic – one size does not fit all;
- Provide wraparound support including in-work support for those participants entering employment, self-employment or apprenticeships.

Intended outcomes:

- 1235 eligible adults and young people engaged
- 510 eligible adults and young people including inactive, unemployed and long-term unemployed placed into employment including self-employment
- 90 ILMs for workless participants delivered
- Partnership Protocols devised and agreed with JCP and DWP Work Programme Co-ordinator

