

TO:	ELEVATE BERKSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	25th September 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	Elevate Berkshire Update		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR MUNRO (WBC)		
WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE		
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1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Elevate Berkshire Joint Committee with a progress update on the pan-Berkshire 'Elevate' programme, specifically focusing on:-
- Item 1 – Update From Central Team on Key Projects
 - Item 2 – Partner Updates
 - Item 3 - Performance and Funding
 - Item 4 – Future Plans
- 1.2 Elevate Berkshire is an employability and skills programme funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The Elevate Berkshire partnership is made up of a number of key stakeholders including the 6 Berkshire local authorities, The Prince's Trust, Ways into Work and Adviza. The partnership also has a number of delivery partners – delivering activity on behalf of the key stakeholders.
- 1.3 The programme is led by a central Elevate Berkshire team based at Reading Borough Council, the accountable body, and brings together a range of other partners, as above, to support young people aged 16-24 in Berkshire who are hard-to-reach or have barriers to employment

2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Joint Committee note the success of the collective Elevate Berkshire programme and endorse the actions, proposals and agreements within the briefing paper; to ensure the programme continues to be delivered in-line with ESF processes.**

ITEM 1 – UPDATE FROM CENTRAL TEAM ON KEY PROJECTS

3.0 Slough delivery

3.1 Previously the Elevate Berkshire programme was not being directly delivered in the Slough local authority area with the exception of the provision from the Prince's Trust and Ways into Work. However, as there are a significant number of eligible participants who could benefit from the Elevate Berkshire ESF programme, agreement was made by the Thames Valley Berkshire Joint Committee to procure providers to deliver two projects in Slough.

3.2 In November 2017 a procurement exercise was undertaken by Reading Borough Council, as the accountable body, for the two projects:

- **Slough Project 1-** A contract for £170,000 to engage and support 390 eligible young people into employment, education or training or to gain basic skills. With a particular focus of supporting those from an ethnic minority (B&ME) background.
- **Slough Project 2-** A contract for £40,000 to engage and support 40 lone parents into education, employment or training.

3.3 Slough Project 1 was awarded to Kennedy Scott, who have considerable experience in delivering employment support to individuals with barriers to employment. The project went live in May and Kennedy Scott have reported 89 outcomes and 15 results. 18 of their participants attended the Slough Jobs Fair in June to meet potential employers. This event led to four participants gaining interviews. Staff from Kennedy Scott have attended service provider meetings to introduce the project which has led to an increase in referrals and also resulted in a better understanding about the delivery with local partners.

3.7 Despite considerable interest in Project 2, only one provider bid for the project. The contract was offered to this provider who subsequently turned it down. As a result, the central team sought feedback from those who expressed an interest. The project was re-advertised at the beginning of May. Kennedy Scott were then awarded this contract also and the delivery went live in September.

4.0 Digital Marketing

4.1 Each partner has their own localised website in the form of ElevateMe and some partners use social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter for promoting the service and support available. However, Elevate online presence is not particularly strong.

- 4.2 Traffic to the Elevate Me website remains low in some areas and out more can be done across the programme to promote Elevate and engage with young people in more meaningful ways online.
- 4.3 The Officer Steering group previously agreed to employ a digital marketing apprentice however given the time constraints of the project it would not be possible for someone to complete an apprenticeship in the period so an advertisement has been placed for a Digital Marketing Assistant, part funded by Elevate Berkshire and part by Bracknell Forest Council. Their role for Elevate Berkshire will be to build the online presence and improve the content of the ElevateMe local websites and work with partners to increase outreach via social media. The advertisement closed on 23rd September with interviews taking place on 5th October.
- 4.4 Once the staff member is in place, the central team will look to source some digital marketing training for Elevate staff so all partners could become more proactive in this area.

Appendix A outlines the most recent analytics for the Elevate Me Websites.

5.0 Employment is Everyone's Business Project

- 5.1 Employment is Everyone's Business - Stage 2' commenced delivery in March 2017. The aim of the project is to support Elevate Berkshire and the 6 LA areas to improve life chances and employment outcomes for young people with Special Educational Needs SEND. The project includes 20 days of targeted support based on the outcome of phase 1 and the action plans and outcomes desired across Berkshire.

Appendix B provides an update on the progress of this project.

6.0 Dynamic Purchasing System

- 6.1 Within the allocation of ESF funding retained by the central team there remained around £60,000 to be allocated to a project or to commission a provider. An initial options paper was tabled at the April 2018 officer Steering Group for discussion, feedback from this options paper was strongly in favour of a project to intensively support participants to intensively support participants with a mental health problem.
- 6.2 Progress is being made towards the delivery of this system with Central Elevate team members in liaison with the Procurement and Legal officers of Reading Borough Council to ensure relevant standing orders and processes are adhered to. Elevate partners have been asked to nominate organisations they are aware of who work with the client group and would bring provision to Berkshire young people in need additional support in mental health and other areas.

ITEM 2 - PARTNER UPDATES

7.0 Bracknell Forest

- 7.1 Considerable work has been carried out to contact non-compliant client records. This has been carried out as part of on-going tracking and all attempts are being recorded. Staff are using telephone calls, email messages, text messages and will now be carrying out some door knocking, to gain the relevant information. Ensuring full programme compliance remains an on-going priority.

- 7.2 Nine of the current cohort have had one or more significant interventions. However 18 have had other contacts with the average number of other contacts being six. This would indicate the importance of other contacts as a route to encouraging engagement. Contacts in general remained high particularly for those who have not yet engaged – 17 is the maximum number any one client has had, which shows ongoing partnership working to try to engage with the referees. All relevant partners and providers have been engaged to generate an increase in the number of referrals of young people who would benefit from Elevate support.
- 7.3 From the total of 19 clients contacted over this quarter, 13 have engaged with the support offered.
- 7.4 Referral sources can be broken down into 32% from the local authority, 21% from Adviza, 21% self referral and the remainder from YOS, DWP, a Housing support provider and Social Care.
- 7.5 At risk of disengaging is the most common risk factor recorded. Low school attendance, PRU and mental health are also commonly occurring:
- 7.6 A seasonal trend was noted in the lower number of young people supported.
- 7.7 Being co-located with the local JCP has enabled better networking and an awareness of the support available to relevant young people. Collaboration with Job Coaches has enabled them to see young people, give advice on Universal Credit and increase awareness of local employment opportunities. A number of young people have been supported to look at options such as apprenticeships, Princes Trust Courses, Adviza Intensive Project – support otherwise that they would not have received.
- 7.8 Dedicated presence at Bracknell and Wokingham college has meant that young people are supported as they finish their course to support them to identify options. They have been supported to look for employment, apprenticeships and further courses. A young person was supported to apply; attend the interview and enrol on her chosen course which she was successful in securing. Another young person was helped to research about local car garages and then supported to hand out CVs for employment opportunities which led to an interview and subsequent offer for a job.
- 7.9 Regular attendance at a local supported living establishment has led to improved engagement with short and long term NEET young people. This has enabled a number of young people to seek support for job searches where three have gone on for interviews and are now in employment.
- 7.10 Bracknell Forest continue to offer CSCS Card Health & Safety assessment practice at the Hub and this offer has been taken up by 34 young people who are seeking a career in the construction industry. The students continue to achieve their qualification following intensive support via the Elevate programme. For one young person, gaining the CSCS card and being able to get a job as a general labourer on a construction site meant a complete turnaround in his life; from being NEET and exploited into criminal activity, to being in full-time permanent paid employment.
- 7.11 Partnership working continues to be very successful, with regular meetings being held with managers and delivery staff, to ensure a structured client focussed delivery to all clients.

- 7.12 Elevate Steering Group meetings are being used as the venue for discussions as to how best we can open up these opportunities to local people. Various meetings have been held to maximise opportunities for all of our young people.
- 7.13 The Supported Employment programme with Learning to Work has progressed well and 17 young people were referred and supported to this programme.
- 7.14 The project with Adviza, targeting the harder to reach NEETS involves more young people in the programme, even if they are seen remotely from the Hub is an intensive support programme and the target was 75 young people in the next year. This target was achieved in month 11 of the project. Most interventions take place outside of the Hub, in venues that the young people are more comfortable with. It can now be seen that, with early meetings being held remotely, as their confidence increases, they are happy to visit their PA at the Hub, enabling them to access wider support.

8.0 Prince's Trust

- 8.1 210 fully compliant young people have been claimed to date, against a profile of 278. 82 results have been claimed against the profiled 155. In the period, 22 additional young people were engaged who we could not claim for due to eligibility issues. Over the duration of the project, Princes Trust have worked with 305 young people in Berkshire, which makes at least 89 young people supported but not claimed due to eligibility issues.
- 8.2 The following courses were delivered in the period, in line with the project plan:
- Get into Security – Reading
 - Get Started with Football – Reading
 - Get Started with Health and Fitness – Reading
 - Get Started with Digital Media - Reading
- 8.3 Despite considerable efforts to reach out to NEETS in the area, the Princes Trust continue to face substantial challenges in the recruitment of eligible participants to the project. They regularly review our offer of programmes, the selection of themes and the location of the course to maximise recruitment, but they continue to see low uptake and courses continue to run under capacity. They find that young people that do engage, particularly through referrals, are mainly high needs, and too far from being ready for employment or education or training, for their intervention to be effective.
- 8.4 Following success in other localities they are piloting a three day Ready to Work course for the Hospitality sector, which will focus on participants closer to the job market, who require a short but targeted intervention to progress into employment. The 3 days will focus on employability skills, interview practice and CV writing, and will match participants with employers who are currently recruiting in the sector. If successful in Reading, they will look at replicating the Ready to Work days elsewhere in the county, as a way to reach young people that are not willing to travel, which remains a challenge.
- 8.5 Strong links with employers who work with us to run the courses, has proven to be essential to securing job opportunities for the young people. Courses like Get Into Retail with M&S, Security with Triforce and Get Started with Football with Reading FC prove particularly successful in securing progressions for the participants.

9.0 RBWM

- 9.1 Six young people were added to the data schema in the last quarter and the employment of one young person was added. The project continues to actively recruit young people, inform them of ESF support, and support them to achieve high quality outcomes.
- 9.2 A weekly drop-in takes place for participants to gain employability and job coaching support from supported employment advisors.
- 9.3 Grow Our Own provides a drop-in session to enable young people to get help with applying and searching for employment and education This is well attended and allows new young people to come along and sign up without an appointment
- 9.4 Referrals are made to Ways into Work of clients with disabilities or other barriers to work

10.0 Adviza - Reading

- 10.1 In the most recent quarter Adviza have signed up 35 compliant starts against a profile target of 92. Their cumulative profile is 301 starts against a profile of 400.
- 10.2 They are working with non compliant (due to ID) participants and aiming to support them with applying for ID. In the last quarter, they have managed to convert six non-compliant signup forms to compliant.
- 10.3 Of the 35 compliant signups, ten of the participants have declared themselves as jobless households, which has increased since the last quarter. Adviza ensure that the families are identified to support services such as the National Careers Service. The number of forms marked as having a disability have decreased. 63% of the signups have identified themselves as White British with the remainder identifying themselves from an ethnic minority.
- 10.4 Adviza have delivered a session to targeted students on one year courses at Reading College on the support they can receive via the Elevate Hub.
- 10.5 Students in Year 11, 12 & 13 at risk of becoming NEET have been targeted, by delivering a session on the support they can receive via the Elevate Hub.
- 10.6 Workers embed themselves within Reading Borough Council to support engagement with the vulnerable Groups.
- 10.7 Adviza are working with the Princes Trust "Team" Programme to offer them a CV writing and job searching session at the Elevate Hub for all of their learners during the Programme.
- 10.8 Providing a dedicated worker to Reading College who is having all young people "at Risk of dropping out of College" highlighted to them to engage with and offer the support of Elevate.
- 10.9 The weekly Job Club has not been running as the need wasn't there from the required number of young people. Resource is available at the hub to deliver this on an ad hoc basis or a more regular basis if young people are interested.
- 10.10 Job Centre Plus is still proving difficult to engage. Once JCP removed the worker from the Elevate hub it has been hard to communicate or set up a process for the JCP to identify 18 – 24 year olds.

10.11 School and college presentations have been successful and are a good way to identify young people at risk of becoming NEET in the summer.

11.0 Ways Into Work

11.1 Of the 62 people, WiW are working with:-

- 40 have a completed vocational profile
- All but 2 have action or development plans
- 20 have had work trials
- 17 have obtained work results and are receiving in work support. A further 2 have roles which can't be included as results.
- 68% are male, 32% are female.
- 76% are White British, 24% are from ethnic minorities.
- 45% have autism spectrum conditions, 27% have learning disabilities, the remaining 28% are broken down into physical, sensory or mental health conditions or other disabilities / barriers

11.2 Ways into Work is now established across Berkshire and are successfully receiving referrals from partners across the region. Ways into Work staff are co-located within Reading and Maidenhead Hubs and working across the region from these bases. They are now actively supporting 62 individuals across Berkshire. 18 people from Slough, 22 people from Reading, 1 person RBWM, 16 West Berkshire, 3 from Bracknell. There is a waiting list of 12 (4 Reading, 5 Slough, 3 West Berkshire) and these will be allocated to an Employment Coach as soon as capacity allows. They are currently in the final stages of recruiting a replacement employment coach in Reading/West Berkshire to replace an employee who was promoted. Ways into Work have engaged with in excess of 10 new employers in the quarter and attended several employer engagement events. As a result they have begun working with two new employers and have negotiated Work Experience, Traineeship and Apprenticeship placements.

12.0 West Berkshire

12.1 All providers continue to be encouraged to be flexible in their approach and identify the true barriers to employment. More internal services are being encouraged to put young people forward, but this takes some time to embed with operational staff. A marketing exercise is planned for the autumn which should help. West Berkshire are seeing an increasing number of young people emerging as NEET having previously been engaged with Elevate several years ago. This highlights their ongoing long term support need and the importance of knowing when to close a client's record.

12.1 An increase in participants via a refreshed Adviza approach has increased the number of participants in West Berkshire and they have been able to put on the data schema with a significant number anticipated for the next claim.

13.0 Wokingham

- 13.1 Wokingham have 240 participants in total and have over-achieved on their target relating to ethnic minorities, with 26 individuals signed up (108% of the target) and disabled participants with 62 people signed up.
- 13.2 There are still 20 non-compliant files waiting to be turned round. Optalis have been working on targeting these by contacting them personally to encourage them to continue to using the service effectively.
- 13.3 Wokingham are on track with their target to reach single parents, but have yet to achieve it.. They have been targeting local Children's Centres with flyers and information on the service offer to raise awareness.
- 13.4 They have fallen behind on their target relating to participants with no basic skills, and are currently at 72%. To target this they are gathering information about basic skills courses, and will promote these to participants.
- 13.5 Following discussions with schools, all 12 Wokingham schools have sent in the Intended Destinations for their Year 11 pupils, indicating their plans for after Year 11. Two schools have submitted details of the offers they have made (dependent on GCSE grades obtained) for September 2018. Eight schools have provided details of their potential NEET students, who may require ongoing support over the summer and they have set up Data Sharing Agreements with six schools and a college.
- 13.6 The NEET figures have reduced over the quarter, from 1.5% in April (48 young people), to 1.3% in May (43 young people), to 1.2% (39 young people). The Not Known figures also continue to steadily reduce with 2.2% Not Knowns in April (72 young people), 2.1% in May (70 young people) and 2% in June (67 young people).
- 13.7 The tracking that has been taking place with the SEND (special educational needs and disability) young people has had a very positive impact on the Not Known figures for this cohort, with the Unknown figure reducing from 26.7% in April, to 17.6% in June. Although the NEET figure has risen during this period, this is not a cause for concern as it reflects the fact that the young people who were in unknown destinations have been contacted and are able to support them to move from NEET into EET, inviting them to attend the Elevate Hub to receive support, sharing information about the weekly job shop, and using social media as a marketing tool, Home visits and late night tracking evenings during the quarter have both significantly helped with the NEET and Not Known results.
- 13.8 At the beginning of the quarter they undertook an analysis of the NEET group who had not been signed up to Elevate and prioritised those from BME groups for immediate contact.

14.0 Slough

- 14.1 Slough delivery is reported in 3.6 and 3.7 of this report.

15.0 Case Studies

- 15.1 Case studies from Elevate partners are shown in Appendix C.

ITEM 3 – PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING

16.0 PERFORMANCE

- 16.1 The programme has a set of collective outputs (3380) and collective result (43% result on overarching outcome target). Each partner has been assigned an output and result target – that collectively meet the pan Berkshire programme targets.

The most recent performance table is set out in Appendix D

17.1 Highlights

- The partnership have engaged 1624 young people since November 2015, of these 358 have been supported into employment education or training.
- The partnership has already delivered against the disability target for the programme, supporting 488 participants who have declared a disability against a target of 280.
- The partnership has supported 31 young people to gain basics skills; this is against a 3 year target of 24.
- Good progress being made against the ethnic minority target, as delivery of Slough project 1 has made a positive start this will make a considerable contribution to this target being met.

17.2 Priority areas:

- Ongoing work to ensure that evidence is collected for results where they have been achieved.
- There is still some work to do by all partners to ensure that the lone parents target is met, the delivery which has recently begun in Slough by Kennedy Scott will make a considerable contribution to this target.
- Continued effort to engage with eligible young people, particularly via outreach.

- 17.3 In January 2017, the programme was underperforming against the indicative profile of outputs and results. As ESF money can be withheld or clawed-back for underperformance, it was agreed that local Elevate projects could not continue to draw down ESF funding when the necessary outputs and results weren't being achieved. It was also agreed that if performance did not improve then funding released back to partners, by the central team, would need to be looked at in relation to performance (i.e., outputs and results delivered, not just resource spent); as set out in section 13.10 of the pan Berkshire Partnership Agreement

18.0 FUNDING- CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS

- 18.1 Since the November 2017, the central team have been using the DWP systems E-claims for all activity in relation to claims- this includes claim submission, evidence checking and claim payments from DWP.
- 18.2 To date, DWP have paid 6 claims (covering the period Nov 15 to Jun 17). The programme is still awaiting payment for claim 7 (£372,108.01), claim 8 (£296,111.27), claim 9 (£232,265.28) and claim 10 (£261,476.04). The central team were advised that claim 7 was paid at the end of August but were still awaiting confirmation that this has been received at the time of submission of this report.

- 18.3 Appendix E sets out how much partners have claimed, total values of payments received and have available to claim going forward.
- 18.4 As discussed at previous Joint Committees, in order to mitigate the risk of claw-back which may result from underperformance against the outputs and results targets, partner's performance has been taken into consideration in relation to payments for since Claim 4.
- 18.5 The central team looks at performance and resource spent, when releasing ESF money drawn down via DWP. Claim payments have been based on the performance of the most recent claim submitted – to acknowledge there is a lag with payments and partners will have continued to have delivered outputs and results since the claim was submitted.
- 18.6 As agreed, the money retained will be kept centrally, until a time when partners are delivering their outputs and results in line with their current approved profile.

ITEM 4 – FUTURE PLANS

- 19.1 In September 2018, the programme submitted a Project Change Request (PCR) to DWP. This PCR was for an extension of the project end date, from October 2018 to June 2019 to enable the realisation of project outputs and results over a longer period- mitigating the risk of not meeting collective programme targets. This PCR has now been accepted and partners are working to the revised profiles.
- 19.2 The central team look for opportunities for funding that will bring longevity to the Elevate Berkshire 16 to 24 project – to continue the system change and support new models and ways of working it has introduced. DWP are keen for 'Berkshire' to continue the project beyond June 2019 and has spoken positively of the way in which Elevate Berkshire has striven to knit the skills and employment system together across Berkshire.