

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> July 2014</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE City Deal Project Update</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>CLLR LOVELOCK</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal is focused on increasing the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work, to develop work-related skills and to streamline the pathway to employment for young people. This is linked directly to a broader objective of delivering economic growth locally, and to address local concerns about the number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on key elements of the overarching City Deal and is provided by the City Deal Project Manager, based at Reading Borough Council.
- 1.3 The Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal aims to address the skills gaps and unemployment and underemployment of the 16-24 year old population. Overall the aim is to deliver employment and skills support for 4,500 young people. The deal will deliver improvements in existing schemes:
- Generate 1,300 new employment opportunities for young people including helping 800 sustain work for at least six months;
  - 1,500 work experience placements
  - 300 additional apprenticeships
  - 800 new Youth Contract wage incentives

New approaches will also be developed to help more young people into sustainable employment ensuring 900 young people do not make a repeat claim within 9 months of their last, and increasing the earnings of 450 young people.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 **That Joint Committee note the progress report, below, and highlight any areas of concern or areas they require further information.**

### 3. PROJECT UPDATE

#### 3.1 Finance Update

Five unitary authorities as set out below (delivery spokes) have now received year 1 funding from the £2.4m youth contract funding allocated to Thames Valley Berkshire for delivery of agreed outcomes of the City Deal.

Local Authority	Year 1 Funding	Year 2 Funding	Total
Bracknell Forest	£152,500	£72,500	£225,000
Slough	£131,316	£101,317	£232,632
West Berks	£101,500	£50,500	£152,00
Windsor and Maidenhead	£161,045	£35,500	£196,545
Wokingham	£379,700	£11,400	£391,100
Reading	£208,000	£42,000	£250,000

As the accountable body for City Deal, Reading Borough Council has produced contracts for Reading UK CIC and The Local Enterprise Partnership as they are companies rather than public sector organisations and these contracts formalise the relationship for the purposes of audit and highlight the key deliverables around the implementation of the Reading spoke (delivered by Reading UK CIC) and Labour Market Intelligence project (delivered by the Local Enterprise Partnership)

- 3.1.1 Due to a challenge to allocation of funding by Sheffield and Liverpool councils – the decision around European Social Investment Fund (EUSIF) money has been delayed. An update report will be provided to Joint Committee at the next meeting.

#### 3.2 Data Tracking Function

As the accountable body, Reading Borough Council will negotiate directly with a provider to deliver the data tracking function (common reporting framework) – as opposed to the Local Enterprise partnership undertaking a competitive tender. The justification for this decision is based on value for money. It is anticipated that the specification will provide the necessary data to allow the drawdown of EUSIF money. Please see appendix 1 for Data Tracking specification.

#### 3.3 Targets and Definitions

The definitions for the key deliverables have been agreed. This will provide the project with consistency when counting, and reporting, on City Deal outcomes. Please see appendix 2 for the agreed target definitions.

#### 3.4 Collaborative Working

##### (key partners and providers tasked with delivering City Deal)

After some initial issues around resources and capacity, Job Centre Plus (JCP) are now fully engaged with City Deal and are working closely with all spokes. JCP have committed a resource to each co-located HUB. More widely, spokes have ensured there is a mix of both strategic and operation providers within co-located HUBs / within each locality.

#### 3.5 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

An MoU is currently being drafted that articulates the mutual obligations and agreements each spoke has to City Deal and at a more local level; highlights the mutual obligations key partners and providers need to demonstrate amongst themselves within each locality. This aims to provide a framework for delivering the outcomes of the City Deal.

### 3.6 **Branding and Marketing**

Agreement has been reached, amongst spokes, that the overarching brand for City Deal is to be 'Elevate'. This brand was created by young people who have been involved in the development of the Elevate Me website. (Elevate Slough, Elevate Wokingham, Elevate Bracknell, Elevate Reading, Elevate West Berks and Elevate Windsor and Maidenhead). 'Elevateme' has also been adopted by each spoke. Conversations are on-going around the brand for business / employers. It is anticipated that the brand will most likely be 'Elevate my Business'. A draft marketing plan is being produced to market the brand across Thames valley Berkshire and in each locality. All spokes agree that there needs to be consistent marketing of the brand.

3.6.1 Joint Committee are asked to note that in future correspondences, City Deal will be referred to as 'Elevate Berkshire'.

### 3.7 **Governance**

Each spoke has a clear governance arrangement in place. Spoke steering groups are meeting on a regular basis and lead on driving forward City Deal across their locality. Ultimately, responsibility for City Deal lies with each Local Authority.

### 3.8 **Behavioural Insights Team (BIT)**

The BIT, who apply insights from academic research in behavioural economics and psychology to public policy and services, presented to the City Deal Steering Group and a project plan has been developed. The project plan is a live document and will evolve as City Deal evolves; responding to new priorities and national issues. Please see appendix 3. The BIT supported Reading UK CIC with Elevateme, suggesting ways to increase the number of 'hits' the website receives. Please see appendix 4 for results of the project.

### 3.9 **Pilot projects for particular protected characteristics / cohorts of young people**

With the number of NEETs reducing as the economy improves; it is likely that the young people left will be what some providers and key partners refer to as "hard to reach". With this in mind, it is important that City Deal develops, and implements, creative ways of supporting these young people to move from being NEET to EET.

#### 3.9.1 **Lone Parents**

Although initially identified as a year 2 and 3 project; progress is being made in scoping out possible pilot projects to support Lone Parents who are NEET. With the support of the BIT, the City Deal Project Co-ordinator (PC), is looking to develop three pilot projects focusing on work placements within the various Local Authorities, the use of Social Enterprise and working with Gingerbread – a national organisation focusing on Lone Parents. There will be a particular focus on Reading and Slough (as these locations have the highest levels of lone parents) and the PC will work closely with Reading UK CIC and JCP.

## **Appendix 1 – Data Tracking Specification**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal has an overall target of reducing youth (16-24 years old) unemployment by 50% over the three years of the project. The main subsidiary targets are:

- 1.1.1 Contact and deliver information advice and guidance to 4,500 young people who are already NEET or who are underemployed
- 1.1.2 Complete 1,500 new work experience placements for young people as preparation and readiness for permanent employment
- 1.1.3 Achieve 300 new starts for young people in Apprenticeships, and sustain these starts for at least 6 months
- 1.1.4 Achieve 1,300 new starts for young people in Employment, and sustain at least 800 of these starts for at least 6 months
- 1.1.5 Increase earnings of 450 young people by 10%

1.2 A core purpose of Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal is to maximise efficiencies and economies of scale for services working with the same groups of young people. By bringing together the data collection for beneficiaries of Youth Contract, City Deal, National Careers and LA funded work we plan to minimise the number of 16-24 year olds being contacted for similar reasons by different organisations.

1.3 The brief is to provide an accurate and timely Management Information Service across the whole Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal area. The service will be used to create reports on progress towards the targets, for reporting to the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal Board, to the Cabinet Office and also as the basis for financial claims to the EU SIF project for up to £2.4m based on payment by results.

1.4 The service needs to be operational for the three years of the City Deal (April 2014-March 2017) and an appropriate period after March 2017 to satisfy any monitoring or auditing requirements set by the City Deal funders.

### **2 Background**

2.1 There are currently good systems and practice focussed on recording and reporting data about young people aged 16-18, (and to 25 for young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities). This is set out in the DfE's specification for the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS), which is available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nccis-management-information-requirement-2014-to-2015>. Each Borough is required to collect and report this information through their Children's Services responsibilities.

2.2 For young people in the 18-24 age range the DWP routinely collects and reports data that are focussed on its primary role of processing benefits claims. These systems are necessarily closed and lack the flexibility to work well in partnership settings.

2.3 Therefore, the TVB City Deal is working with the local delivery teams to adapt and extend the existing NCCIS recording and reporting systems currently in use for 16-18 year olds to cover the older age groups. Our aim is to reach a point where all Management Information within the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal project is collected in systems that are NCCIS compliant.

2.4 Responding to this request will require some careful thought, not least in respect of fair data processing obligations and the renewal or extension of data consents.

2.5 For this extension to older age groups, management information will only be required for some young people:

2.5.1 Registered with JCP

2.5.2 Registered with National Careers Service

2.5.3 Registered with Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal

2.5.4 Young people with LDD

2.6 Where local delivery teams partnering TVB City Deal are also National Careers Service contractors, there will be a further assessment of the recording and reporting requirements under that contract, with a view to eliminating any wasteful duplication of efforts.

2.7 The default position of the City Deal arrangements is that any recording and reporting it requires will be in a format and to a definition that is NCCIS compatible. Only in exceptional cases will special arrangements be made.

### 3 Reporting Requirements

3.1 The successful supplier will make arrangements with TVB City Deal local delivery teams to collate the following data:

	Analysis
<b>As at each 1 September, cohort size for:</b>	Following consultation with the local delivery partners and the successful supplier, a "census day" will be fixed.
Year 12 (16 yr olds who will turn 17 during the year)	The cohort definition for years 12, 13 and 14 will be 100% of all young people
Year 13 (17 yr olds who will turn 18 during the year)	
Year 14 (18 yr olds who will turn 19 during the year)	
Year 15 (19 yr olds who will turn 20 during the year)	The cohort definition for years 15 -19 will be:
Year 16 (20 yr olds who will turn 21 during the year)	All young people registered with JCP, AND
Year 17 (21 yr olds who will turn 22 during the year)	All young people registered with the National Careers Service, AND
Year 18 (22 yr olds who will turn 23 during the year)	All young people who have been in contact with Thames valley Berkshire City Deal, AND
Year 19 (23 yr olds who will turn 24 during the year)	All young people with a s.139 statement or, after 1 September 2014, an Education, Health and Care Plan
<b>For 16-24 year-olds, as at the end of each Calendar month:</b>	
Numbers who are NEET	By Borough
Numbers who are in Employment	By duration of NEET status

Numbers who are in Education	more or less than 6 months By Gender By Ethnicity By LDD By Age Cohort
Numbers who are in Training	
Numbers whose destination is Not Known	
<b>For 16-24 year-olds, during the preceding Calendar month:</b>	
Numbers of NEET joiners, analysed by previous status	By Borough By duration of NEET status more or less than 6 months By Gender By Ethnicity By LDD By Age Cohort
Numbers of NEET leavers, analysed by subsequent status	
Numbers of young people contacted, registered, and given Careers Information Advice and Guidance, who were not previously registered	
Numbers of young people who completed a structured programme of work experience	
Numbers of young people who started an Apprenticeship	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship for one month	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship from one to two months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship from two to three months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship from three to four months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship from four to five months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their Apprenticeship from five to six months	
Numbers of young people who started a new employment	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment for one month	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment from one to two months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment from two to three months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment from three to four months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment from four to five months	
Numbers of young people who sustained their new employment from five to six months	

### 3.2 The frequency of reports required is set out below

Data Set	TVB City Deal Officer Steering Group	TVB City Deal Joint Committee	EU SIF Financial Claim	Cabinet Office Monitoring
Cohort sizes	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual
NEET, EET and Not Knowns	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
EET young people moving to better paid employment	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
EET young people moving from part-time to full-time employment	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
Work Experience starts, abandons and completions	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
Apprenticeships started, abandoned and sustained	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
New Employment started, abandoned and sustained	Monthly	Three times a year	Monthly	Monthly
Other Some suggestions have been volunteering, education, engagement on work programme, starting own business.	Three times a year	Three times a year	Three times a year	Three times a year

## 4 Financial Claims

4.1 As noted in paragraph 1.3 above, one purpose of the Management Information Services is to support financial claims to the European Union Structural and Investment Funds (EU SIF).

4.2 The standard of management information required is that it is robust enough to withstand audit and other routine checks about the probity and the evidential basis of the claims for payment.

4.3 Therefore there will have to be a document and/or electronic trail supporting the new or sustained status of every young person about whom a claim is made. It is anticipated that the source documents will be held in the systems of the local delivery teams in each Borough

4.4 The successful supplier will be accountable for collecting, collating and providing this evidence as and when requested to satisfy routine checks about the probity and the evidential basis of the claims for payment.

4.5 The table below shows the particular categories of information that will be involved in submitting financial claims to the EU SIF.

	Non-Work Programme eligible i.e. NEET for less than 6 months prior to start	Work Programme eligible i.e. NEET for 6 months or more prior to start
New NEET contact registered and given Information Advice and Guidance	yes	yes
Structured Work Experience Placement completed	yes	yes
New Apprenticeship started	yes	yes
New Apprenticeship sustained – checked every month for 6 months	yes	yes
New employment started	yes	yes
New employment sustained – checked every month for 6 months	yes	yes

## 5 Tracking Services

5.1 In addition to the reporting requirements and the financial claim requirements set out above, the successful supplier may also be required to provide tracking services to local delivery teams.

5.2 In this context, tracking services means specialist staff who are skilled at contacting young people, gaining accurate information and recording their current status in the appropriate NCCIS compliant system. This is sometimes called “Interventionist Tracking’, i.e. not simply calling, asking and recording but actually interacting and discussing individual needs and the support available.

5.3 The priority for any tracking effort that is required under this specification will be to gain information about whether young people recently started in an apprenticeship or employment have sustained their new status or whether they have dropped out.

5.4 A secondary call under this specification would be to try reduce the volume of young people with “not known” status, in order to identify NEET young people who have not engaged with the IAG services.

## Appendix 2 – City Deal Baseline Figures

The following table sets out proposed definitions for each KPI and a baseline from which to measure together with comments. All KPIs cover the period April 2014 to April 2017. It is proposed that KPIs are monitored monthly with quarterly reports and case studies presented to the CD Steering Group.

Earlier in the year, task group recommend that the only baseline set is for the 50% reduction in youth unemployment as that is what Cabinet office are going to be measuring the success of the City deal against. For all other KIPs the baseline is 0 and relates to those who are NEET. It will be up to each local authority how they track/claim these targets, but the criteria for claiming needs to be the consistent. It is expected that a common reporting framework (to track outcomes) will be in place by September 2014. In the meantime, each local authority will update on outcomes using the reporting framework.

Goal/KPI (CD outcomes)	Definition / Measurement	Evidence (already collected by providers)	Comments
4500 contacts (IAG)	<p><u>Definition:-</u> Number of 16-24 year olds given initial IAG or Employment brokerage</p> <p><u>Measurement:-</u> -Face to face appointment with a qualified IAG professional Appointments are face to face. Support offered to candidates over the phone or via email if needed but these do not count towards the allocated IAG - just part of the continued learning experience.</p> <p>All of the advisors have completed or are currently working towards completion of a Level 3 NVQ in Advice and Guidance</p> <p>-Appointment to last at least 45 minutes the minimum time for a 1-2-1 session is 45</p>	<p>The customer has received a high quality service that has provided them with relevant advice and identified clear next steps.</p> <p>A declaration as to what IAG has been provided signed by participant and provider</p> <p>There must be a skills action plan signed or confirmed by the customer and the adviser which includes verification from the customer of the following:</p> <p>-the support was relevant to his/her needs and his/her expectations were met -the customer's needs outlined at the start of the interaction have been recorded -the options available</p>	<p>For someone to be considered to be accessing IAG, they would need to have (at the least) an initial appointment at which an assessment of need would be undertaken and, if appropriate some form of action plan, or series of future appointments would be agreed. Generally an initial appointment would be with a qualified IAG professional and would last 45 minutes; subsequent arrangements would be dependent upon individual needs / circumstances</p> <p>The IAG will be based around</p>

	<p>minutes and could be as long as two hours</p> <p>-Assessment of need undertaken Screening process which includes a Basic Skills Assessment which helps the IAG advisors to establish and understand any literacy or numeracy issues the learner might have. Interview where the IAG advisor will go over the candidate's work history, education and current status to get an insight into the learner's long and short term goals</p> <p>-Action plan drawn up Long term and short term targets are drawn up with the full agreement of the learner</p> <p>-Future appointments agreed Candidates are given slots to attend their 1-2-1s either while the training is on or around the training, these are arranged to suit the candidates and also work within the opening hours of the facilities</p>	<p>to the customer were understood -the 'next steps' were agreed, understood and reflect how the expressed needs will be addressed</p> <p>Other- Small group session delivering Information, Advice &amp; Guidance (up to 6 people face to face)</p>	<p>setting goals and targets and identifying possible options, outcomes and pathways for the young person whilst on the programme and beyond</p>
<p>Generate 1,300 new employment opportunities for young people</p>	<p><u>Definition:-</u> Numbers of 16-24 year olds in employment through CD interventions</p> <p><u>Measurement:-</u> Employment is defined as working for 16 hours or more per</p>	<p>Copy of contract of employment signed by the participant and the employer</p> <p>Letter from the employer confirming participants permanent full time employment</p>	<p>16 hours per week is very standard and will almost always be the watershed for employment related outcomes as it is the point where someone is deemed to change</p>

	week	<p>Confirmation of employment, organisation address and contact details.</p> <p>Providers may wish to record this on the Action Plan if they do not currently.</p> <p>Evidence to support placement participation must include weekly attendance and hour's undertaken records endorsed by claimant and placement provider</p>	status in terms of employment and come off the benefits register. It is used in the majority of DWP funded programmes as one of the criteria under which a provider can claim an employment outcome; usually in combination with a duration of continuous employment (4, 13 or 26 weeks are the most common). This has been included in the data tracking specification
Help 800 young people sustain work for at least 6 months	<p><u>Definition:-</u> Numbers of 16-24 year olds sustained in employment through CD interventions</p> <p><u>Measurement:-</u> 16 hours or more per week for 6 consecutive months</p>	As above	As above
Ensure 900 young people do not make a repeat claim within 9 months of their last	Numbers of 16-24 year olds not making a repeat claim within 9 months of last claim		
800 new Youth Contract Wage Incentives	Numbers Youth Contract Wage incentives offered to employers by DWP from April 14 – April 17		
Increase earnings of 450 young people by 10%	10% increase in wages of 450 16-24 year old CD Clients between April 14 – April 17		
1,500 new work experience placements	<u>Measurement:-</u> Number of work placements delivered as a direct result of the CD from April 14 –	Confirmation of placement start endorsed by participant and deliverer of activity,	Definitions of work experience offered (DfE report October 2013) Experiential-

	<p>April 17</p> <p><u>Definition:-</u> Work placement defined as a brokered experience over 5 days. Days do not need to be consecutive but the experience does need to be with the same employer and for meaningful activity</p>	<p>organisation address and contact details. Details of agreed placement hours to be undertaken. If reduced hours agreed, evidence of any existing restrictions provided in referral information, or change of circumstance notified by the provider. Providers may wish to record this on the Action Plan</p>	<p>one or two short periods of work experience or other work-related learning connected to future study or employment options, such as study visits, projects and engagement with local enterprise. The target audience for this is likely to be students taking A levels (level 3, academic-only route).</p> <p>Vocational-work experience focused on a particular vocational area to contribute directly to a study programme. The target audience for this is likely to be students taking larger vocational qualifications.</p> <p>Extended-work experience focused on developing employability skills, with English and mathematics covering the majority of the study programme time. The target audience is likely to be students not taking a larger vocational qualification or studying below level 2.</p> <p>The principal</p>
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			factors contributing to successful work experience placements are:- -effective coordination, -good matching of students to placements, -ensuring students are well-prepared for placements and flexibility in timing of placements.
300 apprenticeships	<p><u>Measurement:-</u> Number of apprenticeships starts for 16-24 year olds delivered as a direct result of the CD from April 14-April 17</p> <p><u>Definition:-</u></p>	Registration with the awarding body and evidence of the participant start on a course, signed by the participant and provider	Number of apprenticeships created with employers by spoke delivery partners from April 14 – April 17.
Traineeships	<p><u>Measurement:-</u> Number of traineeships arranged by spoke delivery partners from April 14 – April 17 for 16-24 year olds delivered as a direct result of the CD</p> <p><u>Definition:-</u> -A focused period of work preparation training, covering areas like CV writing, interview preparation, job search and interpersonal skills</p> <p>-English and maths, as these are seen as crucial employability skills</p> <p>-A high quality work placement to give the young person meaningful work experience and develop workplace</p>	<p>-Choice and relevance Placement matched to the trainee's areas of interest and aspiration, with young people undertaking high quality work experience rather than observation or mundane tasks</p> <p>-Organisational readiness Commitment from senior managers or owner/manager and a low ratio of trainees to experienced staff</p> <p>-Good preparation Thorough pre-placement preparation by the provider, employer and prospective trainee and an understanding of young people's circumstances that may affect their</p>	Providers and employers should have the freedom to bring these three elements together in the best way to engage and support individual trainees

	skills	<p>workplace behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Written agreement Made between the trainee, employer and provider setting out mutual expectations and commitments, including the training plan and arrangements for reviews</li> <li>-A planned placement A structured induction, clear objectives and integrated off-the-job training, with an identified mentor or buddy</li> <li>-Feedback and review Regular constructive feedback from managers and formal reviews at key stages with the manager, provider and trainee.</li> </ul>	
Underemployed definition	<p>-No set targets</p> <p><u>Definition:-</u> A person is considered underemployed when they are working part time when they would prefer full time work, working at a job they are over qualified for or have a qualification in a different subject or sector and are working in a job with no real progression, or working at a lower paid job when they could, if jobs were available, be working more hours or earning a bigger salary</p>		

### Appendix 3 - Elevate and the BIT 2014 – Draft Project Plan

Work stream	Short term milestones	Medium term milestones	Long term milestones
Marketing	BIT to review current marketing approaches and suggest improvements		
Lone parents	EJ to convene meeting for TL at Children's Centre to allow BIT to undertake scoping exercise		Look at broadening work out to other "hard to reach groups"
Apprenticeships -Employers -YP themselves -Parents -Schools	Trial undertaken at EBC (not sector specific)  Trial design to be sent to PG & EJ by end of July	Share learning with other spokes and look to broaden the trial out to Wokingham and Reading focusing on construction sector	Undertake a session for those tasked with selling Elevate locally (brokers)
Co-located HUBS / new ways of working – "Is it business as usual?"	BIT to prepare a short note on ideas for how to make the service at the hubs new, different and more effective.	Once the HUBS are established / operating – BIT to review effectiveness.	
Targets		BIT to review progress and support where under-performing	

## Appendix 4 – Elevateme BIT Report

### Applying Behavioural Insights in Thames Valley Berkshire

#### Results from the ElevateMe trial

##### Summary

The Behavioural Insights Team was asked to look at ways to tweak ElevateMe before launch and to attract more users. Members of the team attended the task and finish group as well as working collaboratively with the project manager and web developers. Together, we came up with a number of changes to the application process, content and design of the website. As part of this work, we designed, implemented and evaluated two separate randomised controlled trials. These investigated the best way to attract users by email and also encourage them to register.

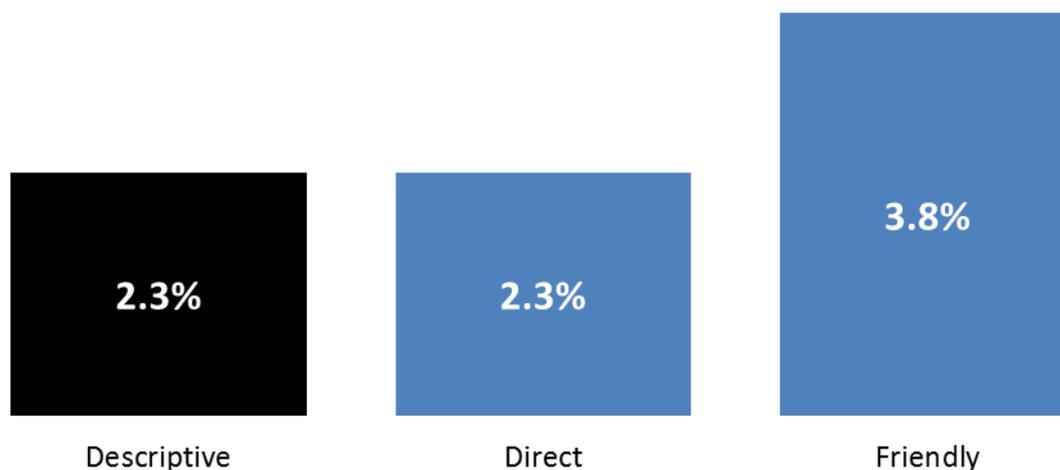
We worked with Adviza and Waters Creative to implement these trials.

##### Trial 1: Emails to attract users at launch

We worked with Adviza, a local service provider, to send out emails to all young people in the Reading area. We tested three types of emails to encourage people to go to the ElevateMe website. These were all personally addressed to the individual and were sent from the local service manager, who was likely to be personally familiar to the recipients. These are described below:

1. **Descriptive:** This email contained an introductory paragraph about the website, followed by an invitation to the site, which stated “Click [here](#) to register on the ElevateMe website!”
2. **Direct:** In this email, the introductory paragraph appeared at the bottom of the email, and the instruction to click was presented at the top.
3. **Friendly:** In this email, the introductory paragraph was presented at the bottom of the email, but the request was altered to state: “I’d like you to register on the ElevateMe website by clicking [here](#).”

##### Results – % of people emailed who visited ElevateMe



The chart above shows the proportion of young people emailed that clicked on the link. There was no significant difference between the number of people who clicked on the URL in the descriptive and the direct conditions. **People who received the friendly message were much more likely to click on the link.**

As mentioned above, the only difference between the three emails was a small detail in the text. This finding is supported by our work in other areas – a personal touch and a little social interaction can make a large difference when asking people to undertake a task.

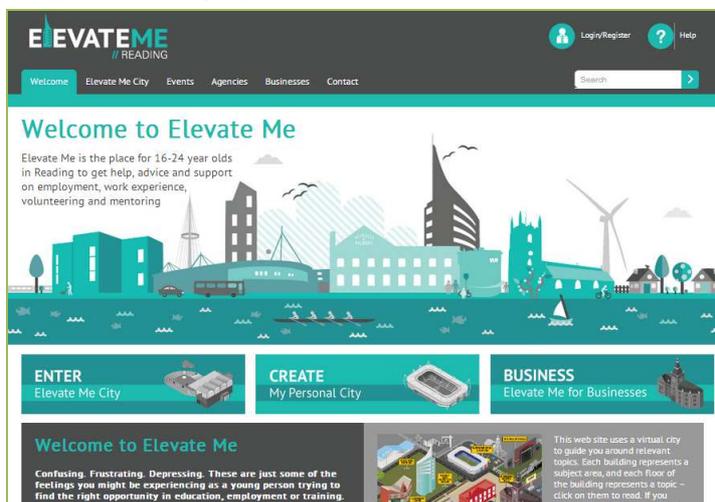
## Trial 2: Encouraging registration

The second objective we were set was encouraging those people who did visit the site to register. We made a number of small tweaks with the project team to shorten the application form and remove any unnecessary questions.

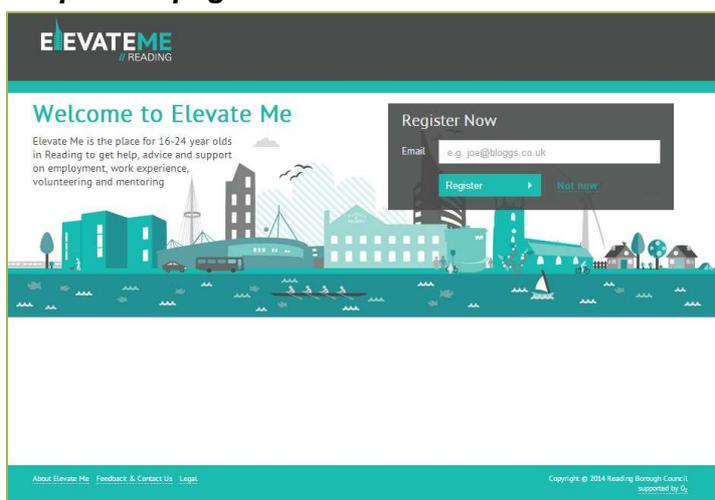
We also ran a second trial, comparing an extremely simplified version of the website against the original. Given that at launch there is only one target behaviour for users (registration) we decided to create a 'splash page' that has two options, "Register" or "Not now". Clicking "Not now" will take users to the original home page.

The two different home pages were as follows:

### Original homepage



### Simple homepage



## Results –% of visitors who registered



The figure shows the proportion of new visitors who registered on the site depending on the landing page they viewed. **People who viewed the simple site were 3.44 times more likely to register.**

We were confident that making it more straightforward to register would have a dramatic impact, but we were surprised that the effect was quite this large. The lesson from this trial extends beyond the design of websites – throughout Thames Valley Berkshire, when we want to change the behaviour of young people, we should ensure that our communications and processes are easy and straightforward. Similarly to other trials conducted by our team, even tiny simplifications can have a dramatic impact on behaviour.

### Annex: Randomised Controlled Trials

A randomised controlled trial is a specific type of scientific experiment, and the gold standard for finding out what works.

People are assigned to different interventions by random lot – allowing you to compare the effectiveness of the interventions. In the first example above, we had several hundred people on the Adviza contact list for Reading. We used a spreadsheet to randomly assign each person a 1, 2 or 3. People who were assigned a '1' were sent the Descriptive email, a '2' the Direct email and a '3' the friendly email. Evaluating the trial is as simple as looking at which of the emails received more clicks.