

# EMPLOYMENT IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

## Purpose of the Report

1. This report updates Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Elevate partners on the work of the DfE-funded project Employment is Everyone's Business. The report also reviews the action plan that WBC developed as part of the project, identifying areas of strength, weakness and providing opportunities to improve employment outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

## Background

2. NDTi and the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) were awarded a grant by the Department for Education to work together on a project called 'Employment is Everyone's Business'. The project's overall aim is to improve employment outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The funding for the project was from April 2015 – March 2016. We have worked with four sites across England:
  - Wolverhampton (NDTi)
  - Kirklees (NDTi)
  - Bath & North East Somerset (NDTi)
  - Berkshire (BASE in partnership with Elevate Berkshire)
3. The Project commenced in June 2015 and worked closely with ElevateBerkshire, on behalf of the Local Authorities (LA). The idea of the project was to demonstrate how:
  - Vocational Profiling can be embedded in the curriculum, education, health and care plans and reviews as well as careers advice
  - Post-16 providers can develop effective employer engagement strategies and study programmes that facilitate young people moving into employment
  - Local authorities are ensuring the needs of young people with special educational needs and disabilities and those who are NEET are at the heart of their employment, economic, housing, personal budget and commissioning strategies.
  - How work around skills and employment outcomes for young people with disabilities/SEND could align with the work of ElevateBerkshire and inform future delivery through re-engineering existing resource that could be aligned with Elevate to deliver a supported employment model of employment support

## **Executive summary – Wokingham Borough Council**

4. As part of the project, baseline data was sought from WBC on outcomes for young people with disabilities. Lynn Lee (post 16 and EHC co-ordinator) provided information and was the main link for the project.
5. An action plan was drafted by key partners with the aim of achieving better employment outcomes for young people with SEND. Various parties and key stakeholders were involved in developing the action plan and proposed the following deliverables, that they said they wanted the support of the project to achieve:
  - a. Everyone involved in supporting and working with children, young people and families have high expectations of what can be achieved in relation to paid work and careers, which includes enterprise development and self-employment. They work together to boost aspirations and expectations so that more young people leaved education and get paid work and careers.
  - b. All young people have access to high quality information, advice, support and guidance, on a face to face and 1-to-1 basis from qualified, impartial careers guidance practitioners or job coaches to co-produce a personalised employment pathway. This includes access to high quality benefits advice including better-off-in work calculations.
  - c. Study programmes are available that have meaningful work experience as the core aim including supported employment embedded into the curriculum.
  - d. Traineeships and apprenticeships are accessible to young people with SEND. Education and training providers are making full use of reasonable adjustments to ensure this is an option for young people with SEND and embedding supported employment into the provision.
  - e. The local offer is comprehensive on the employment support available to young people and families. This includes resources for those supporting young people and families. The local offer is co-produced, updated regularly and developed on the basis of what the evidence-base says works.
  - f. There is a clear, shared strategy to engage with employers to benefit young people with SEND. Those people engaging with employers understand the business cases of a diverse workforce and can promote the benefits of employing young people with disabilities. The Strategy is linked to the LEP and education provider strategies and provides a single point of contact for employers.

- g. There is a clear well governed strategy and plan to ensure that more young people leave education for work and sustainable careers. The strategy has been developed in partnership with all stakeholders (internal and external) which demonstrated that it's everyone's business.
6. Questionnaires were sent to young people with SEND who attend SEN Schools across Berkshire to determine if they have employment aspirations. 87% of the young people self-declared that they would like a job.
7. Project events were held across Berkshire and a specific day for WBC were delivered around a number of key themed areas. Two shared learning events were delivered for all of the sites where good practice has been shared and lessons learnt across the sites as well as employer engagement.

Date	Event	Purpose	Number of Attendees
10/11/15	Vocational Profiling (X-Berkshire)	Introduction to supported employment and the underpinning core values. Methodology on the completion of Vocational Profiles and their purpose. Discussions on what can be done to embed Vocational Profiles within the system	10
11/11/15	Writing outcomes for Employment in EHC plans (X-Berkshire)	Introduction to writing outcomes in EHC plans. What to consider when developing employment outcomes. Good practice and examples of writing employment outcomes in EHC plans. Discussions on what can be done to ensure employment outcomes are embedded within EHC plans	7
20/01/16	Boosting Aspirations for Parents (Wokingham)	Provide parents with information on examples of young people with SEND who are in employment. What the evidence base says works. Informing parents on what good support looks like. Discussions on what can be done in Wokingham to boost ambition in the system.	11
20/01/16	Developing the Employment Pathway (Wokingham)	To develop the pathway transition from education to employment. What the evidence base says works. Mapping what employment support is available; identifying gaps and barriers; voting on	14

		priorities and next steps	
21/01/16	Employer Engagement Techniques (X-Berkshire)	Participants will have a greater understanding of the employer's role and perspective; the importance of marketing and customer service; the business case for employing workers with disabilities; how to initially approach employers and engage with them; how to identify and meet employer needs and how to organise and conduct a pitch to employers	11

## Conclusions and Findings

8. Based on the results of questionnaires that were sent to young people with SEND (who attend SEN Schools across Berkshire to determine if they have employment aspirations) 87% of the young people who responded self-declared that they would like a job. This needs to be made aware to professionals as part of EHC plans and Information, Advice and Guidance sessions.
9. There is a real commitment in WBC to increase existing opportunities for people with SEND around employment. WBC has been working towards implementing learning from the events to improve employment outcomes for young people with SEND. WBC continue to develop and implement their action plan.
10. To support WBC, BASE provided a transition pathway, that was adapted from the Wolverhampton pathway, which highlights the seamless transition needed from education to employment and is centred around three key themes: Vision; Influences and Resources. Optalis continue to develop this model.
11. As part of the project – BASE supported the LA to identify areas of strong and best practice and also acted as a critical friend to highlight areas that need improvement:

Good Practice	Gaps
Person Centred Planning Approach used in annual reviews	The Local Offer lacks information, parents and young people with SEND unsure where to go to look at future options
Vocational Profiling being used in Addington School and Optalis	Vocational Profiling is not used in all secondary schools
Supported Internships being utilised at National Grid via Addington School and Royal Berkshire Hospital via Reading	Lack of flexibility of courses post-16 with aim to achieve employment outcomes

College.	
Optalis and Addington School keen to share good practice across the Borough	Work experience is not available from all schools
Careers and Opportunities Events delivered at Addington in partnership with colleges, WBC, Optalis, community providers.	Vocational Profiling not embedded within all EHC plans
Employment outcomes are becoming part of EHC plans.	Out of County pupils not accessing specialist Careers Information, advice and Guidance
Elevate hub at Wokingham library with variety of partners	
Optalis are well linked in with provision in their area – employers; parents; schools; colleges and other provision.	

## Recommendations and Opportunities

12. In order for WBC to develop and improve employment outcomes for young people with SEND, the following recommendations are suggested:

- WBC to continue implementing and developing their action plan from this project
- Vocational Profiling to be embedded within the EHC plan process. This will then inform Commissioners of what needs to be procured in post-16 provision
- The provision of supported employment needs to be of high quality and evidence-based that delivers employment outcomes for the young people with SEND, on behalf of WBC who have a statutory requirement for people with SEND up to the age of 25
- All staff who deliver supported employment for young people with SEND should be trained and have a recognised qualification in supported employment
- WBC commit to ring-fence a number of work placement opportunities/apprenticeship/internships/employment opportunities for young people with SEND
- Explore using employers / parents and young people with SEND as role models to boost aspirations across the system
- Local offer pages, linked to the Council webpage, need to be developed in regards to employment. Explore the possibilities of the local offer being linked to the Elevate pan-Berkshire website (and local Elevate site)
- WBC and key stakeholders to use the guides and tools supplied from the project to support employment outcomes for young people with SEND. The

outcomes of the project to be embedded in relevant team and service plans and learning embedded with commissioners

- Elevate Berkshire (Elevate Wokingham) provides a real opportunity to align local Elevate budgets (including local provision across 14 to 19) with the SEND Reform Grant – to provide a holistic package of support for young people with SEND rooted in a local supported employment offer that runs in parallel, offering support to services and teams within the LA and Schools, who support young people with SEN. This re-engineering would improve the life chances of young people
- Through City Deal Elevate EU funding, resources have been profiled for BASE to do additional work to continue the EEB project. BASE will be able to support the 6 unitary authorities in the operational embedding of the recommendations as part of the Elevate Berkshire programme and it is recommended that the links continue with WBC – where BASE could support the LA to operationalise the learning.