

TO:	ELEVATE BERKSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	21st May 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	Elevate Berkshire Update		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR MUNRO (WBC)		
WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE		
LEAD OFFICER:	Joanna Flaxman	TEL:	0118 937 2177
JOB TITLE:	Project Manager – Elevate Berkshire	E-MAIL:	Joanna.flaxman@reading.gov.uk

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 In November 2017 a procurement exercise was undertaken by Reading Borough Council, as the accountable body, for two projects – one to engage and support 390 eligible young people into employment, education or training with a focus on BAME young people; and the second to engage and support 40 lone parents into education, employment or training. Kennedy Scott have been delivering under both of these contracts.
- 3.2 Project 1 went live in May 2018 and Project 2 in September 2018. Kennedy Scott have reported 279 outcomes and 146 results up to the end of March 2019 over both contracts. Further detail of delivery is reported in section 15.0.
- 3.3 The contract will end on 30th June 2019 in line with all Elevate delivery.

4.0 Digital Marketing

- 4.1 Prior to October 2018 each partner had their own localised website in the form of ElevateMe and some partners used social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to promote the service and support available. However, Elevate online presence was not particularly strong.
- 4.2 A Digital Marketing Assistant, part funded by Elevate Berkshire and part by Bracknell Forest Council was employed in October 2018. Their role for Elevate Berkshire has been to build the online presence and improve the content of the ElevateMe local websites and work with partners to increase outreach via social media.
- 4.3 Elevate Berkshire now has a presence on Facebook (having taken over the existing Elevate Reading Facebook page which already had 1400 followers), Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Posts are tailored according to the audiences for each platform and are also scheduled so they can go live during the weekend and evenings as well as working hours.
- 4.4 A timetable of monthly themes was produced with social media posts focussing on those themes, such as Supported Employment, B&ME groups and lone parents. Partners are asked to contribute material based on the themes as well as upcoming events and ongoing support available.
- 4.5 The ElevateMe website has had a complete overhaul and is now up to date. Local Authority partners are being asked whether they can take responsibility for their sections of the site following the end of the project in June.

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

5.0 Extended Support

5.1 In early 2018 options were considered to intensively support participants with a mental health problem. Initially a Dynamic Purchasing System was investigated but advice from Reading Borough Council procurement resulted in a simpler spot purchase scheme which has been live since October 2018.

5.2 Elevate partners have been able to identify participants who need individualised support over and above the standard delivery such as counselling or 1:1 support, to allow them to take steps in the right direction towards the labour market.

5.3 To date, ten participants have received support from the scheme, which has included travel training, specific family and individual counselling for a young person with autism and other needs, resilience training for job coaches and 1:1 work placement support.

6.0 Evaluation

6.1 Chimera Consultants have been commissioned to carry out an evaluation of Elevate Berkshire. Field work will be carried out during May 2019 including interviews with stakeholders and participants. A report will be produced in mid June, followed by an event to present the findings.

7.0 Employment is Everyone's Business Project

7.1 Employment is Everyone's Business - Stage 2' commenced delivery in March 2017. The aim of the project is to support Elevate Berkshire and the six Berkshire 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.

7.2 Two days support have been provided to Bracknell Forest - one day with SEN staff on careers and enrichment in schools and what good looks like. The connections between Kennel Lane and schools connection now improved. Some careers guidance practices pulled against good practise so this has improved. A day was also spent with Kennel Lane school and they are now in a position to join the schools supported employment alliance. They were also linked with the DWP schools worker.

7.3 Support has been provided to Thames Valley Berkshire LEP on their call around apprenticeships and ensuring material was fully inclusive and also on their a webinar for providers interested in the call, ensuring providers understand the inclusivity aspect.

7.4 Two events for carers around employment are being held at Newbury College and Bracknell in June / July.

7.5 A shared learning event will be held on 18th July at Newbury College. The morning is for senior leaders and includes information impact that good practice in employment has on Ofsted rating. In the afternoon operational staff, are invited and will hear a young person's experiences, about the World of Work programme and available resources.

ITEM 2 - PARTNER UPDATES

8.0 Bracknell Forest

8.1 The key details of recent delivery are:-

- 1 Client applied for University and travelling independently
- 1 Client supported with Disability allowance for Tertiary Education
- 2 Clients actively leaving supported housing and attending sessions with coach independently
- Attended External Agent Networking Event to promote services at supported housing
- Reached out to Involve, Prince's Trust and Youth club for Volunteering Opportunities
- 1 Client linked with Catch 22 and referral made
- 4 Clients interviewed by Prince's Trust Get Started Programme and invited to Taster Day.
- 1 Client supported with referral to CAMHS
- 2 Clients supported with interview preparation for Apprentice Interview
- 2 Clients supported with Advanced Apprenticeship applications
- 1 client supported with college application
- Youth Obligation clients contacted and 3 to be followed up as may require additional support

8.2 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 on IYSS. They 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. Discussions taking place with Elevate Berkshire to ensure pan-Berkshire compliance. This will be an on-going process, to ensure correct and accurate compliance. The Elevate Bracknell Forest Recovery Plan updated for this quarter's claim provides further details against this area

8.3 Issues / Barriers

- Participants not attending meetings arranged directly with them, there are various reasons but in most of these cases, they are able to get hold of the young people again to rearrange.
- Non engagement of young people who have been referred.
- Meetings arranged with other professionals being cancelled at the last minute

9.0 Prince's Trust

9.1 The following courses were delivered in the period, in line with the project plan:-

- Get into Retail with Marks and Spencer – Reading
- Get Started with Music – Reading
- Get into Security - Reading
- Get Started with Photography – Reading

9.2 A whole new staff team started in the period, so time was needed for inductions and training prior to them being able to deliver. However, the team was fully trained on the project in the early stages of their induction and were able to work on the project quickly.

9.3 Despite considerable efforts to reach out to young people in the area, they continue to face substantial challenges in the recruitment of eligible participants to the project. They regularly review their offer of programmes, the selection of themes and the location of

the course to maximise recruitment, but they continue to see low uptake and their courses continue to run under capacity.

10.0 RBWM

10.1 Delivery by RBWM ceased on 31st March 2019. This early end date was accepted by DWP as mitigation actions were proposed by the central team, i.e. other existing delivery partners will be able to operate in the RBWM area and claim participants up to project end.

10.2 Up to project end, the active period has seen a continuing delivery cycle with focus on a number of areas:-

- Weekly Job Club: 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
- Attended local Employment Forum
- Regular social media activity
- Supported employment by Ways into Work for clients with disabilities or other barriers to work
- Google digital garage event.
- School delivery
- Reaching out to the One Borough group in RBWM these meetings are held quarterly and a range of diversity groups within.
- Careers fair at Windsor Forest Group, Windsor campus.

11.0 Reading

11.1 Delivery in Reading by Adviza ceased as planned on 31st October 2019.

11.2 The Prince's Trust and Ways into Work have continued to deliver in Reading, and addition a member of the Central team has an Information, Advice and Guidance qualification so has been able to provide a skeleton service in addition to his usual duties and ensure no young person is turned away.

12.0 Ways Into Work

12.1 Ways into Work have continued to use the supported employment model with individual job coaching as their primary focus for each participant. 90% of their participants have vocational profiles and development plans. They are now actively supporting 81 individuals across Berkshire. (119 across the lifetime of the project) of which 67 are currently eligible to be claimed under Elevate.

12.2 Ways into Work have engaged with in excess of 10 new employers in the period and attended several employer engagement events. This includes work with Kier towards a second work experience week and BUPA regarding roles in their care home division.

13.0 West Berkshire

13.1 Delivery of Elevate has continued to be through two external partners (Adviza and WBTC) and internal direct delivery working with internal services such as the Youth Offending Team (YOT), Leaving Care Team, SEND (additional needs) Team and the Turnaround Families Team. Activity continues to be supporting young people with

careers advice and guidance, procuring work related opportunities, such as work experience, enabling access, such as procuring travel.

13.2 Specific activity this period has been:

- Meeting with Newbury Town Council to explore better ways of linking up local employment opportunities with available to work young people
- Linking with Castle special schools to target employers who already take young people with additional needs, to explore capacity building
- Starting a Young Mums club / drop-in in Calcot to support a cohort of young mums identified by Family Worker
- Identifying and targeting those young people in alternative provisions (PRU) who are at risk of becoming NEET
- Attending EHCP reviews to provide careers advice and ensure employment is a focus of the plan
- Reviews of young people being support through YOT, offering careers advice
- Reviews of young people being supported through LAC team, offering careers advice
- Attending Culture Club for asylum seekers (with right to remain) to devise employment pathways
- Advocacy work with Social Workers to support out of work expectant teenage parents – with four young people identified and now being supported through Elevate
- Site visits to Cottesmore Garden Centre and Newbury Resource Centre to link up with other youth engagement work and look areas to ass employability additionality
- Continued outreach to support young people in their homes.

14.0 **Wokingham**

14.1 Specific activity this period has been:-

- The Elevate Wokingham team have continued to promote the Elevate service to all those young people being tracked and home visited as part of their ongoing tracking processes.
- The team have links with local schools and colleges and continue to highlight their service and offer their support to any students leaving mid-year, without completing their course.
- Continued to use Social Media to promote support offered and opportunities available.
- Weekly group job searching sessions at the Elevate hub facilitated by Optalis
- Continued social media and event publicity by Optalis (recently DWP job fair in Reading
- Exceeded basic skills output this period by reviewing all files / documentation.

15.0 **Slough**

15.1 Workshops have been delivered in small groups on interviews, transferable skills, motivation and confidence building and job search. The workshops are tailored to the cohort of individuals attending the session to ensure they are able to access all the resources, they are also use their SEN computes for any participants who require additional support during the sessions.

15.2 The below programmes also ran– offering additional skills and qualifications to the participants

- Cooking Food and Hygiene Course
 - Customer Service
 - Retail traineeship
 - Employability and first aid at work course
 - Construction and warehouse traineeship
- 15.3 Staff attend the faith centres fortnightly to increase the BAME community and this is evident in the increased Roma relationship.
- 15.4 There has been an increase in the outreach work to secure referrals but lone parents are more challenging due to housing and money issues which they want to address before taking the steps to EET, so in many cases it is training that they are wanting to look at as this can be fitted around the children as some of the children are very young.
- 15.5 Lone parent advice sessions take longer due to the children needing attention and the wellbeing section does tend to be the main focus – English, Maths and Mental health seem to be an issue within the cohort so additional funding requests are being put in. Those lone parents that are engaging really want to pursue EET but just lack confidence so staff are looking to hold group outreach sessions so they can pair up for additional support which will encourage them to engage. The flexi hours change to the office with the lone parents has also seen an increase in them attending the centre which is felt what has contributed to the six outcomes this quarter.

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.
- 16.2 The most recent performance table is set out in Appendix B.

17.0 Highlights

- The partnership have engaged 2258 young people since November 2015, of these 498 have been supported into employment education or training.
 - The partnership has already delivered against the disability target for the programme, supporting 721 participants who have declared a disability against a target of 280.
 - The partnership has supported 49 young people to gain basics skills; this is against a three year target of 24.
 - Good progress being made against the ethnic minority target, assisted by the specific project in Slough, and performance is exceeding for this point in the project.
 - There is a good upward trend in the number of lone parents receiving a service, although there is still work to do to meet the target.
- 17.1 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. Withheld funds will be released back to partners at the end of the project (30th June 2019).

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 11 claims (covering the period Nov 15 to Sept 18). Following a backlog of payments which caused significant difficulty, payments were brought up to date by DWP in December 2019. The claim Oct-Dec 2018 is now the only one awaited (claim Jan – Mar 19 was only submitted on 8th May 2019).
- 18.3 Appendix C sets out the claim payments broken down by partner.

ITEM 4 – FUTURE PLANS

- 19.1 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.
- 19.2 An opportunity has arisen to apply for funding with DWP and applications have been submitted or plan to be submitted shortly for three projects – Supported Employment, Extended Support / IAG and Your Move (a project which uses sport to engage participants). Existing partners have made proposals for remaining Elevate Berkshire underspend and future projects will be finalised once the outcome of the funding application is advised.