

# Working Plymouth

25 September 2013

## Youth Unemployment – Update



At the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 21 November 2012, the actions taken following the four Cabinet recommendations (from its meeting on 12 July 2012) were described. This report details the further progress made in these areas and informs where other action is being taken.

### **A City-wide SEN/LDD Review**

It was noted at the last Scrutiny Panel meeting that there was a gap in evidence around the issue of young people with special needs (including disabilities).

Following discussions with key stakeholders it has since been recommended that a city-wide review of Special Educational Needs (SEN)/ Learners with Learning Difficulties (LLD) is undertaken through a task group, to include Pluss, Local Authority, Secondary and Special Schools and college representation. Youth unemployment is a cross cutting priority, so this focused work and its impact will be reported as appropriate to both the Plymouth Growth and Health and Wellbeing Boards.

The proposed city-wide SEN/LDD review is in response to the recommendation and the Children and Families Bill. The latter sets out a reform programme to implement an integrated system across education, health and care to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN and disability from birth to 25 years old. This extends the current Special Educational Needs duties and responsibilities, particularly with regard to young people aged 16-25.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy Steering Group has established a working group regarding planning for 16-25 years olds. This work includes:

- Sufficiency assessment of post 16 provision and place planning (employment, education and training).
- Education, Health and Care Planning with 16-25 year olds (systems and workforce development).
- Multi-agency transition planning arrangements and person centred planning.
- Enhanced support for complex and vulnerable young people (personalisation).

### **Existing SEN/LDD Initiatives**

The following SEN/LDD initiatives are currently being delivered:

#### Project Search

Project Search is an initiative being piloted at 14 sites across the UK. In Plymouth, the initiative is delivered jointly by Plymouth Hospitals National Health Service Trust, City College Plymouth, Serco and Pluss. Project Search offers 12 month internships for young people with a learning disability aged from 16-24, with a large local employer. This is made up by three 10 week internships in different departments over an academic year. Project Search is offered to 10 young people a year.

In Plymouth's case the employer is Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust. Each day the interns work as a full member of staff undertaking tasks in different departments (including orthopaedics, theatres, x ray, radiology, administration and Serco (providing hotel services)) supported by a Pluss job coach. The interns then return to an on-site classroom to assess how their day has gone and learn other communication, problem-solving and job skills. The teaching is provided by qualified tutors from City College Plymouth. The end goal for each student is to achieve competitive employment either within Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust or elsewhere in the community using the skills they have acquired.

Project Search has had a good success rate of students gaining paid employment, in year one, six out of eight; year two, four out of nine; and the current cohort is still working on their internships.

### Achievement Pluss

This project was designed as part of 'Raising the Participation Age' (RPA) to bring fresh ideas and new hope to young people who were looking for work experience and an opportunity to improve their own skills for young people aged 16-25. The course is a roll- on roll-off course which means the learners can complete the course at their own pace from a few months to an academic year. The most important issue was the course's aim '... that of equipping them with the necessary means to find paid employment'. Achievement Pluss started with five learners but two could not continue due to personal reasons.

All three learners progressed well and enjoyed their course. Their appointed tutor reported that their day to day skills in English and Mathematics improved steadily. However, in addition to this, it was apparent to all those who met these young people that their own self confidence and worth had grown in a way no one could have anticipated. Work placements were sourced very quickly within the following sectors: hairdressing, car mechanics/valeting, and commercial cleaning. To date all three young people have succeeded into either paid employment or apprenticeships. One parent reported that the scheme has 'turned her son's life around and he is full of enthusiasm again'.

This year's cohort is currently working towards gaining paid employment.

### Autism Spectrum Disorder Provision, City College Plymouth

Plymouth Local Authority set up a project with key partners in the city to develop bespoke packages of education/ training for young people with Autism. The course is tailored to meet each young person's individual needs, to eventually support them into either main stream educational provision or the world of work, in as short a time as possible. The course is run by City College Plymouth with support from Michael Batt Foundation (specialists in Autism) and currently four young people have been enrolled with 1-1 support and one tutor. All staff are trained in the 'Teacch Method' which provides individualised programmes, skills training and vocational training specifically for young people with Autism. In September it is planned to open this course up to eight young people.

### Effective Transition into employment from age 14 to 19

- *Achieve Employment Focussed Transition Plan:*

All year 9 Transition plans now have a presumption of employment for all young people with a learning disability. All schools now as part of the transition plan have to complete

person centred plans to promote the young person's aspirations which now includes employment, training and or apprenticeships.

- *Ensure young people and families are at the centre of the planning process:*

PLUSS are currently working on a Family Led Jobs Project with 10 families, through customised employment planning. Plus Customised Employment in Plymouth is a form of Supported Employment that delivers a more participative and intensively supported form of supported employment than usual. It uses "Discovery" as a particularly positive, participative and pictorial means of finding out about an individual person with a learning disability and their aspirations, interests, skills and support needs (similar to Vocational Profiling). Person Centred Employment Planning is facilitated and seeks to build a team to support an individual's plan to progress towards and into employment. This includes identification of what works / doesn't work; suggestions for ideal job; interests, contributions, conditions, and a plan to progress towards getting a job. This form of supported employment has tended to have been deployed locally to only a small number of people and these individuals have tended to have been recognised as having higher support needs and / or have not previously made much successful progress towards paid work previously – hence this approach.

### Valued in Public

In order to increase employment opportunities for people with Learning Difficulties within Plymouth City Council, Ken Holder (Apprenticeship Coordinator) will publicise Work Experience Policy across all Directorates to achieve an increase in Work Experience placements for people with Learning Difficulties and complete data analysis of the number of people with Learning Difficulties working for Plymouth City Council.

Work is currently underway in the following areas:

- Analysis of data from local colleges to record if adults with autism are translating their qualifications into employment. Work being undertaken by National Autistic Society.
- Target employers & champion employment for individuals with most complex needs.
- Curriculum planning to enable progression pre and post 16 for qualifications that enhance employability skills and promote pathways into the world of work.
- To influence providers to develop local provision that meets the needs of all young people into post 16 education, training and employment.
- Post 16 transition panel (September Guarantee – which ensures that all 16 and 17 year-olds are offered a suitable place in education or training, including in schools, colleges or work-based training ) working with a range of partners to ensure all young people have a suitable offer of education/training.
- Riddleys have four people on paid or voluntary work. Riddleys is a support service for adults aged 18+ with Learning Disabilities. They provide support, information, guidance and a place to socialise in a friendly environment where members have the opportunity to develop life skills.

### Other Youth Unemployment Actions and Initiatives

#### **City-wide Skills Leadership**

The Economic Development Department, and Education, Learning and Families, are working together at officer level as reflected in this joint report.

Since the last Scrutiny meeting the Assistant Director of Education, Learning and Families has undertaken to produce a new Skills Plan, which will detail a proposal for a comprehensive city-wide skills and employment initiative.

It is proposed that a full report will be produced on the Skills Plan for the March 2014 meeting of the Scrutiny Panel, which will include a proposed new Skills Governance Architecture.

In order to maintain an appropriate, broad focus on the issue, the intention is to request that the Growth Board include the Assistant Director of Education, Learning and Families and that a progress or exceptions report is brought to the Board regularly. In addition, existing groups may be revised to create one strategic group focusing on Learning, Skills and Employability and this will report to a new Employer Skills Board (sitting below the Growth Board) and the Children's Partnership. These linkages are critical to ensure all round ownership and understanding of the issue. At individual learner organisation level there is excellent work and developing a mechanism to capture this and to challenge poor practice early is essential.

The Employment Sub Group continues as a forum to discuss the specific difficulties faced by young people seeking employment.

### **Current Unemployment Position**

The city's unemployment rate has fallen each month since February 2013 signalling a tangible improvement in labour market conditions. In July 2013, there were 5,233 individuals claiming unemployment related benefits in the city – 3.1% of the resident working age population compared to a national rate of 3.5% Plymouth's unemployment rate remains higher than the Heart of the South West LEP (2.1%) and wider South West regional (2.2%) rates – a long run trend.

Currently, some 1,485 unemployed have been claiming for over a year – 28% of total claimants. Although this number has falling since January the rate of decline has been relatively slow. This is a fairly common post-recession trend and reflects the increasing difficulty of accessing work following lengthy periods of unemployment. The proportion of long term claimants is slightly lower than national trends (30%).

Rates of youth unemployment are also on the decline – between February and July 2013, the 18-24 year old claimant count fell by 415. There are currently 1,630 18-24 year old JSA claimants across the city – 31% of total claimants compared to 28% nationally. Therefore, although the fall in numbers is welcome, the relatively high proportion of youth claimants remains a long standing challenge for Plymouth.

### **Current Initiatives**

Plymouth City Council is currently leading on a wide range of initiatives to support young people into work:

#### Plan for Jobs

The Plan for Jobs was launched on 4 January 2013, and contains 19 projects that aim to create over 2,000 jobs (including 500 apprenticeships) over two years. It brings together actions and commitments designed to reinvigorate the local economy and stimulate private sector growth and job creation.

Two of the projects are directly related to assisting the city's unemployed gain skills and experience to help them secure work:

- *1000 Club*

The 1000 Club has 258 members who have supported over 1,100 people into work. (Please see break down of figures below)

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Full Time Jobs	353
Part Time Jobs	12
Apprenticeships	289
Internships	153
GMB Work Placements	174
Schools Work Experience	151

The potential of the 1000 Club has been widely recognised and in August funding was secured through Jobcentre Plus and Plymouth City Council for Plymouth Chamber to increase activity under the Club banner.

Employer Support Packs are to be produced giving details of the options available to businesses if they wish to support a young person into work. Also a programme of events including 'Behind the Scenes' Visits at Members' Companies will commence in October.

The 1000 Club will be holding a recruitment event to celebrate its first birthday. Presentations and speeches will be made by the Leader, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service and Plymouth University.

The event is funded by NAS and the chamber is organising the event.

- *Apprenticeship Training Agency*

City College Plymouth, through working in partnership with the Council, has recently been certified as an Apprenticeship Training Agency (called the Plymouth Apprenticeship Company - PAC). The PAC will support the delivery of apprenticeship opportunities across the City.

Funded by PCC, the PAC acts as the agent between employers and the apprentice; the apprentice is employed by the PAC who will place them with an appropriate employer, and the employer will use the services of the PAC to source and arrange the apprenticeship. Through this model, the apprentice can split their on-the-job training between a small number of employers, thus gaining a wider range of complementary skills and experiences. The model is particularly useful for small businesses to create valuable apprenticeship opportunities, as small businesses often find the financial investment of taking on an apprentice full time too great. As the apprentice is employed by the PAC, and the apprenticeship placement can be split between employers, the model makes it viable for smaller businesses to offer an apprentice placement.

The project is underway, and the aim is to create a minimum of 70 new apprentices by mid-2014.

## Plymouth City Council Apprenticeship Scheme

Since the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator post has been made permanent, over 75 apprenticeships have been created providing opportunities for young people across 8 employment frameworks. A group of 10 apprentices participated in the Brathay National Apprenticeships Service Team Challenge 2013 and were placed fifth overall after competing against over 90 teams from across the country. The Team was also recognised for the community projects and schools engagement work they have done in Plymouth by being placed first in the community engagement category and are continuing to work with the National Apprenticeship Service to promote apprenticeships. Plymouth City Council has also been shortlisted in the South West National Apprenticeships Service Large Employer of the Year 2013, with the national finalists being announced on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

The Council is continuing to support the Work Placement scheme run in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus, which offers the unemployed (who have not been in work for up to 12 months) eight weeks work experience. The Council has provided 17 placements since 1 April 2013 and 35% of participants have subsequently gone into work or education within 13 weeks of their placement. Of the 17, three are still on placement and seven are within the 13 weeks monitoring period.

## Preventative NEET Measures

- *Contract for transition support for young people to education, employment and training*

The Service commissioned by the four peninsula Local Authorities, under Plymouth leadership, aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Young People are able to make informed choices about Education, Employment and Training (EET) opportunities.
- Young People are supported to overcome barriers to participation in EET which meets RPA requirements and to make smooth transitions.
- Young People's participation (RPA) in EET is raised.
- Young People are supported to remain engaged in sustainable post 16 education, employment or training, with a particular emphasis on engagement in learning.

There are three key priorities for the Service:

- **Priority 1: 139a Learning Disability Assessment**  
All Young People (16 and 17 year olds) who hold a Statement of Special Educational Needs will receive a high quality and timely assessment of their learning needs (in line with Section 139a/Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008) that enables appropriate support in their new placement.
  - **Priority 2: Tracking**  
All eligible Young People will be effectively tracked through a 'Child Care Information Service' (CCIS) compliant system in relation to their education, employment and training status and destinations in line with Statutory Requirements, with particular attention to post-16 and RPA reporting requirements.
  - **Priority 3: Vulnerable groups**  
The Supplier will evidence the impact of interventions with vulnerable Young People in enabling them to maintain or re-engage in EET which meets RPA requirements, with a particular emphasis on engagement in learning.
- *Risk of NEET Indicators*

There are a range of partnership networks and initiatives led by Schools and Settings to tackle the prevention and reduction of the City's NEETS. A range of preventative NEET measures have been introduced, including Risk of NEET indicators (RONI). Working together with partner representatives from Plymouth Learning Trust, Special Schools and Careers South West this evidence-based approach identifies and puts in place measures to support students who are at the highest risk of non-engagement Post-16.

The initial phase of activity is an analysis of previous year 11 leavers and their participation in learning across the academic years 12 and 13 (e.g. the period when they would be in a school sixth form or an FE College). The analysis looks at the monthly participation status of the year group and a range of education and social characteristics (e.g. attainment of GCSEs or postcode) demonstrated by the young people. From the analysis, common factors linked to the incidence of non-participation are established. The analysis is used in discussions with schools and LA services to identify where interventions with current secondary pupils would reduce the prospect of these students becoming NEET.

- *Post-16 Transition Panel*

This panel is comprised of representatives from referral bodies and Post-16 providers which include City College Plymouth, YMCA/Discovery College, Prince's Trust, Plymouth College of Art, Careers South West and Plymouth Learning Trust. It considers young 16-18 year olds who are "ready to place" in learning/work opportunities and which provider would provide the most suitable provision and support to meet their needs and aspirations.

During the summer period the panel is focused on meeting the September Guarantee of providing an appropriate learning opportunity for all 16/17 year olds. This involves discussion of individual young people that have unsecured places in Post-16 provision to ensure an offer can be developed that is:

- At the right level.
- In an appropriate geographical location.
- In the occupational sector and
- Provides a learning method which suits the young person's needs.

### NEET Reduction Initiatives

- *Workskills Bootcamp (Whiz Kidz)*

The Bootcamp programme is designed to address the lack of employability skills of Plymouth's NEET population by delivering workshops that incorporate a mix of theoretical and practical approaches delivered by a combination of tutors, mentors and business representatives. The programme is delivered in a business environment that encourages the development of the employability skills to assist participants attain the confidence and knowledge to apply to job search, interview techniques, work tasters and placements, as well as gain the necessary skills required by employers offering employment and Apprenticeship opportunities.

The programme supports unemployed 16-24 year olds referred from Jobcentre Plus and Careers South West and a key aim is to open their minds to opportunities that can arise out of work experience. Feedback from last year's programme indicated it was difficult at first for the candidates to understand the value of undertaking work experience. Some who undertook it had positive outcomes, including job offers, whilst others were disappointed that there was no job offer at the end. One candidate completed eight weeks work

experience in retail and whilst this didn't lead to employment it gave her far more confidence to apply for work than she previously had.

Last year's programme attracted over fifty young people and 43% of the candidates gained employment or Apprenticeships. A further 31% of candidates went onto FE or other learning (short courses). Overall 88% of the young people attending achieved a positive outcome, having gained either work experience or progressed onto FE/training, employment or Apprenticeship. Feedback from candidates suggested that there was a significant increase in the number of interviews they were offered as a result of attending the programme. They also felt more encouraged to apply and try work experience and voluntary opportunities to increase their prospects of getting paid employment.

The current Bootcamp programme is running again between July 2013 and March 2014. In response to feedback from tutors and candidates on the previous year's programme the workshops have been extended from one to two weeks in order to maximise the tutor and mentor support available to candidates.

- *Volunteer Mentor Training Programme*

In order to develop the capacity of skilled Youth Mentors, this programme's aim is to recruit and train motivational people from all walks of life to become voluntary mentors to specifically support the cities fast growing number of unemployed young people and NEETS aged 16-25. In its first year (2012) the programme benefited from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) funding for development and training delivery costs.

Representatives from Schools & Settings, PACLS and Whiz Kidz (Economic Development) collaborated to create this bespoke programme, consisting of 20 hours training over eight modules. They developed something that was innovative and reflected the needs of the client base, i.e. the young people. Therefore in addition to the standard courses offering Safeguarding/Equality and Diversity etc. new modules were designed to help mentors to understand youth culture and the issues young unemployed people face, as well as learning about how best to communicate with young people using modern communication channels including social media.

The programme of workshops were delivered between June to December 2012 and attracted 34 applicants, bringing together an eclectic mix of mentors from all walks of life, ranging across public and private sector, including professions from the field of HR, Sport, Training and Development, Business Consultancy, Medical and Retail. Many of those that attended the programme have gone on to successfully provide one to one mentoring support to young unemployed people from across the city. The programme will be repeated in November 2013 year, albeit on a smaller scale, with a target of recruiting and training a further 20 mentors.

- *Mentor Matching Pilot*

A proposal to develop a Mentor Matching Service formed part of the DWP conditions for funding the Volunteer Mentor Training Programme. Through consultations with representatives from Jobcentre Plus and Whiz Kidz various methods were discussed as to how mentors qualifying from the training programme could be matched to the target group of unemployed 16-25 year olds. It was agreed that to trial two different approaches. The first of these, involving Jobcentre Plus, was to develop a series of procedures for selecting volunteer JSA claimants and matching their information, including background, issues identified, barriers to employment etc., with similar profiles produced for the mentors, to



include their areas of specialisms and expertise. This to be followed by a supervised meeting to introduce the mentor/mentee, with continued supervision of the relationship.

The alternative approach adopted by Whiz Kidz, who run the 'Bootcamp' employability workshops, was to incorporate the mentors into the Bootcamp programme. Several of the mentors attended and participated in the programme of delivery, thereby exposing them to matching opportunities with potential mentees. In principle this method of introduction is the ideal way of ensuring a 'best match' as the relationship between the two can begin to take place more informally and thereby seeming less 'imposing' for the potential mentees. However, although this approach to matching has many benefits, it has limitations that it can only be applied where similar employability projects are being run. Also it will require appropriate staff that can supervise and manage the matching. However, this approach may shortly be trialled with the YMCA (Dame Kelly Holmes fund) sport/employability initiative.

It should be said that both these approaches have generated successful outcomes, whereby mentors and mentees have been successfully matched but it is too early to evaluate an overall winning formula as many of the mentoring relationships have not reached maturity.

- *Skills Aid Plymouth (SAP)*

This pilot will be launched early in 2014 and has been developed with Plymouth Rotary. It will initially provide a twelve month programme of one to one mentoring for twelve 13/14 year old students recruited from selected schools, including the Virtual School. It will take a similar, although not the same approach, to the Citizenship for Life (C4L) programme which is delivered Cornwall as a partnership between Cornwall Council and Rotary.

The programmes key aims are to improve and enrich the learning and skills of young people participating in the programme and to inspire their choices for future careers and learning through participating in a range of business led events and activities.

The success of the pilot will be reliant on gaining private sector sponsorship, as well as voluntary sector participation, particularly in regards to recruiting mentors from within the Rotary membership. Those mentors selected will gain the necessary mentoring skills by attending the Voluntary Mentor Training Programme in November.

- *Inspire*

Inspire is an annual careers and training event for 14 to 19 year olds to help make informed career and development choices. It takes place usually in October and provides a 'one-stop-shop' for young people and parents to explore vocational opportunities. There is a strong emphasis to create the right environment for young people to explore the range of employment and education opportunities by bringing together between 44 - 55 local employers, education and training providers to engage with young people and parents. This extremely popular event last year attracted more than 1,600 visitors, including 600 students from 13 schools and colleges.

Following the outcomes of the Employability Workshop which was held on 19 October 2012, the Growth Board's Employment Sub Group decided that an Employability Task and Finish Group be set-up.

The first meeting of the Group was held in February 2013 and the Group began by agreeing a definition of 'employability' for Plymouth, which is:

"Employability refers to a person's capability to gain, maintain and progress in employment. In addition to the technical or job specific skills required for different jobs, employers require their employees with personal attributes, attitudes and skills to be successful in all jobs."

The report attached 'Appendix 1' specifies the work of the Group and details 12 recommendations on its final page. Two of the key recommendations are given below:

- The Group has identified 10 key 'Areas of Focus', which best represent the core competencies and value-based behaviours needed by individuals to lead independent, resilient and fulfilling lives. A list of 'Employability Activities' was produced to identify what support and training is currently available in the city supporting these areas of focus and where there are gaps.
- It was decided that a 'Curriculum Framework' be developed around the 'Areas of Focus' which schools and colleges would be requested to adopt. Through the 1000 Club, employers would be invited to support the schools and colleges by providing project work, work experience, etc. and investigations are taking place to create an on-line 'match making brokerage service' to better support employers to link up to schools and colleges; and vice versa.

## **City Deal**

The City Deal bid contains a (draft) skills and youth unemployment element, which focuses on three areas and aims to provide the following:

- Engagement: improved co-ordination of support for young people into employment, including independent, impartial information, advice and guidance.
- Progression: improved opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential and increase their wages once in employment.
- Employability: improved experiences during and post-education that develop young people's employability skills.

A summary of all existing employment, skills and employability initiatives is currently in preparation, which will enable improved support and signposting of young people and employers to navigate a complex, fragmented and confusing support system.

## **Plymouth Growth Point**

The Employment Sub Group decided at its meeting on 5 June that a Growth Point Task and Finish Group should be set-up to review how best the areas of future growth in the city can be mapped. This information can be used to better inform residents of the city, plus local schools, colleges and training providers, where career opportunities will be occurring and skills gaps are likely now and in the future. This will be done through a number of ways including using labour market intelligence, the planning process, existing and pipeline capital projects and emerging sectors.

It is hoped that this information will also encourage developers to the city, as they will be able to establish where development is forecast and that the city is 'open for business'.

## **Procurement**

Under the Plan for Jobs, Plymouth City Council is planning to boost levels of local procurement and increase the number of contracts delivered for the Council by businesses located in the city. Through Sell2Plymouth (a partnership of buyers made up from Plymouth City Council, Plymouth University and Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust) the Council will raise the percentage of local Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) delivering local services, thereby maximising levels of local expenditure.

For larger contracts and the majority of capital projects the Council has adopted the Cornwall Framework (which uses a method similar to the Construction and Industrial Training Board framework) in relation to recruitment of apprentices and the development of skills and training. This approach requires the Client to develop an Employment and Skills Strategy within the tender documentation: setting the authorities' minimum requirements to be met by the contractor during the duration of the framework and including targets to be achieved by the contractors' Employment Skills Plan.

Research is being undertaken to identify how best to quantify and maximise the employment benefits of PCC's local procurement.

### **Fairness Commission**

The Economy, Enterprise and Employment team contributed a robust evidence base to support the development of the city's Fairness Commission. This included intelligence on youth and long-term unemployment and how trends vary across the city's wards.