

Appendix 1

Westminster Employment Service

Background Information for Scrutiny Committee

November 2020

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1. Introduction

Overview of the Service

In July 2017, the Council launched the Westminster Employment Service to support the Council's ambition of a *City for All*. Our objective is to **transform the lives of vulnerable residents through employment**. Our service works with the support of colleagues from across the Council, partners and commitment of over 100 local employers.

The Westminster Employment Service is delivered by a committed team of employment coaches providing 1-2-1 support to residents in their communities. Our coaches work alongside our Westminster Adult Education Service, our employer team and a wide range network of local charities, Colleges and other public agencies.



Our core activities

What makes the service unique is its understanding that accessing employment often requires a **wide, multi-faceted range of support** for multiple and complex needs. It also requires **close engagement with employers** who understand the added value of employing vulnerable residents. However, none of this would be possible without effective partnerships enabling centralised referrals.

As a holistic service, our aim of supporting Westminster residents into employment is achieved through **5 key activities which work together to create sustainable and long-term change** to clients' lives.



Who we help

We help residents with health conditions and disabilities to live independent lives, families looking to return to work and young people transitioning from not in education and employment, including our own children leaving care.



Focussing on those most in need

Since 2017, we have focused our services on residents with some of the most significant barriers to employment.

The quality of personalisation we offer is a key strength of our services, evidenced in the positive feedback from clients.



Justification & business case – recap

- **At a time of rising unemployment**, residents need access to opportunities to re-skill and train with pathways into well paid roles in sectors that are growing.
- There is **insufficient support for workless residents** through mainstream programmes to meet demand from residents – e.g. the Work & Health Programme and Working Capital will deliver jobs for an estimated 2% of the long-term unemployed population in Central London.
- Recent analysis of just one of our coaching services for residents in temporary accommodation, shows that clients supported are **3 times as likely to be in work**, they earn £1,000 more and have £300 less rent arrears than comparable Westminster residents not engaged in the project.
- Investing in more comprehensive **community-based support for priority groups** will reduce pressure on Jobcentre Plus and DWP and generate savings for public services. An evaluation of our FACES Coaching Service illustrated the wider benefits beyond employment of our work – an investment by WCC Public Health of £200,000 resulted in 78 families and 154 children being taken out of poverty and a reduction in the number of people with a Common Mental Health Disorder.
- **The Service has secured over £7M** in discretionary and external funding in the past 3 years, with no call on the Council's General Fund to deliver the service. Over this time the Service has supported over 2,000 residents into employment.

2. Context

Demand for our Service

Claimant count & referrals

As of September 2020, **the claimant rate in Westminster was 5.5% - up from 2% a year ago** – with men and those aged 50+ being the groups claiming the most benefits as a result of the deteriorating employment situation. The wards with the highest claimant rate are Church Street, Queen's Park and Westbourne, with a 152%, 169% and 178% increase in claimant rates in comparison to the previous year, respectively.

Many young people within the City already face a difficult route into adulthood and the economic downturn has disproportionately impacted this group. The Resolution Foundation found that since March, one third of 18-24 year old employees (excluding students) lost jobs or were furloughed, compared to one-in-six adults.

Economic activity

Data from the 2019 Annual Population Survey indicates that Westminster's rate of economically active residents (74.3%) is low in comparison to almost all other London boroughs. This means there is a **high proportion of residents who are unemployed but would like to work**. Of the 25.7% economically inactive residents, 25% wanted a job but do not have one due to caring responsibilities, long-term sickness, amongst other factors.

This data does not yet reflect the impact of Covid on the labour market nor the expected rise in redundancies following the end of the Job Retention Scheme. According to IPPR's research, **over 1 million more people may be under the pre-Covid poverty line** by the end of the year, compared to a scenario where the pandemic had not occurred.

Demand for our Service – employers

- Westminster businesses have been severely impacted by Covid with **9 out of 10 reporting reduced productivity**, and **4 in 5 businesses expecting profitability and turnover to reduce over 2020** (Business Tracker Survey, July 2020).
- **Retail/wholesale and the hospitality sectors were those with the highest number of furloughed staff** at the time of the survey. The end of the Job Retention Scheme is expected to impact on the number of redundancies in these sectors.
- The last Employer Skills Survey, carried out in 2017, found that **‘skill-shortage vacancies’** (vacancies that are hard-to-fill due to applicants lacking skills, qualifications or experience) **accounted for 22% of all vacancies in the UK**. Despite this, **the poorest adults with the lowest qualifications were the least likely to access adult training**, according to the Adult Skills Gap Report.
- In 2019, **66% of Westminster businesses reported having difficulties recruiting for roles** due to a low number of applicants or a lack of experience/skills.

3. Our Reconfigured Service Offer

Our reconfigured service offer & priorities



Focus on **growth sectors** and providing short training and re-skilling courses designed and delivered with local employers



Harnessing **Westminster Connects** volunteers as mentors and to support our clients.



Strengthening support for **Young People** not in education, employment or training



Partnerships with local charities & businesses

Lockdown case study - Supporting Rough Sleepers

This programme was set up by WCC using government funding to provide a wrap-around service for a group of rough sleepers (thirty-eight individuals) who were moved into temporary accommodation during lockdown and to help them find work, as they were not entitled to any public funds and this would be the only way of getting them off the streets. It involved The Rough Sleeping Team, Housing, Westminster Employment Service (WES) and three homelessness charities.

Many of these individuals are from Eastern Europe and some were working cash in hand for low wages and sleeping on the streets, so that they could send money home to their families or were otherwise finding it hard to secure work due to language barriers.

WES provided one-to-one coaching support to help as many of these people into work as possible. So far, by working together, we have helped sixteen ex-rough sleepers into work. The individuals will now be able to apply for settled status.



Increasing support through mentors & volunteers

Youth Mentor programme:

- Training volunteer mentors to provide support to Westminster residents between the age of 16-24 who are currently at risk of becoming NEET. The mentor will work with the young person over a 6 months period
- The mentoring programme is managed by council partner, Groundwork
- Our ambition is to train and pair 30 mentors and mentees by April 2021

Volunteer employment programme – there are 2 distinct areas:

1. Supporting Westminster residents to improve their employability skills through volunteering with Connects
2. Training 40 volunteers to support unemployed residents with basic employability skills – e.g. CV development, interview prep etc.
3. Our ambition is to have 100 unemployed Westminster residents benefitting from the service by April 2021

Support for Young People

What we are doing – overview of our support

We have 5 coaches dedicated to supporting young people, particularly vulnerable young people. Our team of coaches sits within services already working with young people including the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit, Looked after Children's Services plus coaches working with young people not in education, employment or training.

Our work to support NEET referrals is managed through a virtual NEET Team made up of internal services that engage with a variety of vulnerable young people and an external organisation that holds the data for young people who are NEET (Prospects).

During the year we have increased the support within our team for young people by two coaches and as referenced above, a new mentoring programme, harnessing trained volunteers via Westminster Connects will work alongside our coaches to provide additional support to young people.

Positive Pathways and Kickstart are two new programmes the Service is partnering with. Positive Pathways will support at risk young residents (19 –24 years old) and families around Church Street and Westminster borders to reduce crime and support career development through embedded ESOL and pre-employment elements. Kickstart will provide wage subsidies for employers creating new jobs for young people, including within the City Council.

Support for Young People

Our partnerships with services and local organisations to support young people.

- **Virtual NEET Team** – the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit, Youth Offending Team, Looked After Children's Services, Early Help, Tri-borough Alternative Provision, Prospects and WES.
- **Kickstart Scheme – DWP programme managed by Jobcentre Plus, 6-month placements to help young people access the job market**
- **Youth Mentoring Programme** – 6 month mentoring programme in partnership with Groundwork London and Westminster **Befriend a Family**, see slide below.
- **Positive Pathways** – delivered by WAES in partnership with GOALS UK and supported by Job Centre Plus targeting at risk young residents and families to reduce crime and support career development

What will be delivered:

Across our partnerships and by increasing the support which we can directly offer through WES and by promoting other schemes including Kickstart, our aim is to:

- Ensure every NEET has access to training courses, apprenticeship and job opportunities.
- Through our Coaches, we will work with 89 young people and help 40 of them into jobs.
- Kickstart Scheme – will create 30 WCC jobs for young people by the end of March 2021

Connecting with Services

WES is connected in with over 100 employment, skills and resident support organisations. Some of the ways in which we work with our ever-expanding network are:

Signposting to other services through the creation of a provision map on our webpage, This will give residents a detailed overview of the many different support services within the borough and support signposting where needed, it will also enable much more collaboration between providers which will ultimately lead to an improved provision landscape for residents. Residents will be able to access local support, tailored to their needs, by filtering the options available on the map, e.g. If a resident requires support with updating their CV, suitable interview clothing, they can specify this and a list of providers who provide this support will appear along with their location, access criteria and typical customer journey.

Referring WES clients to suitable pathway support, as well as receiving referrals to WES from services. Working with others to support our client's journey and tackle any obstacles.

Advocating for smaller organisations who require support when working with bodies such as London Councils, as well as supporting funding bids to GLA and others.

Leading meetings and forums to share organisational practice, develop plans to tackle economic needs and to give a voice to all our stakeholders.

Responsible Economy Newsletter, a monthly bulletin promoting the work we do with businesses, community partners and projects needing investment support

Creating partnering agreements with organisations to underpin ways of working and collaborative focuses.



Notable Examples of Collaboration

WES host a virtual **monthly Employment & Skills Provider Network Forum** with partners which regularly involves 40 – 60 people from a variety of organisations – In light of covid19 we have covered the following themes, The New Normal - the impact on services and looking forward, Emerging Jobs and the Current Labour Market, Digital Inclusion, Supporting young people and Supporting BAME communities.

The **Responsible Business Network** is a virtual monthly platform which brings together Great Estates, Business Improvement Districts, FTSE 100 companies, Developers and WCC Suppliers. The platform provides an opportunity for regular communication between businesses, Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and private sector stakeholders in the borough, to make networking more accessible, embrace our Community Investment Portfolio and where possible work together for mutual benefit. The vision is to create a responsible **business community** that makes **Westminster** a better place to live for **all**.

Advisor Academy training sessions restarted in September with sessions on an Introduction to WES for the Community Development Officers in the Regeneration Team in Church Street and Young People & Employment training delivered by Brent Foundation. In October we ran Financial Capability & Universal Credit training to upskill front-line workers on these topics and have sessions arranged for Good Record Keeping, Trauma Informed Practice and Motivational Interviewing between now and the end of 2020.



Focus: Training Courses

Short training & re-skilling courses

- ✓ Short employer led training courses in growth sectors throughout 2020/21
- ✓ Partnership between WAES and our Employment Service and working with other training providers
- ✓ Aspirational, accessible and engaging
- ✓ Accredited training leading to guaranteed interviews, live jobs and traineeships
- ✓ Support for trainees from WES Coaches and our volunteer industry mentors
- ✓ Courses: Horticulture, Public Sector, Skills for Leadership, Bike Mechanics, Construction, Childcare & Social Care



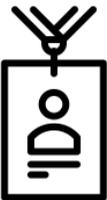
Short training & re-skilling courses – Public Sector



3 week training, Level 1
Qualification in Public Service



6 Courses for 78 residents



City of Westminster



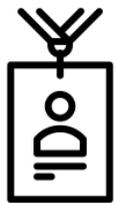
Training courses – Childcare & Social Care



3 week leading to level 1 in health and social care



6 courses training 78 residents



Vincentian Care Plus
We make your HOME CARE difference



Sagecare Ltd



Training courses – Bike Mechanics & Retail



**CYCLE
CONFIDENT**



6 weeks leading to level 2 cycle mechanic (City & Guilds)



3 courses training 30 residents



3. Targets & performance indicators

Revised targets



1000 residents accessing the service (last year 778).



400 into employment (last year 390)



840 residents with significant interventions: volunteering, training, work trials/placements, receiving financial capability and wellbeing support (last year 596).

Other indicators which we track

Beneficiary data – BAME, Disability
Ethnicity and ward

Job sustainment

Volunteers engaged with WES

4. Look ahead

Strategic priorities and key activities

Enhancing the service offer to residents

- **Increasing our Westminster Connects volunteers** to support with language skills and CV development. From Oct 2020
- Agree a strategic approach with Jobcentre Plus to **integrate more work coaches** with WES / community providers to support higher demand / new need. By December

Skills, retraining and employment opportunities for residents in growth sectors

- Build relationships with St Mary's, Cleveland Clinic and introduce a new **health and social care training course** in November.
- Open a bike repair and maintenance shop and workshop in Church Street. December
- Virtual Reality Pilot for WCC roles. January.

Ongoing service improvements

- **Evaluation and peer review:** An interim report will be produced in December 2020 and the final report will be available in April 2021.

Further information

Evaluation

The central aims of the evaluation are to **determine the effectiveness of the WES in addressing the existing gap in mainstream employment support and its capacity to generate savings.**

These aims were highlighted in the service's original business case, which puts the WES forward as an effective way to address long-term unemployment in Westminster through collaborative working and a client-centred approach.

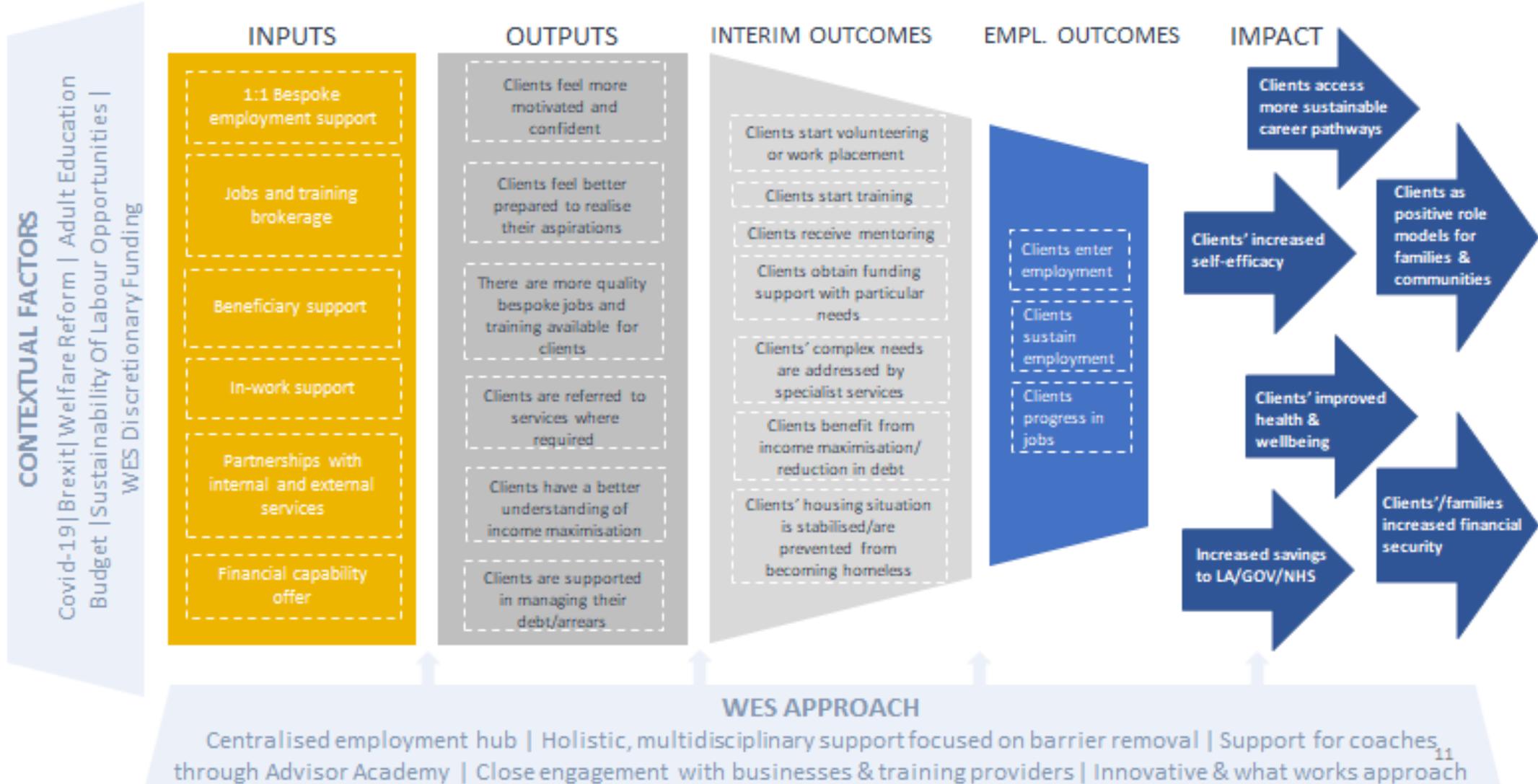
Three years following the creation of the WES, this service-wide evaluation will be guided by the following questions:

Evaluation questions

1. What have been the employment, individual and collective outcomes of the service for clients? Are they sustainable?
2. What role has the service's holistic, collaborative approach played in the achievement of its outcomes?
3. What has been the return on investment of the WES for the local authority, central government and NHS over its life cycle?

PROBLEM: High LTU rates in WCC and lack of employment support for residents with complex and multiple needs

INTERVENTION: WES



The teams in WES

We are made up of a number of different teams, each with its own focus:

- Homelessness, Employment and Learning Project (HELP)
- High Potential
- Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU)
- NEETs
- WES for All
- Financial Capability & Wellbeing
- Care Leavers
- Church Street Team
- Families and Communities Employment Service (FACES)
- Troubled Families Employment Advisors (TFEAs)

Helping residents that need our help the most

Since the Service was established in 2017 (to March 2020), we have supported over 1791 residents into employment.

Of those supported into employment, **45%** had been unemployed for 12 months or more.



**Westminster
Employment
Service**

Getting to work together

Value for money & effectiveness

WES: output per coach

We offer a high level of personalisation which is valued by our clients and given the needs of clients – many of whom have been unemployed for up to 10 years. For 2020, we've adapted our model - on average each coach will work with up to 30 clients at any one time – an increase on 2019/20 (21 per coach).

WES Benchmarks

The unit cost of a job through WES (Total Cost v Number of Jobs) represents value for money in comparison with other provision and the cost to the exchequer / local services of being unemployed. The cost per job (combining coaching and our jobs and training teams) is £6,000 (400 jobs and expenditure of £2.4m on WES). Given the client groups supported, this is on a par and better than a number of comparable programmes.

Savings to public service of helping residents into employment

- The evaluation carried out by Public Health found that **in 17/18, the WES resulted in savings of £3,649,866**. That equates to **£1.82 return for every £1 spent** (this compares to £1.40 return for every £1 invested in a similar adult employment programme in North Tyneside, for example)
- The evaluation of the HELP team in 2018 found that the team would result in **£1.1m of net public benefits for service users over 2 years (17/18 and 19/20)**

What our Service users say

From our recent Public Health evaluation, service user feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

- Clients highly value the person-centred approach adopted by our Employment Coaches, who reportedly go above and beyond to support clients with their employment, education and wider needs.
- By contrast, client's experiences of clients that had previously used an alternative employment service were not positive. Service users expressed that it was impersonal, did not tailor jobs to individual's needs and did not provide support with any element of the application process e.g. CV preparation or interview skills.



'You know the good thing with [the Coach], she's not an officer, she's a friend, you can feel free to discuss with her your situation'