

6 Monthly Update: Youth Promise Plus

To: Economy and Skills O&S Scrutiny Committee 29th January 2020

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Birmingham & Solihull Youth Promise Plus: YPP (Youth Employment Initiative) update

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the current performance of the Youth Promise Plus (YPP) project.

2. Background

2.1 Birmingham has a lot of young residents. Recent figures (November 2019) show there are 460,000 young people in the city under 25 years old, accounting for 38% of the city's population; This is significantly higher than the UK average of 30%.

2.2 The table below shows that Birmingham's young people have higher unemployment levels than those living in the wider West Midlands Combined Authority area and across the UK; DWP Job Centre data for 18 – 24 year olds shows this significant difference:

Area 18 - 24 claimants	October 2019	
	Number	Rate
Birmingham	8,775	12.1%
WMCA (3 LEPS)	21,685	8.2%
United Kingdom	226,450	5.9%

2.3 The unemployment / inactivity levels are linked to the skills gap that exists locally. The table below shows the detail for 16 - 24 year olds:

Qualifications Level	Birmingham		WMCA (3 LEPS)		United Kingdom	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
% with NVQ4+ - aged 16-24	32,000	19.1%	84,400	16.9%	1,322,300	19.0%
% with NVQ3 only - aged 16-24	50,000	29.9%	135,000	27.0%	2,025,900	29.2%
% with NVQ2 only - aged 16-24	40,200	24.0%	127,500	25.5%	1,862,700	26.8%
% with NVQ1 only - aged 16-24	17,400	10.4%	59,700	11.9%	733,700	10.6%
% with other qualifications (NVQ) - aged 20-24	10,600	6.3%	31,100	6.2%	281,600	4.1%
% with no qualifications (NVQ) - aged 16-24	16,900	10.1%	54,100	10.8%	573,000	8.2%

- 2.4 The table at 2.3 shows that Birmingham has proportionally lower numbers of young people at NVQ 1 and 2 levels. This will be partly because we have higher numbers of young people reaching NVQ 3 and above than the national average. However the gaps at Levels 1 and 2 still need to be addressed, as does the gap in the number of young people with no qualifications (10.1% compared to the UK at 8.2%).
- 2.5 Positively the numbers of young people with 'other qualifications' (generally meaning non-UK qualifications/professional qualifications that do not fit the NVQ levels) in Birmingham is strong, however this may mean that some people's qualifications are not recognised and they unemployed or under-employed.
- 2.6 The Birmingham and Solihull Youth Promise Plus (YPP) project was designed in 2015 to seek to address the levels of youth unemployment in Birmingham, it also supports skills levels as it supports gaining qualifications too. The Full Business Case was approved by Cabinet on 16 February 2016, with the aim to deliver an enhanced package of employment, education and training (EET) support to 16,610 NEET (i.e. Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people aged 15-29 years from Birmingham and Solihull.
- 2.7 The project was based on a funding package of up to £50.4m which included £33.6m (66.66%) EU funds and £16.8m (33.33%) match funds/staff time from BCC and key delivery partners.
- 2.8 Originally the project was set to a tight timescale dictated by the EU's Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funding programme, with delivery due to be completed by 31 July 2018. The project delivered as much support as possible, and at July 2018 expenditure was £25.7m and the project had engaged over 13,000 young people (well ahead of pro-rata target, which for this level of spend would have been 8,470 young people). However due to the support time needed for many young people to reach an outcome of employment, education or training, results lagged behind targets: the latest figures showed that at July 2018 we succeeded in supporting 36% of young people into employment, education and training against a target of 44%. For many projects aiming to support NEET young people, 36% would be a respectable achievement rate, but the targets related to this funding are more ambitious.
- 2.9 The progress was reported to the managing government department DWP, and an extension to the project was approved and accepted by Cabinet in January 2019. The intention is that this extension enables BCC and partners to deliver the project until October 2021 and allows enough time to support the original target number of 16,610 young people by the end of the project; achieving the target level of results. Based on evaluation of the first phase, the extension phase was redesigned to be delivered more in-house by the Delivery Partnership who are public/non-profit sector (Partner details are provided in Section 3 below) enabling an overall cost reduction of £8.4m, and giving a new total project cost of £42m.

3. Delivery Partnership

- 3.1 The Youth Promise Plus Project is delivered by a set of partners and contractors. The Council is lead partner and Accountable Body:

- 3.1.1 Our Employment and Skills service lead project management and administration, manage the delivery contracts and provide links to employers and job matching;
- 3.1.2 Birmingham Careers and Youth services provide personalised support, working with key colleagues in Education and Skills Directorate to principally target 16 – 19 year old NEET (Not in Employment/Education/Training), with some additional capacity for support for young people to the age of 25.
- 3.1.3 Birmingham Children's Trust are a partner (specifically Youth Offending Services, Children in Care and 18+ Care Leavers) and we are also starting to work with Adult Social Services to develop ways to support young people between the ages of 18 and 29 who may have additional needs to transition to employment, education or training.
- 3.1.4 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) provide a similar set of services to project participants, including travel training advice and guidance for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- 3.1.5 The Prince's Trust provides personalised support, also a range of confidence building programmes and training with national employers such as Marks and Spencer and TK MAXX, and into key sectors for young people such as digital and creative.
- 3.1.6 University Hospital Birmingham provides training; work experience and pathway support into NHS healthcare employment and is expanding to new training sites across Birmingham and Solihull.
- 3.1.7 The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office supports the project with match funding, and links with West Midlands Police, as well as joining the rest of the partners and other key stakeholders (such as Job Centre Plus) on the project Steering Group.
- 3.2 This project is delivered from many locations across Birmingham and Solihull including libraries, youth centres, community centres, faith centres, job centres, training providers and also participants' preferred meeting places such as home / café etc. The outreach activity includes working in shopping centres and door knocking (e.g. where young people are on the Council's NEET list and cannot be contacted).
- 3.3 The extension phase of the project includes two contracted services;
 - 3.3.1 The first contract which has been won by Change Grow Live (CGL), the company which also runs the area's drugs and alcohol support on behalf of the mental health trust. CGL employs 11 intensive support mentors to support young people with some of the most significant barriers to employment, education and training. The 11 staff are based in West Midlands Police Integrated Offender Management Teams, at the Youth Offending Service sites across Birmingham and Solihull, and with the Care Leavers teams in Birmingham.
 - 3.3.2 The second contract is for additional mental health advice and support to be provided alongside the pathway support provision of the main partners.

Through analysis of project data, this additional mental health support is likely to be needed by at least 9% of NEET young people, and this is likely to be an underestimate. This is part of a wider issue: DWP figures show that the proportion of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants with mental and behavioural disorders is increasing over time – up from 35% in 2010 to over half at September 2019. This is more prevalent among younger claimants: 72% of Employment and Support Allowance claimants aged 18-24 are presenting mental and behavioural disorders. The project team have consulted with the mental health trust and other providers to ensure there is no duplication caused by this contract. The procurement process is underway with the expectation that delivery will commence in March 2020.

4. Current performance

- 4.1 Project performance data is produced quarterly. The latest figures at 30 September 2019 show the project is achieving; with cumulative spend to date at 97% of target, and performance against all 17 cumulative output delivery measures being within tolerance levels, the lowest score being 88%. A number of measures show project performance at over 100%, including for levels of support to young people who are BAME, lone parents or disabled.

5. Delivery challenges and successes

- 5.1 The lowest performance levels are related to engaging and supporting Inactive young people - these are young people who are not actively seeking work (if they are, they are classed as 'unemployed') or not available for work (such as having caring responsibilities). Inactive young people are therefore much less likely to be involved with the job centre or any other related front facing service, so they are harder to find and engage.
- 5.2 We have an Inactive Action Plan and have improved our inactive engagement levels from 8% in the first phase (when we focussed on work with job centres) to the 42% at September. This needs to increase further to around 70% - 80% to meet the overall targets, which will be very challenging to achieve. Therefore we are taking all possible steps to reach and support this target cohort; Our outreach work is extensive, with the project staff working at local venues across Birmingham and Solihull including faith centres and community centres, and using social media and local radio to promote the project support to local communities. The project staff are also working closely with other providers, such as those funded by West Midlands Combined Authority to provide local advice and guidance, aligning support in a co-ordinated way to enable citizens to benefit from seamless support, and not be confused by conflicting offers.
- 5.3 Appendix 1 of this report provides some very detailed monitoring of equalities within the project, the commentary below summarises some key factors:
- 5.3.1 By Gender – the project is not yet meeting its stretch target of 48% female participation (currently delivering at 41%). The detailed breakdown by ward at Appendix 1 shows where young women are being engaged, and (in relative terms compared to the average across the project) how successful they have been in gaining employment, education or training results. Evaluation of the

project in 2018 showed that overall females are slightly more successful than males in reaching results.

5.3.2 By Ethnicity grouping (BAME) - the project is exceeding its target for engagement, and is far exceeding (by almost 20%) the 2011 census figures for BAME population. Overall BAME participants are exceeding the general success rate for Birmingham participants.

5.3.3 By Disability status (self – declared disability) - The employment rate for people with a disability in the Birmingham and Solihull area is low at 49.6% compared to 54.2% nationally (at September 2019). The project is exceeding its target for supporting young people with a disability, however they are less likely to reach employment education or training, with a success rate of 26.5% so far, which is why we are looking to continue to improve our provision.

5.3.4 By ward –the project delivery by ward is listed, Table A shows wards ranked by % project activity and this is overlaid by the grey rows which denote wards that are in the top 10% most deprived in the country. The table shows that most YPP delivery is undertaken in these more deprived wards (i.e. with the highest level of project support is at the top). It also shows the relative support success rates per ward (compared to the project average). Table B shows how the ranked distribution of the project support in Table A compares to the distribution of young claimants registered at Job Centres. This gives us a proxy indication as to whether our support is in the right wards (though the project supports 16 – 29 year olds and Job Centre data is only for 18 – 24). The red colour coding in Table B shows where the ranking of project support is significantly lower than the ranking of job centre need – this is particularly evident in Bromford and Hodge Hill and Ward End wards. We continually seek to target activity where it is most needed, for example the project is now linking with another BCC project called Future Parks Accelerator to promote jobs and skills outcomes in Ward End.

6 Next Steps

6.3 The project partnership will continue to seek to perform to project targets and reach young people to give them the support they need on their path to employment, education and training. We will seek to maximise the equalities impacts by analysing our data and adapting the project to meet needs. Our new specialist contract provision to support young people's mental health will be launched this quarter. The next report to scrutiny is due in July 2020.