

# APPENDIX 1

## EVALUATION OF SOUTHWARK WORKS SERVICE, 2015-18

### Summary

1. This appendix provides a summary of findings which inform the commissioning of the new Southwark Works employment support framework, including the following:
  - 2015-2018 performance
  - Service user, caseworker and employer feedback
  - Labour market analysis
  - Council colleague (departmental) feedback
  - Current provider feedback
  - Incorporating the apprenticeship offer in Southwark Works
  - Incorporating an in work progression support offer into Southwark Works
2. Performance monitoring of the existing Southwark Works contracts demonstrates that this was successful at delivering (between July 2015 and March 2018):
  - 2,363 job outcomes
  - 956 sustained job outcomes
3. In 2017 an evaluation of the first two years of delivery took place. A service user survey demonstrated that:
  - Hours/types of job: The most prevalent number of hours survey participants who had secured employment worked per week was more than 35 hours (34%), followed by 16-35 hours a week (31%), less than 16 hours a week (13%), 35 hours a week (11%) and finally flexible / guaranteed hours (10%). Most Southwark Works participants had secured a permanent contract (52%), just under half (48%) were working under a flexible arrangement (including temporary, fixed term or zero hours).
  - Service user feedback: 86.2% of survey participants who had gained employment agree or strongly agree that the Southwark Works service helped them find work. Non-employment measures such as confidence, being able to deal with setbacks and knowing where to find other help and support were measures that participants were more likely to agree with.

### Southwark Works caseworker insights

4. Caseworkers, who provide direct employment support to residents and employers, have given the following insights into things which reduce barriers to entry to employment:
  - Improved ICT training, recognising that a lack of basic digital skills were a barrier to finding work for many of their clients.
  - Improved affordable childcare would eliminate a barrier to employment for many of their clients and allow the caseworkers to achieve better outcomes.
  - Improved finance support for interview clothing and to make transitional payments until the first salary payment.
  - More workshops / training on budgeting and money management.

- Case workers are able to meet employer needs whilst helping raise awareness of the barriers specific cohorts face and challenge recruitment practices they believed disadvantaged their clients.
- Some face multiple barriers to employment and a reduction in available support services, particularly English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision within the borough, has made providing sufficient support very challenging.

## **Employer feedback**

5. Employers have given the following feedback:

- The majority of employers used the service to employ staff and connect with the local work force. Employers also utilise workshops and training for employers, employees, and candidates.
- The majority of employers had enjoyed a highly positive experience of working with the Southwark Works team and appreciated their expertise and flexibility, but some had received interview candidates who were not suitable for the job and a small number of employers mentioned that responsiveness could be improved.
- 94% of employers said they are likely to work with Southwark Works again in the future.
- Employers reported the following benefits of using the service: financial savings through saved time, an increased likelihood of achieving a highly skilled workforce, experiencing a sense of social value, and an increased likelihood of meeting Section 106 employment targets.

6. It is evident that a large part of the success of the framework lies in having an effective network coordination function which supports both clients and providers. There is therefore considerable value in continuing the Southwark Works Network Coordination contract providing operations management and support to the network which goes above and beyond what the council can provide via contract monitoring.

7. The 'hub' office is an important customer facing service which allows residents to easily access the service and move towards employment, or a better job, in a friendly environment. The hub office and management service is also a key recruitment tool for local employers. The years of expertise that have been developed via this provision mean that even if the support an individual requires cannot be accommodated via Southwark Works contracts, effective referral into local provision offered via VCS, public or private sector organisations can be made.

8. On the basis of previous performance and service evaluations and reviews, a dual approach is proposed for the continued investment in employment services delivered under the Southwark Works brand from July 2019, combining a framework for specialist services targeted at priority groups/employment growth sectors with a management and co-ordination service to ensure the most efficient collaboration between providers, ease of access for service users (and a single point of contact for employers).

## **Labour market analysis**

9. The latest data shows that Southwark's employment rate is at a historic high at 79.4%, higher than both the regional (74.2%) and national rates (75%). This suggests economic stability yet Southwark has a higher unemployment rate (5.8%) than London (5%) and we know there are still groups who are disproportionately affected by unemployment, under-employment and the rise in insecure work and poor pay

progression; those with lower level skills, caring responsibilities, health conditions and young people in particular.

10. Southwark was one of the first boroughs to move to Universal Credit (UC), starting with London Bridge Jobcentre in November 2015 and rolled out to full service in the whole borough from October 2016. Prior to this borough level DWP data, which gave a breakdown of the core out of work benefits (Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA)) and reasons for claim (health, lone parent etc.) was available and used to gain a better understanding of the needs of residents who benefit from employment support services. Now that these 'legacy' benefits are in the process of being phased out, as more people move to UC, this data is no longer available. Instead we have access to UC data which shows the number of claimants by 'conditionality regime'.
11. This data shows that a total of 15,845 Southwark residents claimed UC in May 2018. 64.0% of these are not in employment, 36.0% are in employment. Current advice from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is that the 'managed migration' of those who remain on legacy benefits will take place from 2019. Those on these benefits will be informed by the DWP that their benefits will be stopped and invited to claim UC. It is considered that there is a significant risk of those receiving these messages failing to act upon them, which could have a negative impact on their income and ability to pay their rent and subsequently retain their homes. The council will continue to work closely with the DWP to limit the impact of this change on residents.
12. The number of lone parents claiming out of work benefits fell from 4,750 in 2011 to 2,710 in 2016. The claim rate for Southwark for the most recent data available was 1.2% of the working age population, compared to 1% of the London population. The drop off in 2016 is likely to be as a result of people moving onto Universal Credit.
13. Current council commissioned support targets those out of work and on unemployment benefits. Evidence from the above analysis and feedback from current Southwark Works providers and the tri-borough partnership Routeways programme suggests that there is an increased demand for employment support from people in work and on low incomes and those who do not wish to claim benefits.

### **Council colleague feedback**

14. Officers in teams across the council have been consulted on the development of the service specifications within the framework including officers in the following teams: Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Education, Youth Offending Services, Culture, Housing and Modernise and Adult Learning. The Clinical Commissioning Group has also been consulted. Overall there has been a positive response to the Framework and buy-in from across the council and other partners to be involved in the procurement of the future Framework and support the delivery of the contracts by integrating support offers with core services.
15. Key points from these discussions are:

#### **Support offer**

- Southwark Works should offer 'one front door' access with specific referral points for specialist services
- Expanding the employers Southwark Works engages with to ensure the quality and breadth of work experiences and work opportunities
- Supporting clients through knockbacks and managing client expectations of a job application process

- Addressing wider barriers to employment through 1-2-1 support; tailoring the support for the individuals and ensuring that they are matched with the service that can best support and provide for their needs, not just the one that is likely to provide a job output / apprenticeship

### **Skills**

- Focus on lower level vocational and functional skills including CV building, interview preparation (including timekeeping and expected behaviours), filling in application forms and presentation skills
- Looking at ways to overcome the barriers created as a result of no Maths and English basic skills qualification (particularly for younger clients and those who are seeking an apprenticeship)

### **Contract structure**

- Consider ways to include flexibility with defining progress towards a job outcome – volunteering, work experience etc. These are all beneficial to the individual and part of the process of eventually finding long-term / full time employment
- Making best use of contacts and ideas within the network and through council services, ultimately ensuring that opportunities are shared and better linked up and that referral pathways are clear and work for the individual

### **Current provider feedback**

16. An online survey was sent to current contract managers. Feedback was sought from both managers and caseworkers who support clients. Key points from the provider survey are:
17. **Changes in employment support demands:** Providers report that more clients have complex/multiple needs and they see more clients with undiagnosed mental health issues. Clients also need help with claiming and maintaining benefits and wider financial issues such as debt. There has been a rise in the number of clients who need help with biometric cards to prove their right to work.
18. **Changes in skills demands:** Often Southwark Works clients have basic to intermediate skills requirements. More recently, clients have needed self employment support, support to get into creative industries as well as support with ESOL. Positively, providers report less unmet demand in construction skills – as a consequence of the Southwark Construction Skills Centre.
19. **Quality work:** Current providers seek to help their clients into quality roles that meet their aspirations; however this is not always possible. Providers would appreciate resource to help them engage with employers on their client needs to work with employers on adapting recruitment and HR policies to allow for more vulnerable residents to secure quality jobs.
20. **Measuring impact:** Current providers agree with the council that there is a need to capture the wider outcomes of Southwark Works support.