



Report of the Resources Manager, Regeneration Service

Date: 26 March 2009

Subject: Activities to assist people into work

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

On 3rd July 2008 the City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board agreed to carry out an inquiry into skills in Leeds with particular reference to:

- Skills targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan (incorporating the Leeds Local Area Agreement (LAA))
- Skills targets in the Leeds City Region Multi Area agreement (MAA)
- The future of Further Education in Leeds

At its meeting in February, in order to understand the full picture, the Board requested further information on provision available to support those people who have left school with no qualifications or with qualifications at Level 1 only. The report received by the Board at its meeting in February outlined some of the provision delivered through the Access to Employment scheme and planned through the Skills for Jobs programme. This report outlines how partners work together to tackle worklessness in Leeds and to commission and coordinate provision.

1.0. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1. Leeds has a working age population of 499,400 people. This report provides information on what is being done to help those who have no qualifications and are not in work. These people tend to fall into three main claimant groups – those claiming Incapacity Benefit (some 30,020 people in Leeds) and Job Seekers (19,077 people). Lone parents on Income Support account for 9,650 people from the working age population. *(Figs correct as at Aug 08)*

2.0 Background

- 2.1. As part of its Inquiry into Skills, this Scrutiny Board has asked to look at provision available in Leeds to help those with no, or lower level skills, improve their skills and to access work.

3.0. Main Issues

- 3.1. JobCentre Plus has the brief nationally for delivering and commissioning activity to address worklessness and to assist those who are losing their jobs as a result of the recession. Others such as the Learning and Skills Council and Colleges have a remit to increase skill levels.
- 3.2. In order to coordinate a response to worklessness, and to implement a strategic approach to commissioning services, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods has established a Worklessness Strategic Outcomes Group. This provides the opportunity for key stakeholders to work in partnership to make better use of public resources to tackle worklessness in our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The Group is chaired by JobCentre Plus and attended by Yorkshire Forward, the Learning and Skills Council, NHS Leeds, the City Council and a representative from the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (VCFS).
- 3.3. The Terms of Reference for the Group include:-
- reviewing the evidence base to agree shared priorities and target beneficiaries.
 - assessing existing and planned provision to identify potential duplication and gaps.
 - drawing up an action plan to achieve the improvement priorities and targets in the Leeds Strategic Plan to reduce worklessness with a focus on the most deprived neighbourhoods.
 - to advise on resource allocations and commissioning for the provision of activity to reduce worklessness (jointly agreed specs and commissioning processes that focus on particular client groups and localities / decisions panels).
 - to monitor progress towards achievement of the above targets, impact and effectiveness of interventions.
- 3.4. The work of the Group directs commissioning of additional worklessness activity to focus on those most disadvantaged in the labour market. The Group work together to identify and access funds to support interventions which will assist people to access work. An example of this is the work that is taking place to submit a bid for funding to Yorkshire Forward. This will include work with employers to secure job guarantees and to respond to the recession.
- 3.5. Where funds are available locally the Group commissions activity such as the Access to Employment and Skills for Jobs activity described in a previous report to this Scrutiny Board to assist local people into work. Providers for this activity include the VCFS who have experience of working with, and engaging people, in their communities.
- 3.6. LCC Regeneration Service through Jobs and Skills provides targeted employability and signposting services for workless residents furthest from the labour market. This includes links with area management, recruitment of Community Engagement Officers, work with key stakeholders and with target groups.
- 3.7. The work of the Strategic Outcomes Group is supported by Worklessness Sub Groups which cover the three area management areas. The Sub Groups are managed by Job Centre Plus and bring together a number of stakeholders and providers across sectors. Action plans have

been drawn up for each of the worst performing neighbourhoods to identify provision required locally to achieve the targets outlined in the Leeds Strategic Plan.

4.0. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the City and Regional Partnerships Scrutiny Board note the contents of this report and receive presentations from JobCentre Plus, Learning Partnerships, Archway and LCC Jobs and Skills about the work they are delivering in Leeds to assist people with low level, or no skills, to access work.