

Subject:	Addressing Barriers to Employment for Disabled People and those with Long Term Health Conditions in Brighton and Hove		
Date of Meeting:	10th October 2016		
Report of:	Acting Director of Public Health		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The purpose of the paper is to report the work of the city's Equality and Inclusion Partnership (EQuIP) in relation to disabled people in the city. In October 2015 the partnership completed a [disability snapshot report](#). This report provides an accessible overview of statistics about disabled people living, working or studying in Brighton & Hove. The ultimate aim of the report being to create a shared sense of priorities across the partnership.
- 1.2 Following scrutiny of the snapshot report the partnership agreed to focus in on barriers to accessing and maintaining employment as a critical issue for disabled people. Approximately two-thirds of working age people receiving DWP benefits in Brighton & Hove in 2014 were in receipt of benefits due to poor health or disability (66%), this is above the South East (61%) and England (59%). Twelve per cent of those whose day-to-day activities are limited 'a lot' because of a long-term health problem or disability are in employment, far below the employment rate among residents whose activities are not limited (70%).
- 1.3 Improving employment chances for disabled people and individuals with a long term health condition is both a national and local commitment and not without its challenges. In their 2015 manifesto the Conservative Party pledged to halve the disability employment gap by 2020. The gap has only reduced by 0.1 percentage points since the General Election. Halving the gap in employment rates in one Parliament would require 1.12 million more disabled people in work and increasing the employment rate of disabled people by 16.4% over five years. Locally the labour Administration has created a lead member for mental health. It has also initiated a Fairness Commission which specifically said that:
 - 1.3.1 "All employers should recognise and utilise the experience that older workers and disabled people can bring to workplaces and they should adopt recruitment and training offers in a way to up-skill and side skill existing or new older and disabled staff and utilise their skills to train others".

- 1.3.2 “The Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus) should improve the employment support it gives to disabled people, particularly Deaf people and those with Autistic Spectrum Conditions”.
- 1.4 In January and February 2016 a cross sector sub-group of the partnership drafted and released a tender for research into the barriers to employment with the requirement for a set of practical, realistic actions to help disabled people and those with a long term health condition secure and sustain employment. The proposal is that the actions are included in the action plan of the new City Employment and Skills Plan (CESP), under objective 3, following its adoption by Full Council.
- 1.5 On 22nd September the Economic Development and Skills committee recommended the CESP to Full Council for adoption. Assuming Full Council approves the CESP four action groups will be established to deliver the CESP action plan.
- 1.6 Appendix 1 is the full research report by the appointed consultant Learning and Work Institute on addressing barriers to work for disabled people and those with long term health conditions in Brighton and Hove including the recommended actions (section 7 of appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee welcomes the research and its findings and approves the recommendations.
- 2.2 That committee refers the research report to the Children, Young People and Skills Committee and the Economic Development and Culture Committee for approval and requests the incorporation of the recommendations into the CESP action plan.
- 2.3 That committee refers the research report to the Learning and Skills & Employment Partnership and the City Management Board for consideration as part of their responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the CESP action plan.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

26,000 Brighton & Hove residents are disabled and out of work

16% per cent of Brighton & Hove residents have their day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months

Of the 3.6 million disabled people who are out of work nationally, nearly half (47%) are neither looking for work nor available for work; three times the rate for those who are not disabled.

Disabled people are nearly four times as likely to be unemployed or involuntarily out of work as non-disabled people

Disabled adults are also nearly three times as likely as non-disabled adults to have no formal qualifications.

Employment rates are lowest for those with more significant impairments, for older disabled people and for those with mental health conditions.

Brighton & Hove lags behind the region and country, with a larger 'gap' between disabled people and non-disabled

66% of ESA claimants are in the support group – they receive no work or health related support.

There is also a higher prevalence of mental health conditions in the ESA Work Related Activity Group in Brighton & Hove (58%) compared to South East (42%) and Britain (50%)

- 3.1 In 2015 the city commissioned Rocket Science to refresh its City Employment and Skills Plan. The City has benefited from economic growth with a strong financial services sector, vibrant visitor economy, emerging dominance in the creative and digital sectors and a centre for learning and innovation. However, here is evidence that this growth has not benefited everybody. Youth unemployment although reducing is still high and there is deeply entrenched unemployment for some residents and increasing polarisation between wealth and poverty. One of the Plan's three priorities is "no one left behind" and one of its four objectives is "Making our services, providers and funding work better to help those furthest from the labour market".
- 3.2 With the development of the CESP in progress and the compilation of the 2015 disability snapshot report it was apparent that a more detailed analysis of the challenges faced by disabled people should be explored and what more or differently could be done. What was working or hindering employers hiring disabled people? Which support services were working better for disabled people to secure and sustain employment? How could and would changes in the welfare system help disabled people? Equip agreed an approach to answer these questions.
- 3.3 Following a competitive tendering process, overseen by a sub-group of the Equality and Inclusion Partnership the consultancy firm National Learning and Work Institute was awarded the research contract. Starting in May 2016 the research was completed in in early September. The methodology for the research is outline in section 1 of appendix 1. The research was jointly funded by the city council and Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group in recognition of the benefits of employment to physical and mental health of all

individuals and especially individuals with a disability and/or a long term and/or fluctuating health condition.

It should be noted that the sub-group agreed early on in the drafting of the tender that the research should focus on exploring disabled people's experience of and barriers to 'open employment' and did not include a focus on the benefits and challenges of supported businesses.

3.4 The research suggests two key objectives with three enablers. The two objectives are as follows:

- Increasing employment: support to prepare for, look for and take up work
- Maintain employment: Support to stay in work and/or return to work after absence

The three enablers are:

- Partnership working and information sharing
- Employer engagement and support
- Effective engagement with disadvantaged groups

Under both the objectives and the enablers are one or two recommended actions with details on how these could be achieved.

See section 7 in appendix 1 for full details.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 Alternative option - not accept the research findings and recommendations. This is not an option because the CESP is reliant on this research and a similar one into the barriers to employment experienced by BME people in the city to ensure that its actions under "no one left behind" are meaningful and will make a difference to these two groups.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 As part of the research a wide range of stakeholders were engaged including disabled people in work, out of work and in placements. Engagement of employers both large and small/micro and public and private sector was a critical element of the commission. In fact more so than engaging with disabled people, since there has been considerable engagement and research nationally and locally regarding the issues and barriers faced by disabled people from their perspective but very little in comparison with employers.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 As the research demonstrates disabled people fare very badly in the labour. Only 49.7% of disabled people are in employment compared to 79.5% of those who are not disabled. The employment rate for people with a mental health condition

is just 39.9%. Nearly half of all new ESA claims are now due to mental health or behavioural condition.

- 6.2 Moreover the research found that whilst there was excellent support provided to disabled people either looking for and/or in work, and also to employers, for example the council's supported employment service, there was low level employer awareness of the support available to either themselves or to their disabled staff. Also that there was little awareness between services of each other's provision and in particular that there was limited referrals and relationship between health care and employment support.
- 6.3 As noted in section 3 the research found three areas of focus under two overarching objectives, and developed specific recommendations in response to the findings. It is also worth noting that the recommendations involve and are for a range of agencies in the city across the sectors. Therefore the report will also be presented to the Equality and Inclusion Partnership for consideration and response. Furthermore, that the recommendations range from very practical, pragmatic steps to the need to give consideration to more significant system change that would be required to achieve the step change in employment of disabled people.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. The cost of research was funded from within existing resources in the Communities, Equality and Third Sector team and the NHC Clinical Commissioning Group. Any financial implications associated with the delivery of the recommendations set out in the report will be assessed within relevant future reports or business cases and appropriate approval for funding will be sought where required.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Mike Bentley

Date: 27/09/16

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 This Report asks the Committee to note and refer on research commissioned by the authority pursuant to its responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, including its duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This Report raises no additional legal implications.

Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson

Date: 27.9.16

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Disability is one of the nine characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Through this piece of research, its findings and recommendations we are seeking to ensure that disabled people are not unfairly treated or discriminated against in

the labour market either consciously or unconsciously and the most effective action is being taken to support individuals into employment.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 Sustainable communities are inclusive communities where all individuals have equality of opportunity and are not hindered by their circumstances or characteristics, and everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential and play an active role, economically and socially in the city. It is well documented that being employed in satisfying work has a considerable impact on individuals, their families and local communities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Addressing Barriers to Work for disabled People and those with Long Term Health Conditions in Brighton and Hove, Research Report, Learning and Work Institute, September 2016.

Background Documents

1. Disability in Brighton and Hove 2015

Appendix 1

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.2 The risk of not approving the recommendations and including them in the CESP action plan is that practical and tangible actions that will help improve the employment opportunities for disabled people will not be taken forward. There is a risk that the resources and change needed to achieve the actions will not be forthcoming or easy to secure. To mitigate this risk, the recommendations will be included in the CESP action plan and taken forward as part of the four action groups established for each CESP objective. The report is a key opportunity to ensure that resources in the city, across different sectors, are being best deployed to help employers hire disabled people and people with long term and/or fluctuating health conditions.

Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 A critical driver for the commission of the research was the well-documented impact of employment on individual health and well-being and significant difference in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled residents due as a direct result of their disability and/or long term/fluctuating health condition.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 The work and the recommendations directly support the council's corporate plan priority to increase equality. They also impact on other organisations in the city not only in terms of how they may change their approaches and/or the allocation of resources but also the demand on their services. For example, GPs may well see a reduction in visits from some patients who are getting and keeping work because they are receiving better support to manage their fluctuating health conditions and at work both they and the employer are receiving help to make reasonable adjustments for that person. Thus the report will also be presented to the Equality and Inclusion Partnership for consideration and response.

