

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES OR AUTISM

To: **Adults Committee**

Meeting Date: **13th July 2017**

From: **Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, Children, Families and Adults**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To consider the employment strategy for young people and adults with learning disabilities or autism**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to agree the strategy and to comment on the proposal to develop a business case to the Transformation Fund for additional capacity to deliver on this agenda**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** People with learning disabilities or autism tell us that they, like most of the population, want to work. Employment is also one of the best ways of achieving real social inclusion. However many people with a learning disability or autism have difficulty getting a job.
- 1.2** In Cambridgeshire work has started to improve the chances of people with a learning disability or autism getting into employment but more needs to be done. Therefore a draft strategy was presented to Adults Committee in January 2017. Members noted the progress made on the draft strategy and agreed to consider the strategy again once an engagement and consultation process had been carried out. This has been done and the strategy has been agreed by all stakeholders.
- 1.3** The strategy looks at the current situation; describes the barriers to employment and proposes ways of overcoming these barriers. There is an action plan at the end of the strategy which details how such proposals will be carried out.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1** Paid employment is beneficial for people in terms of a higher income, better health outcomes and improved self-esteem and social interaction. For disabled people this is all the more important because they are more likely than the general population to have lower incomes, poorer health and be socially excluded.
- 2.2** However people with disabilities are much less likely than the general population to be in paid employment. Of 1527 adults of working age with a learning disability known to social care in Cambridgeshire who had a social care review in 2015/16 only 38 (2.5%) were in employment. For 2016/17 the provisional figure is 23 (1.5%) although this figure would rise to 86 (5.6%) if everyone had an annual review. For people on the autistic spectrum about 15% are employed. This compares with a national employment rate of 74% for the general population.

There are various reasons for this which are listed below:

- Lack of accessible transport
- Difficulty in accessing online recruitment processes
- Lack of understanding from employers
- Don't have the necessary skills or qualifications
- Don't expect to get a job
- Pay may reduce benefits
- Lack of confidence to take part in interviews
- Job advertisements application forms not in easy read format
- Need support through the whole application process and also when in work
- Lack of suitable jobs

2.3 Although there are various initiatives in Cambridgeshire to address these problems, more needs to be done to increase the levels of employment amongst this population. Therefore this employment strategy has been drawn up to propose ways of addressing these issues. A SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time limited) action plan is included at the end of the strategy to show how these proposals will be carried forward:

1. Improved recording of employment status of people known to social care
2. Enable more disabled people to be employed by the County Council, for example by reviewing existing recruitment procedures
3. Health and Social Care providers commissioned by the County Council to be encouraged to employ more people with learning disabilities or autism
4. The Learning Disability Partnership to create more job opportunities and strengthen the capacity to increase the numbers of people in employment. This increased capacity would be drawn from both in-house Provider Services and the Young Adults Team. It would be complemented by externally commissioned services such as the Autism Support Manager Service and would work jointly with the Adult Learning and Skills team.
5. Ensure employment is a priority for applications to the County Councils Innovation Fund.
6. The County Council to provide clear advice and information about employment and training opportunities in the county
7. Ensure that employment is promoted as a positive outcome for children and young people who have Education Health and Care (EHC) plans or SEN (Special Educational Need) support
8. Prioritise employment and travel training in support planning
9. Extend the Total Transport initiative across the county
10. Improve links between Adult Social Care and Adult Learning and Skills in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in order to maximise opportunities for people with learning disabilities who are supported by adult social care and other young people with learning disabilities and/or autism who need support to access and gain education, training and employment.
11. Review the Disabled Bus Pass to extend the hours of operation

3. TRANSFORMATION FUND PROPOSAL

- 3.1** The Strategy presented to Committee outlines a comprehensive programme of work to support the employment prospects of people with learning disabilities and autism. It will be delivered by the effort and contributions of teams across the County Council. To ensure we coordinate this collective effort and give this agenda the dedicated focus it needs, it is proposed that we develop the business case for employing a lead project role for the Strategy.
- 3.2** If this approach is supported by the Committee, the proposal would be to apply to the County Council's Transformation Fund to meet the cost of the lead role on a time-limited basis for one year. The proposal would therefore form part of the development of the business plan for 2018/19 reported to Service Committees in the autumn. General Purposes Committee would scrutinise the investment of Transformation Funding following the input from Adult Committee, testing in particular the confidence

of the financial return on investment.

- 3.3 The cost of employing the lead role would be circa £50k (including on-costs) and it would be beneficial if the agenda were also supported by an allocation of resource for workforce development, training and practice re-design work of approximately £20k.
- 3.4 The business case for the total investment of circa £70k would be set against the potential for recurrent savings to local authority budgets which would arise if we are successful in helping more people with learning disabilities and autism into employment. In particular if people are working then they are less likely to also require day service support. Modelling the cost of reduced day support provision (for example day support for 10 service users with lower needs would be approximately £1,000 per week) allows us to estimate a potential saving which might be derived. Initial modelling focussed on people accessing in-house day services suggests a maximum of £266k in costs which might be avoided if success rate were very high. In addition to the day care cohort there will also potentially be elements of support for people with autism and young people transitioning from children's service which could be mitigated by more successful work to support employment. We do need to apply some caution to these estimates as there are significant challenges to overcome in supporting employment on a sustainable basis for people with learning disabilities and autism and so assuming a success rate of around 50% with those we engage, potentially a savings estimate of around £150k to £200k might be more likely. This transformation fund bid would also need to be linked to the wider review of in-house day service provision which is underway to ensure all costs and savings are appropriately accounted for.
- 3.5 The financial modelling will be refined further as the business case develops but there is confidence that this work will deliver some financial return. The level of savings will be comparatively modest but the business case will also highlight the potentially transformative effect on the life of each person we successfully support into employment.
- 3.6 The function and focus of the lead post would be;
- to pull the public sector together around this agenda – forming the partnerships that can deliver on a sustainable basis.
 - identify which roles in which teams and organisations should be part of this work
 - identify the most effective ways to support people into employment and agree the practices, pathways and ways of working across teams and partners
 - develop and deliver training to Learning Disability Partnerships and other staff groups
 - identify the service users who could benefit and engage them
 - project manage the delivery of the strategy
 - develop and deliver an evaluation framework for this agenda – building the business case for phases of work
- 3.7 The post-holder would have one year to establish a sustainable model with the intention to embed this work in the work of County Council teams and partners, so that we continue to deliver in this priority area without the need for any ongoing additional

local authority capacity.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The following bullet point set out details of implications identified by officers:

- More disabled people become economically active which is good for them and for the local economy

4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Disabled people are likely to be healthier and more independent if they are in employment.

4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Disabled people generally have lower income and worse health outcomes than the general population and having greater numbers in employment will help to address these disadvantages

5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in Section 3

5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in Section 3

5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The strategy is in line with 'Valuing People Now' Department of Health (2007) and compliant with the 'Adult Autism Strategy: Statutory Guidance' Department of Health (2015).

5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The aim of the strategy is to increase the numbers of people with a learning disability or autism in paid employment as employment levels are low amongst this group of people.

5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

5.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

- Increasing the numbers of people with learning disability or autism in paid employment will improve the health prospects of this group whose health outcomes are generally worse than the general population

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Chris Malyon
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Tracy Gurney
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Tracy Gurney
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Kate Parker

Source Documents	Location
Cambridgeshire Employment Strategy and Action Plan for People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism 2017-2020.	Appendix 1 Copies are also available in Members' Group Rooms