

# Barnet Council Employment and Skills Midyear Report – April to September 2021

## Introduction

Barnet's first Employment and Skills Action Plan was approved by Housing and Growth Committee in June 2021. The Action Plan defines our priorities and directs delivery of programmes and activities that focus on a joined-up, multi-agency approach to boosting employment and productivity in the borough.

There are four key priorities in the Action Plan. Under each of these four priorities, the actions are split into "now" (this year), "soon" (the next 1-2 years) and "later" (2-4 years).



Activities and outcomes delivered against these four priority areas between June and October 2021 are described below.

### 1.1 Supporting young people and maximise opportunities for care leavers

June saw a tour of the Brent Cross Town site for care leavers, with presentations from developers and contractors on careers in construction for local young people. Of the 7 Barnet attendees 3 have so far secured a graduate or apprenticeship job, including an apprentice groundworker, Trainee Civil Engineer and Site Administration at Brent Cross West. 2 of the 3 roles were taken up by young women from BAME backgrounds.

The Employment and Skills Team are supporting Argent Related at Brent Cross Town to develop and strengthen their contractor requirements to maximise opportunities at all stages of the development.

A Railway Course was launched on Dollis Valley seeing 15 students enrolled with classes booked to start in October. The course provides an entry route to jobs and careers with Network Rail and includes bespoke e-learning, technical assessments, and support to apply for jobs.

Barnet Council have actively supported bids for Mayors Academy Hubs for Health led by LB Islington & Green Skills with West London Alliance and West London College. If successful, the hubs will provide support, skills training and jobs in these sectors, prioritising young people and those furthest from the labour market.

Between April and September 2021 construction developments across the borough provided opportunities for 57 apprenticeships; and the Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Care Leavers programme engaged with 101 care leavers with 20 moving into employment, 2 securing apprenticeships and 20 starting education or training. The Risk of NEETS programme (RON) engaged 253.

The council's Kickstart programme was launched in January 2021.

## **1.2 Routes into Construction (RIC) developed to better meet the needs of participants and employers**

July saw a successful tour and talk hosted at Brent Cross Town by Argent and Galldris. Participants from the Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) Routes into Construction (RIC) programme attended, and work experience placements have been offered. Galldris offered a structured site visit experience for students at Whitefields and Finchley Catholic School.

Our delivery partners Cherry Tree began working with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) to provide Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) training for RIC participants in advance of applications for construction jobs.

The BELS team have continued to actively engage with developers.

## **1.3 Encourage greater collaboration between specialist youth service providers through facilitating joint funding bids to enable smoother transitions for 16 to 24 year olds**

BELS (Barnet Education and Learning Service) are working towards establishing a Barnet Youth Board to bring together providers and encourage a more collaborative approach and increase knowledge of specialisms across the borough.

## **1.4 Review approaches to Section 106-funded and other apprenticeships to ensure they are having maximum positive impact with a strong focus on 18 to 24 year olds**

The council are leading discussions between Employment and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATA) towards a new model for shared apprenticeships; and are also working with the West London Alliance (WLA) to explore options for a west London shared apprenticeship programme across WLA boroughs.

The council have initiated liaison with the Cross Industry Construction Apprenticeship Task Force (CCATF).

Apprenticeship Training Agency Joe Brennan Training have been engaged to provide apprenticeships on the Millbrook Park regeneration area as a pilot option for moving apprentices between sites. Joe Brennan Training now have access to Apprenticeship Levy from a range of sources that could be used locally, using the London Progression Collaboration (LPC) model for transferring Apprenticeship Levy to Smaller Businesses. The first 2 Apprenticeships are planned for the Dollis Valley Regeneration Scheme in the coming months.

## **2. Working with those furthest from the labour market**

### **2.1 Launch a new "one-stop shop" to help those who have never been unemployed before to navigate the system so they can find the opportunities and support they need / Establish at least two local hubs in the heart of**

**communities where the need for work is highest - Estate Based Hubs offering a range of support services to enhance employability and provide access to jobs launched on at least 2 key estates**

The council has worked with Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) and BOOST (Barnet's employment and benefit advice service) on the development of the Grahame Park Hub in the old Library as a model for a One Stop Shop. The facility has been refurbished with space for training and information, advice and guidance (IAG). The Hub is now fully operational with core partners attending weekly including NHG, BOOST, Twinings, DWP and YES Project.

There are plans to duplicate the model with Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) on West Hendon and with L&Q in Dollis Valley and anticipate that both hubs will be open early in 2022.

**2.2 Initiate a programme of supported internships with local partner organisations to support those with disabilities to find good work**

In June the council completed a mapping exercise of current employment and skills provision in Barnet, which identified the need for increased provision for those with learning and physical disabilities. A needs assessment on learning disabilities with regards to housing and employment has commenced and will inform the design of the programme.

BELS continue to successfully deliver the Supported Internships programme. The programme has seen 61 young people engaged of which so far 19 have been supported into education or training.

**2.3 Expand availability of ESOL provision to Barnet residents - Work with BSC and other partners to expand ESOL provision**

We supported Barnet and Southgate College to submit a funding bid to Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to extend the ESOL for Integration project to 2022, and have been successful in securing £255,000. The programme was launched in September with Barnet and Southgate College actively engaging with local stakeholders supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

**1 & 2 Expand BOOST employment and wraparound service**

**1 & 2.2 Secure additional external funding and provide increased outcomes for clients**

In June Barnet participated as a funded delivery partner in a bid led by WLA for European Social Fund (ESF) funding for employment support. The bid was successful in providing WLA with £1.8m, and BOOST with £250,000 over 2 years.

The council supported funding bids for 2 Mayors Academy Hubs (Green Skills and Health) and the GLA No Wrong Door initiative.

In August BOOST were supported by the council to develop a programme with the Royal Free towards securing priority access to jobs in health. Processes have been agreed and installed with the first role offered through BOOST for supported applications. The Royal Free were pleased with the quality of candidates and 3 were shortlisted for interview; however, none were successful. A review of lessons learned will take place in advance of the next recruitment round.

A multimedia care recruitment campaign was launched in October offering incentives to join the care sector. This is to support our care providers anticipating the loss of staff who fail to be vaccinated within the November deadline.

**1 & 2.3 Support young people into work through the DWP Kickstart programme across the borough, both as an employer and a convenor - Kickstart is a government initiative to support unemployed 16 to 24 year olds to gain paid employment for 25 hours per week for 6 months fully funded by the DWP.**

The council Kickstart programme is led by Learning and Development and has gained 'Gateway' status, allowing us to be the conduit to placements for partner employers alongside jobs within the council. By July we had a total of 96 posts approved by DWP, 40 of which are with the council. 32 positions have now been filled.

The government has announced that the Kickstart programme is to be extended to March 2022.

**1 & 2.4 Work with DWP and the WLA to ensure Barnet residents are able to fully access the JETS programme – Number of JETS referrals maximised - Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)** is a DWP funded light touch support programme for people who have been unemployed for 13 weeks or more.

Through June Barnet actively promoted the JETS programme including distribution of a new flyer produced by Shaw Trust. The Barnet Skills Provider Meetings have helped providers work together to promote specific programmes such as JETS.

The council are negotiating with Shaw Trust towards gaining performance stats on JETS delivery in Barnet and hope to be able to capture these from the autumn.

**1 & 2.5 Work closely with DWP and Jobcentre Plus to continue the successful rollout of the Work & Health programme - Increase outcomes produced by the Work and Health Programme** - The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is a DWP funded programme for people who are unemployed with additional barriers to employment, which may include disability, carer responsibilities, homelessness or risk of homelessness, care leavers, refugees, and ex-offenders.

By September the programme had recorded 177 job starts for Barnet residents.

**1 & 2.6 Expand existing provision of digital skills for job search and the workplace; including offers of support for digital skills available and accessed by local residents**

Argent Related have ringfenced £6,000 towards digital initiatives in the borough.

The council are working with Community Fibre to provide access to skills and jobs, planning to start cohort of training in the autumn. Through their Ambassadors Programme we are seeking to recruit a group of local digital ambassadors who will be trained to train others.

The council have negotiated with DWP for SWAPs for sales opportunities with Community Fibre's London wide recruitment programme. DWP have agreed to pay for personal protective equipment (PPE) and travel for those securing a job.

Volker Fitzpatrick are refurbishing North Road Community Centre (Burnt Oak), where Community Fibre have provided free connection and are paying for Digital Champions and licences.

**1 & 2.7 Develop and resource an entrepreneurship programme to enable unemployed residents with business start ups**

In June the Rebel Business School provided their latest report on the recent programme in Barnet with statistics. Through the summer Rebel School worked with DWP to secure match funding for any council contribution and engaged with Brent Cross Town to access Community Funds.

**3. Prioritising High Growth Sectors - Focus on creating new pathways into work in the highest-growth sectors with the best long-term prospects for progression: health & care, green skills, construction and trades, and the creative industries**

**3.1 Work with partners to develop new approaches for high-growth sectors focusing on NHS and health and social care, green skills, construction trades and creative industries**

## **Employment and Skills partnership with NHS and Care providers established**

In June Barnet joined the North Central London (NCL) Health and Social Care Employment & Skills Forum.

Employment and Skills are working with Signature Care Homes, DWP and Barnet and Southgate College to design a SWAPs programme to fill a large number of roles that are expected to be offered from March 2022.

See 1 & 2.2 – BOOST, Royal Free Pilot and Care Sector Recruitment campaign.

## **Options for a skills and employment programme linked to Retrofit developed**

Employment and Skills are seeking to explore the scale of Barnet and West London retrofit programme and have joined the Retrofit Steering Group with a view to exploring the potential for jobs and apprenticeships.

### **3.2 Encourage developers to actively create new local job opportunities alongside upskilling their existing workforce**

In July the council began conversations with major developers towards drafting Terms of Reference for a Barnet Developer Group to enable us to better understand and manage the pipeline of jobs and apprenticeships in Barnet, encourage collaboration and inform our brokerages to enable better outreach and engagement of local talent. Galldris have actively engaged and supported.

### **3.3 Develop more joined up partnerships between training providers and businesses so that residents are able to develop the skills employers need in growing sectors**

See 3.1 - Signature Care Homes SWAPs programme and Railway Course. (Barnet and Southgate College have completed 3 Care SWAPs so far with 15 per cohort seeing 50% into employment).

Barnet supported two bids for Mayors Academies, one for Health in NCL cluster and one for Green Skills with WLA.

St George are building a new superstore in Silk Park generating 220 retail jobs for 2023. In response, Barnet and Southgate College are gearing up to provide SWAPs courses in Care, Security, Civil Service and Construction.

Volker Fitzpatrick offered a Trainee Buyer position for which 28 Barnet candidates were shortlisted. This is not a role we have recruited to before and hope that if successful we can introduce with other developers.

### **3.4 Develop new apprenticeship and training programmes to support entry into growth sector employment**

BELS have appointed a senior curriculum adviser and will employ a member of staff to source work placements for T Level students. The potential for a 'Barnet Pledge' for employers coming into the borough is being explored which will, offering opportunities for young people.

## **4. Delivering at Scale and Pace - A focus on delivery at a faster pace and wider scale than has been the case for the last decade, catalysing a faster recovery, and preventing many individuals from falling out of work entirely**

### **4.1 Work with planning to review and update Local Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Delivering Skills, Employment and Training Through S106' to ensure it maximises the resources to deliver our programmes**

Economic Development are working with Planning towards a refresh of the 2014 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The team are aiming to have a draft prepared for further consultation by spring 2022.

## **4.2 Work with the WLA to secure further funding from DWP, GLA and other sources to deliver large scale programmes**

### **Opportunities to bid for funding identified**

In June funding bids worth around £500k were submitted. A funding bid led by WLA was submitted to GLA for employment support funding that would provide BOOST with £250k over 2 years. A funding bid to DLUHC was submitted for £255k for ESOL provision. Both have been successful (see above for further detail).

## **4.5 Develop and improve access to opportunities and information for residents**

### **Jobs and Skills Portal on the Council website continuously improved**

In June updates were installed to improve the link to BOOST's site and other provision, plus some layout changes. Links to jobs with Community Fibre and Hyperopic have been added along with an updated link to the BOOST registration page.

### **BOOST and BELS websites**

In July BOOST recruited an officer to lead on digital inclusion and a refresh of their website.

### **Brent Cross**

**Delivery Plan Reporting** – Argent Related (AR) have produced a high level 3-year Employment and Skills Action Plan detailing KPIs which will be reported against quarterly and shared with the Brent Cross Joint Venture Board.

**Statistical Reports** – Argent Related now provide a monthly and quarterly statistical report detailing employment and skills outcomes achieved on site from all contractors.

**ASB Project** – With are working with AR to scope plans for a programme to target local young people engaged in antisocial behaviour towards positive outcomes.