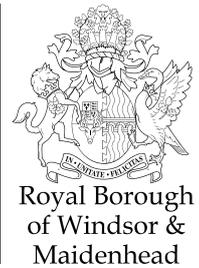


Subject:	Commissioning arrangements for Supported Employment provision - RBWM
Reason for briefing note:	Briefing for Disability and Inclusion Forum 14 th December 2020
Responsible officer(s):	Laurel Sanderson
Senior leader sponsor:	Lynne Lidster
Date:	10 th December 2020

www.rbwm.gov.uk



SUMMARY

This paper sets out the current arrangements for provision of the Supported Employment Service within the Royal Borough.

The Borough commissions a Supported Employment Service which primarily supports people with a learning disability and/ or autism and who are known to Adult Social Care. The service is currently provided by Ways into Work. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the existing contract, which has an annual value of £75,000, has twice been extended under new terms that take into account the different way of working necessitated during this period. The current extension expires on 31 March 2021.

Ways into Work also provides employment support to five people with learning disabilities who work for the Parks and Countryside Team. These people are directly employed by RBWM and are accompanied by staff from Ways into Work. This service, valued at £12,000 per annum, is additional to the contract referred to in section 1.1 above.

Ways into Work has been delivering supported employment to residents of RBWM for some 20 years, the last five of which have been as an independent Community Interest Company. They support between 230 - 250 residents per quarter, with around 68% in work and retention rates of 90%.

Following extensive data cleansing of their client records system and waiting list, at the end of September 2020 Ways into Work was providing employment support to 235 people, with a further 62 people on their waiting list. The funding provided by the Royal Borough currently enables 59 people to be supported at work by Ways into Work. Alternative funding sources for the majority of the remaining people on the active caseload have been sought through other projects, while some cases are being reviewed or are being closed as appropriate following a review.

Since April 2020 Ways into Work has undertaken several service development reviews. They have been working to streamline and rationalise their caseloads and ways of working, including removing people who do not want to work from the caseloads, reviewing staff performance and determining the optimal frequency of support visits/ calls for each case. They are reviewing and streamlining their business processes and have undertaken an extensive analysis of the

employers with whom they are engaged and the recruiting sectors, which is aiding business practices and development.

IMPACT OF COVID 19

The outbreak of Covid 19 has meant operating in a different environment and a significant change in service priorities and delivery. Ways into Work has been keen to support the Borough to provide stability and support for residents in this uncertain time.

The sectors in which people supported by Ways into Work are employed have been particularly negatively impacted by Covid 19 and associated lockdowns and loss of trade. Despite this, Ways into Work has worked with employers to avoid redundancies and job losses as far as possible, including making employers aware of the furlough scheme and how to use it, in some cases reemploying people they had laid off. Between March – September 2020 eight people had left work, while 91% of jobs had been retained.

Ways into Work has attempted to make contact with all clients and any clients not in work have been signposted to Universal Credits; there are very few new opportunities/ roles becoming available during the pandemic. Whilst employers carry out risk assessments on their staff, Ways into Work has been completing a work-based review checklist for each client in work to ensure that they remain safe

NEXT STEPS

A commissioning review is being undertaken for the supported employment service as well as a new service specification with future commissioning options being considered including transferring the service to Optalis which was the preferred option before the pandemic.