

North Tyneside Health & Wellbeing Board Report Date: 25 January 2024

Title: Equally Well
Progress Update: Fair
Employment and Good
Work for All

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**Relevant Partnership
Boards:** Thriving Sub-Committee
Employability Partnership

1. Purpose: Progress Update: Creating fair employment and good work for all

This item relates to the 'creating fair employment and good work for all' theme of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, "Equally Well: A healthier, fairer future for North Tyneside 2021- 2025".

As outlined in 'Equally Well' good work improves health and wellbeing across people's lives, not only from an economic standpoint, but also in terms of quality of life.

There is a two-way relationship between work and health: good work is both a result and driver of good health, impacting on the lives of residents and their communities. There are specific barriers that some of our most economically inactive residents face in engaging with the labour market, and these residents require targeted support to move closer to, and

access work e.g., residents with physical and mental health conditions, caring responsibilities, or transport costs. The evidence is clear that poor health is linked to unemployment and poor-quality work. Closing employment gaps across North Tyneside can unlock prosperity and improve health and wellbeing.

North Tyneside Council's Employment and Skills service is made up of Connexions, Adult Learning, and Employability Projects. In conjunction with our NHS colleagues and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE), there is a range of provision across North Tyneside that enables residents to gain the skills to take ownership of their future to secure good jobs with living wages.

North Tyneside's approach to 'creating fair employment and good work for all' is closely linked to the regeneration of the Borough, expanding the support available and encouraging developers and local employers to offer training and job opportunities.

Our Inclusive Economic Strategy, 'An Inclusive economy in North Tyneside' aims to create conditions for businesses to flourish, to nurture investment and support long-term opportunities for growth, creating jobs that reflect a transforming economy. The Strategy ensures that economic opportunity, generated by the Boroughs assets, is accessible to all.

Local partnerships are closely linked in with the work of the North of Tyne Combined Authority, in particular the Inclusive Economy Board and the Employability Strategy Group. The NoT board brings together experts from across the skills, economic development, housing, and education sectors to help strengthen education, skills and employment interventions, improve local education and employment outcomes, and ensure devolution has a positive impact for all residents.

This briefing paper will be supplemented by a presentation at the Board meeting, which will give further detail about the importance of improving the health of working adults and increasing access to good work, particularly for those individuals with poor health.

2. Recommendation(s):

The Board is recommended to: -

- a) Be assured that the respective partnerships are making progress in delivering the actions for creating fair employment and good work for all.
- b) Provide any comments on any areas requiring further action;
- b) Request the respective partnerships submit further progress reports to the Board in relation to its implementation plan for next year, the delivery of those actions and their outcomes.

3. Progress update: Fair employment and good work for all

The following section outlines key activity from respective partners highlighting progress against the implementation plan for 2023/24

- ***Data and insight analysis to understand the employment and skills needs of different residents and communities and identify and address any gaps in support.***
 - The North Tyneside Employability Partnership involves key partners in the delivery of employment and skills support using data and intelligence to inform the targeting of support for residents and businesses.
 - Funding has been secured from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) to employ an Employability Partnership Coordinator and Employer Engagement Officer with the aim of embedding Employability Partnerships that will work with partners to collect intelligence and ensure the coordination of employment and skills support through collaboration and the sharing of information.
 - This intelligence has also been used to inform the commissioning of employment and skills funding including UK Shared Prosperity Funds (UKSPF) and Adult Learning funding by NTCA. An extensive evidence base has informed the commissioning of funding.

- *Understanding and addressing reasons for economic inactivity due to physical health and mental health conditions and developing a plan to address these barriers to employment e.g., through the Working Well Hub.*
 - The levels of economic inactivity have increased since the Covid-19 pandemic, with significant increases in residents who are economically inactive reporting a long-term health condition.
 - UKSPF is being utilised to provide employment support for economically inactive residents:
 - A relational Mentoring Project delivered by the Wise Group, Anxious Minds, Meadow Well Connected and Justice Prince commenced in July 2023.
 - Work Routes is a new programme commissioned by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) and delivered by Reed in Partnership.
 - A wide range of partners including the partners delivering the above projects are coming together to offer support from the new Working Well Hubs, which have been established in North Shields and Wallsend.
 - Since opening the Working Well North Tyneside employment hub in North Shields in November 2022 over 5300 people have visited receiving 1-2-1 support to address barriers to employment and attending various events and activities with over 25 partners engaged.
 - The pilot in North Shields Town Centre has been extended to July 2024 and the second Working Well Hub opened in Wallsend Customer First Centre on 4th September 2023 with over 650 visitors attending.
 - We have also now extended the services to the North West of the Borough with weekly events and drop-in support sessions taking place at the John Willie Sams Centre in Dudley, Wideopen Library and the White Swan Centre in Killingworth. A weekly drop-in session is also taking place at Whitley Bay Big Local.

- An evaluation of the Working Well pilot is being undertaken by Centrifuge Consultancy with interviews with key stakeholders and data analysis about to commence.
- ***Addressing recruitment and retention challenges in key sectors e.g., early years and the health and social care sector through the Care Academy.***
 - The Care Academy is a partnership between all care providers in North Tyneside including the local authority, the NHS, social care providers, the voluntary sector and local schools and colleges.
 - The website (www.northtynesidecareacademy.org.uk) is a celebration of the adult social care sector in North Tyneside and showcases what the borough has to offer, we can attract more people to, and keep people working in care in the borough.
 - 'Get Into Social Care' is a short introductory course delivered by North Tyneside Council's Employment and Skills Service. On the five-day course learners receive expert training, find out more about the roles available and access support for finding and applying for jobs. The course runs once a month in North Shields.
 - Cedarwood Trust are delivering a 'Step Up Into Care' initiative to support peoples recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting them into meaningful activities to encourage people to re-engage with activities in leisure, well-being training, education and employment.
 - Tyne Met College also run a range of courses aimed at supporting young people to move into a career in the health and social care sector.
- ***Monitor progress and understand issues around supporting over 50s back to work through the Dedicated Work Coaches in DWP, including the upskilling of people to work in the digital environment.***
 - Jobseekers over the age of 50 are provided with more one-to-one support at Jobcentres to help them get into, and progress in work, boosting their earnings ahead of retirement.
 - The increased support is boosted by 50PLUS Champions covering every district across England, Wales and Scotland who work with

local employers to raise awareness of the benefits of employing older workers.

- Mid-life MOTs are also available from some Jobcentres, but can also be accessed online. These promote the benefits of work, signpost to find information about their state pension and any employer based pensions and also signposts to find information and help about health issues.
- ***Delivery and monitoring of employability projects targeting support at disadvantaged groups e.g., the Restart Project targeting the long term unemployed.***
 - The NTCA commissioning of UKSPF funding is gradually seeing an increase in the number of employability projects available to support residents from disadvantaged groups to improve their skills and gain sustainable employment.
 - The eligibility for the Government's Restart Programme, delivered by Reed in Partnership in North Tyneside, has been extended to support more residents and at an earlier stage of their period of unemployment.
 - Additional support is also being provided by Reed in Partnership and the Local Authority for people resettling in the Borough from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria and Hong Kong.
 - This support includes the employment of a Resettlement Employment and Skills Coordinator and an increase in the provision of English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) courses.
- ***Co-ordinate the approach to promoting available apprenticeships across the system to disadvantaged groups and 'Get into' courses and careers and recruitment events.***
 - The Local Authority working with key partners including employers and deliverers of Apprenticeship training are working together to promote the benefits of Apprenticeships and increase the availability of opportunities.
 - A key opportunity is the annual National Apprenticeship Week (NAW).

- National Apprenticeship Week 2024 is taking place from 5th to 11th February 2024. The theme is Skills for Life, reflecting on how apprenticeships can help individuals to develop the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career, and employers to develop a workforce with future ready skills.
 - The week will culminate with the North Tyneside Get Up and Go Apprenticeship Fair on Saturday 10th February 2024, which will bring together local employers and training providers to promote Apprenticeship opportunities to young people and parents.
 - The event is held in on the ground floor of the North Tyneside Council offices at Quadrant, Cobalt Business Park and usually attracts over 600 attendees.
 - Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has a national recognised Apprenticeship programme that helps Apprentices gain the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours vital to undertake roles in a range of areas including Health care, Social care, Business administration, Customer service, Estates and Facilities.
 - The programme, which has been running for over 10 years, has led the way, with more than 95% of apprentices' gaining employment with the trust or wider NHS.
 - As part of the Northumbria Way, apprentices at Level 2 onwards may work in a variety of different roles in hospitals, the community and in office environments, across Northumberland and North Tyneside.
- ***Economic strategy to work with businesses involved in major developments to deliver corporate social responsibility commitments to increase the number of jobs opportunities, including apprenticeships, available to residents.***
 - In line with the objectives of the Inclusive Economic Strategy the Local Authority continues to work with large scale employers and developers to connect opportunities to residents with particular attention to those in deprived wards. This includes proactively working with circa 70 significant employers as part of the Local Authorities Strategic Account Management (SAM) programme,

key business park operators/owners such as Quorum and Cobalt and those responsible and interested in bringing forward development on employment land such as Indigo Park in Weetslade and Swans Energy Park on the River Tyne.

- Through working with local businesses, it has become clear that the growing renewable energy industry and the offshore sector as a whole has significant vacancies and training opportunities for local people both immediately and in future years. There is work in train to develop a plan for skills provision that links local people with key assets, services, businesses, and resources such as the Energy Academy managed by Newcastle College, North Tyneside Council Skills and Employment Services and external resources from skills budgets via the Combined Authorities. In addition, the Tyne is included within the developing North East Investment Zone proposal currently being co designed by Government and the emerging North East Mayoral Combined Authority likely to be agreed and launched by Spring. This will bring opportunities for funding linked to skills, innovation and infrastructure to enable growth on the River Tyne. It represents a huge opportunity to link local people to jobs and training in some of the Boroughs most deprived wards geographically located next to the River Tyne, and beyond.
- Building on the established Inclusive Economic Strategy the Local Authority has agreed to develop an Economic Strategy which will embed the principles of delivering inclusive economic growth as set out in the current strategy into an overall vision for the economic development of the Borough. It will also set out how the Local Authority alongside partners and stakeholders can achieve objectives around employment growth and opportunities, skills development, business support, innovation and sector development and the development and enablement of employment land linked to the Local Plan. A specification to commission a consultant to support this work is in development and we await confirmation of funding via a Grant Funding Agreement from the North of Tyne Combined Authority before we can procure a supplier

- *Ensure North Tyneside organisations and business benefit from involvement with the Better Health at Work and Good Work Pledge initiatives.*

The Better Health at Work Award was established to take health and wellbeing into the workplace and is delivered by Northern TUC. In North Tyneside over 39 organisations and businesses are involved in this award.

The North Of Tyne Good Work Pledge is the North of Tyne Combined Authority's (NTCA) independent kitemark established to formally recognise good employers. The scheme is designed to recognise commitment to providing 'good jobs' – employment that offers security, development opportunities, fair representation, and a decent standard of living as a minimum. Companies applying for accreditation must set out how they meet various good practices by showing, for example, their flexible working options for employees, and policies that promote equality and diversity. *Trying to get a figure of how many NT orgs involved.*

4. Performance indicators

Appendix 1

5. Community engagement

The Employability Partnership continuously engage with residents, employers, and business across North Tyneside and through the work of the North of Tyne Combined Authority to understand the employment and training needs of residents.

North Tyneside Council in partnership with NTCA, Newcastle City Council and Northumberland County Council has accessed funding to provide Employment Partnership delivery between July 2022 and March 2025. NTCA investment is funding a Local Employment Partnership Coordinator and an Employer Liaison/Engagement Lead in each local area.

6. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

7. **Contact officers:**

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8. **Background information:**

The following background documents have been used in the compilation of this report and are available from the author: –

[Inclusive Economy Strategy overview](#)

[North of Tyne Strategic Skills Plan – ‘Opportunity for All’](#)

[North of Tyne Employability Plan](#)

COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

9 **Finance and other resources**

Any financial implications arising from the delivery of the implementation plan to delivery Equally Well, North Tyneside’s Health and Well Being Strategy will be met from existing budgets.

10 **Legal**

The Board has a duty under Section 195 of the Health & Social Care Act 2012 to encourage partners to work closely together and in an integrated manner for the purpose of advancing the health and wellbeing of the people in the area.

11 **Human rights**

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

12 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

13 Risk management

There is a risk that despite the considerable effort for joint action by the Health and Wellbeing Board, partners may not improve the inequalities in health seen in North Tyneside in the life time of this strategy.

The health inequalities that existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have subsequently been amplified and more recently it is also widely acknowledged that the current rise in the cost of living is likely to have a disproportionate impact on some of our communities in North Tyneside.

A corporate risk has been identified for this scenario with a mitigation report was presented at the Audit Committee in November 2022, and this risk will continue to be monitored with regular reporting.

14 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.