

## **Budget Proposals 2016-17: Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Supported Employment for Young People with Disabilities**

### **Summary of Feedback Received and Key Findings**

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#### **Why we consulted?**

Over the last four years we have had to make savings of £23m because we've received less money from central government. We have done this by becoming more efficient at what we do, by reducing some of our administrative functions and increasing our income. Throughout this period we have done our best to protect front line services.

We now have to find another £20m over the next four years, with almost £11m to be found in 2016/17. Much of this will come from further efficiencies within the council, but £4.6m will have to come from services that will impact the public.

In order to inform the budget setting process for 2016/17 we published a list of those proposals which would likely have a direct impact on service users, and sought the views from those affected and interested:

- to understand the likely impact
- to identify any measures to reduce their impact
- to explore any possible alternatives

#### **Approach**

All the proposals were published on the council's website on 3 November 2015 with feedback requested by 14 December 2015. Respondents were directed to a [central index page](#), with a video message from the Chief Executive outlining the background to the exercise.

Information relating to this proposal was linked directly from this index page. This contained more detailed information on what was specifically proposed, information on what we thought the impact might be, as well as what else we had considered in developing and arriving at this proposal. Feedback was then invited through an online form, and through a dedicated email address.

Each individual budget proposal was placed on our [Consultation Portal](#) which automatically notified those registered that an exercise had been launched. Members of the West Berkshire community panel (around 800 people) and local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations were also emailed directly, notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions.

Heads of Service made direct contact with those organisations affected by any of the budget proposals prior to them being made publically available.

A press release was issued on the same date, as well as publicised through Facebook and Twitter.

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### **Background**

The council identified £20,000 in the current financial year for a supported employment service for young people with disabilities aged 16 to 25. National data shows that a high proportion of young people with disabilities are not in employment, education or training (NEET), even though many of these young people have the potential to be employed with the right support.

Young people who do not have any learning difficulties, but who have a physical or sensory impairment, can usually access support through the government's Access to Work scheme. This scheme can fund items of equipment, sign language interpreters etc. However, young people with other types of special educational needs, such as learning difficulties or autism, have more complex and ongoing support needs in the work place, which cannot be met through schemes such as Access to Work. Such young people may require a period of intensive job coaching to learn the tasks they need to perform in their job, as well as support to understand the social expectations of the workplace.

A supported employment service can help young people to gain employment, and to sustain it, and can be brought in by employers if problems arise to help prevent young people with disabilities from losing their employment. There are clear economic benefits to society if young people with disabilities can be supported to gain and sustain paid employment.

The £20,000 allocated by the council in this financial year has been combined with a £28,000 grant from central government to improve employment outcomes for young people with disabilities. The grant can be carried forward to the 2016/17 financial year and may become recurring, although this is not yet known.

The proposal is to remove the council's £20,000 funding

### **Summary of Key Points**

12 responses were received, of which five were from organisations and seven were from individuals.

The organisations which responded were:

- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Pangbourne Parish Council
- UNISON
- West Berkshire Disability Alliance
- Tilehurst Parish Council
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The main thrust of the consultation responses concerned the importance of employment for the individual's well being, quality of life and mental health and also the potential additional cost to statutory services and society if young people with disabilities are unable to access employment.

#### **1. Are you, or anyone you care for, a user of this service?**

No respondents identified themselves as service users as this service is still in the process of being set up.

#### **2. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people?**

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The views of respondents about ways in which people would be impacted were as follows:

- Some young people with disabilities who have the potential to be employed with support will not gain employment or will not sustain it. They will therefore be denied the opportunity to experience the feeling of self worth which employment gives and will lead to less fulfilling and isolated lives than they may otherwise have done.
- Young people with disabilities who are not employed are likely to place demands on other services such as Adult Social Care and mental health services and may cost the NHS and Social Care significantly more than if they had been supported to access employment. They will also be claiming benefits.
- There will be more pressure on parents in their caring role if their adult children are unable to work. Parents will also experience more anxiety as their children transition to adulthood if there is no local supported employment service.

#### **3. Do you feel that this proposal will affect particular individuals more than others, and if so, how do you think we might help with this?**

Respondents noted that the proposal would affect young people with disabilities and their families. Young people whose parents were unable to help them get employment and hold down a job were felt to be more at risk.

#### **4. Do you have any suggestions as to how this service might be delivered in a different way? If so, please provide details.**

Suggestions for delivering the service in other ways included:

- Providing WBC special schools with funding to provide the service
- Seeking support from the Achievement for All NEET Team

#### **5. Is there any way that you, or your organisation, can contribute in helping to alleviate the impact of this proposal? If so, please provide details of how you can help.**

No proposals were put forward in this section.

#### **6. Any further comments?**

There were no comments in this section which are not covered elsewhere in this summary or in the overview and recommendations document.

### **Conclusion**

This is a new service which is in the process of being set up and will be provided by an organisation called Ways in to Work. It is partially funded by a DfE grant which may become a recurring source of funding but this is not yet known.

If Council funding is withdrawn there will still be some DfE funding to provide a level of service. Ways in to Work is a community interest company and may be able to draw in funding from other sources such as European Social Fund.

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***Please note:** In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

*The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.*

*All the responses have been provided verbatim as an appendix to this report. Whilst this summary seeks to distil the key, substantive points made, it should also be read in conjunction with the more detailed verbatim comments to ensure a full, rounded perspective of the views and comments are considered.*

Jane Seymour  
Service Manager, SEN & Disabled Children's Team  
Education Service  
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Version 1 (CB)