

REPORT OF PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE ADULT WITH DISABILITIES PROVISIONS TOPIC GROUP

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 6 December 2022, the People Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee commissioned a Topic Group for an insight into the current provisions available for adults with a range of disabilities within Havering including learning disabilities and autism, but also people with physical and sensory disabilities and mental health issues.

The terms of this review related to the impact on adults with disabilities over the age of 25 years old, exploring the avenues into employment and opportunity within Havering.

The Group established a timetable to hold meetings with Council officers and third sector providers.

The Topic Group consisted of Councillors Darren Wise (Chairman) Jacqueline McArdle and Julie Lamb, (Special) Statutory member representing SEND parents. On many occasions due to other competing priorities, Councillor Darren Wise and Julie Lamb carried out the scrutinising of the meetings and objectives.

The Group met fortnightly between January 2023 to March 2023 and has now concluded its review; identifying recommendations and findings which are detailed in this report.

THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The focus for this Topic Group concentrated on the following key areas:

- To understand the current access routes to education and employment as well as social care provisions for adults with disabilities and to assess their strengths and weaknesses
- Create and then monitor a local authority quality assurance process and written framework for current and future adult day service provisions
- Signposting for current 16-25 provisions and employment opportunities and improving the content of the local offer
- Investigate current employment provisions for 25+ and explore the areas to improve employability opportunities
- Scrutinise Havering Borough's own delivery to modernise/update the current service model in place

METHODOLOGY

The Group agreed that the list of people to be interviewed would comprise the following members of staff and external colleagues:

Carmel McKeogh, Director of Operations, DFN Project Search Foundation
Amanda Montague, Employment and Skills Team, LBH
Andrew Sykes, Service Manager for Disabilities, Adult Social Care, LBH
Samantha Saunders, Commissioning Programme Manager – Disabilities, Joint Commissioning Unit, LBH

Members were grateful for the commitment of staff and witnesses to the review, many of whom took time out of work hours to contribute to the review.

THE REVIEW

The notes of the topic group meetings and discussions are attached to this report. Set out under the heading **RECOMMENDATIONS** are the key issues that emerged from the topic group's scrutiny.

MEETINGS

The Topic Group met on seven occasions conducting the review between January to March 2023:

30th September 2022- Scope finalising
15th December 2022- Initial Plan Discussion
10th January 2023
19th January 2023
7th February 2023
21st February 2023
7th March 2023
21st March 2023
27th March 2023

The first meeting held detailed discussions on the timeline and speakers to consult for the meetings. At the second meeting, a representative from DFN Project Search presented information on the programme (see Appendix A- DFN Presentation). After consulting with the representative, the costs of running the adult programme were sent over (see Appendix B), alongside a spreadsheet from Amanda Montague into the start-up costs for the planning year and the annual cost of running a three-year pilot (see Appendix C). After a cost benefit analysis was taken into consideration, the group decided to withdraw it as a possible recommendation.

Officers from the Joint Commissioning Unit and Disabilities Management Team within Havering provided their involvement around quality assurance functions provided for adults with disabilities currently.

FINDINGS

1. Day Care Provisions and Quality Standards

Members consulted with Havering Officers managing the current adult day care provisions and shared concerns over the lack of quality assurance guidelines and frameworks in place for provisions for adults with disabilities. Members were pleased to hear Officers were carrying out initial benchmarking and identifying neighbouring boroughs who similarly do not have a quality standard in place but instead commit to yearly audits. Moving forward there is a working group for the North East London boroughs and a working group for London Wide Boroughs to discuss and implement a standard as a whole. Once the working groups are set up and a meeting held with Havering Officers, then they will report back with updates.

2. Employability Schemes and Transitioning Process

Members noted many of the current schemes in place for SEND provisions were allocated to those within the age group of 16-25 year olds due to the Education Health Care Plan funding available within the timeframe. Members considered the weakness in the lack of progression from internship to paid employment available for those aged 25+ years with disabilities, transitioned support from day provisions into paid employment, and the limitation of having three Officers dedicated to the general service of supporting unemployed adults into work who may or may not have disabilities. Members noted employing a specialist Supported Employment Adviser for adults with disabilities to work alongside day provision and support transition to internships and paid employment would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Havering to employ a specialist Supported Employment Adviser for adults with disabilities to work alongside day provision and support transition to internships and paid employment.
 - a. Improving employability opportunities and the delivery of such routes ensuring accessibility for all with the Council engaging with adults with disabilities by supporting and signposting these opportunities, and creating relationships with local businesses to employ adults with disabilities.
 - b. Create an action plan/recommendations aligned to actions in the All Age Autism Strategy
 - c. Develop schemes with local businesses to help provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities over the age of 25
 - d. Employers to complete the Oliver McGowan mandatory training in line with national legislation passed July 2022
 - e. Expanding Council operated services for jobs i.e Avelon Day Centre, explore options around social enterprise schemes

2. Ensure Havering's local offer (covering ages 16-25) is comprehensive and detailed with signposting to identify current apprenticeships available for young adults with disabilities.
3. To create, maintain and monitor "Quality Standards" for providers within Havering and benchmarking against other North East London boroughs. Setting standards in place to monitor the quality of provisions and their individual, tailored offer to service users. Establishing a formal framework for providers to set their standards against including frequency of monitoring and inspection.
 - a. A specialised, meaningful set of activity programs for 25+ residents with disabilities - with person-specific requirements to help improve the quality of the services provided.

Financial Implications

Recommendation 1 in this report will have financial implications, further work and a restructure report will need to be undertaken in order to identify the full financial implications and appropriate budget to identify the resources to fund the recommendation. The level of funding required would be established with the grading of the post. This service funding could be considered as part of the ongoing TOM work. Recommendations 2 and 3 have no financial implications.

Legal Implications

The Local Authority has duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that any educational provision required for an adult in the age range 18-25 and set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is provided. There have been recent amendments to the Health and Care Act 2008 which impose requirements on relevant health and care bodies to provide mandatory training to their employees on learning disability and autism (known as "McGowan training").

The Committee cannot make an executive decision to implement the recommendation in this Report and if this is to be approved it will have to be considered by an executive decision maker before it can be implemented. It will of course have financial implications which may be relevant for any ultimate executive decision maker to consider.

HR Implications

The recommendations will require the creation of and recruitment to a new post of Supported Employment Adviser for Adults with disabilities which will be managed in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

Equalities Implications

None directly although the successful adoption of the recommendations in the Topic Group's report would serve to support adults with disabilities with employment and working skills in Havering.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

Employment has positive impacts on health and wellbeing of individuals including those with disabilities. Access to Work Advisers are known to be effective when they are trained to the required standards and are supported by the local system. Therefore, adequate training and management support must be ensured to see results. Volunteering as health champions by the adults with disabilities may not only strengthen their job applications in care sector, but will increase their own knowledge on health and wellbeing which take can subsequently to support wellbeing in their workplaces.

Climate Change

None.