

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

### **BACKGROUND**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The Group established a timetable to hold meetings with Council officers and third sector providers.
4. The Topic Group consisted of Councillors Darren Wise (Chairman) Jacqueline McArdle and Julie Lamb, (Special) Statutory member representing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (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.
5. 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**

6. 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**

7. 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

8. 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**

9. 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**

10. The Topic Group met on nine occasions conducting the review between January to March 2023:

30<sup>th</sup> September 2022- Scope finalising

15<sup>th</sup> December 2022- Initial Plan Discussion

10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

19<sup>th</sup> January 2023- Discussion with DFN Project Search representative

7<sup>th</sup> February 2023- Discussion with Sam Saunders, Commissioning Programme Manager, JCU and Andrew Sykes, Services Manager, Disabilities Management Team

21<sup>st</sup> February 2023- Cost Evaluation of DFN Project Search within Havering

7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 – Discussion with Councillors Gillian and Oscar Ford

21<sup>st</sup> March 2023

27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

11. 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.

12. 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**

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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

That Cabinet:

1. Note the report and recommendation of the adults with disabilities provisions Topic Group:
2. Cabinet agrees in principle that, subject to sufficient funding being available, 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. If agreed, authorisation to create this post will be delegated to the appropriate member of the Executive Leadership team. The job role to include:
  - 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. Creating an action plan/recommendations aligned to actions in the All Age Autism Strategy
  - c. Developing schemes with local businesses to help provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities over the age of 25
  - d. Encouraging 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
3. Agrees that a review be undertaken of Havering's local offer (covering ages 16-25) and amended, following the statutory requirements, to ensure that it is a comprehensive and detailed with signposting to identify current apprenticeships available for young adults with disabilities.
4. Agrees that the Council should create "Quality Standards" for providers within Havering, including frequency of monitoring and inspection and then monitor and inspect providers for compliance with them, following benchmarking against other North East London boroughs. These Quality Standards should address the quality of provisions and their individual, tailored offer to service users. Agrees that the Council should provide, if resources permit, 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 for this group.