



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

Report of the Head of Education Development – Chris Millis

Matter for Information:

Wards Affected:

All

Employability, Skills and Food Poverty Programme Update from within the Education Leisure and Life Long Learning Directorate

Purpose of the Report:

To update Members regarding the employability, skills and food poverty programmes within Neath Port Talbot.

Executive Summary:

There are a number of different activities delivered in the employability area of the Education directorate that supports people living in the communities. Food poverty is also part of this section of the directorate. Details can be seen below.

Communities for Work (CfW), is an employability programme working in partnership with Department of Working Pensions (DWP). The

programme has had 1,411 engagements and 551 job entries over the life of the programme.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is the holistic employability programme, bridging any employability gaps in provision. The programme currently has 2,045 engagements and 929 job entries.

The Communities for Work Plus Young Persons Guarantee programme commenced this financial year and provides increased employability support for young people aged 16 to 24 years of age. To date there has been 241 engagements and 90 job entries.

Skills and Training are supporting people through initial engagement and apprenticeship pathways in addition to alternative curriculum in schools. Over 130 learners on programme last year and additionally 45 young people from the schools completing courses such as construction, ground works and health and safety.

Commercial courses within Skills and Training helped over 800 people complete courses in a variety of subjects.

The Legacy Fund provides support for a number of services including the Legacy Youth Support for schools.

Shared Prosperity Funding (SPF) will support communities throughout Neath Port Talbot. The team are currently developing the employability phase of the fund and hope this will start in January 2023.

Food poverty grants have been given to the organisation by Welsh Government to support an increased number of people facing food poverty. The ELLL directorate have recently started to administer the fund. The grant scheme is currently live to organisations and being promoted locally.

Background:

Communities for Work is funded by the European Social Fund and is in partnership with DWP. Funding for this programme will end in 2023. This programme has two priority age categories, Priority 1, 25+ and older and Priority 3, 16-24 years old, both provide an intensive mentoring one-to-one provision for those who are furthest away from the labour market with individuals either being long term unemployed, economically inactive or NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training). From the beginning of the programme (July 2016) to date we have had 1,411 engagements and 551 job entries over the four delivery areas being Neath, Afan Western and Sandfields. Mentors from NPT LA and Advisors from DWP work as one team to ensure the best results for their individuals.

Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) is a 16+ employability programme which focuses on bridging the gaps of current European provision. CfW+ programme enabled those who were unemployed, not eligible for European employability programmes to provide one-to-one intensive support, advice and guidance, taking away restrictions of postcodes and being able to work with anyone of 16+. This includes those who are in employment, looking to seek career progression, or have extra hours to increase their monthly earnings. Welsh Government recognise that in work poverty is increasing and this programme will help to provide support for those who are barely surviving on their monthly earnings. To date both programmes are running seamlessly. Referrals continue to be a steady flow with 2,045 engagements and 929 job entries.

Communities for Work Plus Young Persons Guarantee commenced on the 1st April 2022. The purpose of this fund is to provide an increased employability support offered for young people (aged 16 to 24) across the existing CfW+ structure. To date we have engaged with 241 young people and achieved 90 job entries. This programme

will be embedded into the new Communities for Work Plus programme due to commence 1st April 2023.

Skills and Training (S&T) aim to provide the best possible service within work based learning which are run in partnership with Pathways Training (NPT College Group), helping and supporting young people aged 16-19 years on a traineeship programme and aged 16+ on an apprenticeships programme, within the community of Neath Port Talbot and surrounding areas.

Jobs Growth Wales + (old traineeship programme) and apprenticeships have a long and successful history of providing young people with highly effective work-integrated learning to secure employment pathways. It is also a route to progression, and we have seen learners with low self-esteem and confidence being able to sustain work placements and going onto our apprenticeship programmes becoming qualified hairdressers, health and social care advisors and childcare supervisors. The learners thrive on work experience, applying their skills and being empowered with paid employment. There were over 130 learners on the programme last year. Income has also increased within the programme with contracts enhanced by over £200,000 this financial year.

S&T also offer an alternative curriculum programme to NPT schools and are working with Ysgol Bae Baglan to upskill and qualify learners in hairdressing and barbering. Currently S&T have 45 young people on programme. Others such as Ysgol Hendre Felin and Cefn Saeson opt for construction work, ground works and health and safety where they train at Tir Morfa Centre in Sandfields.

The Skills and Training commercial arm offer training internally and externally, generating additional income for the department, whilst developing a reputation for providing good quality, effective industry recognised training, meeting the needs of businesses locally and supporting individuals to maintain or develop their skills and knowledge. Over 800 people gained qualifications in first aid,

paediatric first aid, manual handling, site safety plus, food hygiene and health and safety.

Tir Morfa Centre has successfully been refurbished into a place where young people feel comfortable. Defined spaces have been reallocated to community groups to ensure that allotment space is used to its full potential. Tir Morfa is hoping to be registered as a Warm Hub over the coming months, where we will make the centre available for those who need a warm space and warm refreshments during this very difficult time.

The Legacy fund continues to deliver provision for welfare rights, mental health, digital support and youth support due to funding from Welsh Government.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) will support the UK Government commitment to level up all parts of the UK. The fund is designed to succeed and improve upon European structural funds, but is not a direct replacement. There are 3 investment priorities: community and place, supporting local business and people and skills including multiply. As part of people and skills, employability will form one of the anchor projects for Neath Port Talbot.

NPT Employability will provide a holistic co-ordinated employability provision within Neath Port Talbot. We aim to raise aspirations, develop soft skills and look to inspire our people to ensure they are supported throughout their journey. The project will also build upon existing Welsh Government funded projects such as Communities for Work Plus, a person centred approach programme looking to removing barriers to employment, education and training through a wide range of interventions. This can incorporate softer elements such as motivation, confidence building, work experience and volunteering. Experienced European Social Fund (ESF) programmes such as Cynnydd, Workways+ and Communities for Work will form part of an innovative provision where those from the age of 11 years of age + will have access to an enhanced provision tailored to the

needs of that individual. Having a wrap-around, single front door provision for employability will ensure that our residents in Neath Port Talbot have the help, support and advice to meet their individual needs.

NPT Council have received Welsh Government funding in order to support an increased number of people facing food poverty. Known as the Household Support fund, it was previously administered by Corporate Strategy who renamed it the Food Poverty Fund. This fund has now been transferred to the Education directorate to manage.

A further Welsh Government Grant the Direct Food Support Award, with the same objectives of supporting people facing food poverty has also been allocated recently. Both grants have been combined and promoted as the Neath Port Talbot Food Poverty Fund, in total they amount to £139,578.00.

Awards are granted to eligible organisations via an application process administered by the Food Legacy co-ordinator. The funding is currently open for applicants at any time in order for organisations to utilise the funds this year. A cap is in place in order to give as many organisations as possible funding. This is currently set at £7,000. Guidelines explaining the criteria and the application process are currently on the Council website.

To date 13 organisations who submitted applications were successful and funding of approximately £28,588.74 for activities such as purchasing essential food and baby formula, volunteer training in food hygiene, ingredients for cooking sessions, development of a community growing scheme and the supply of food for children attending summer camp, who would normally be in receipt of free school meals, has been awarded.

The Food Legacy co-ordinator is continuing to map and build up a relationship with a network of local community food services and is also keen to work closely with NPT Local Area Co-ordinators and

Members in order to promote the Food Poverty Fund and link in with other services and funding available for people that need support in this time of deep crisis. It is anticipated that the Tir Morfa Community Fridge, when it opens, will be an 'informal' opportunity to promote the many services and funding streams available to help with the cost of living crisis.

Financial Impacts:

There are financial implications within the delivery of Communities for Work programme ending on the 31st March 2023. All other budgets are being monitored at present.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The projects will have a positive impact on the valley communities in terms of support available locally.

Workforce Impacts:

Communities for Work (European Funding) will end delivery in March 2023 with the closure of the programme in August 2023. Staff have commenced the Management of Change process.

Legal Impacts:

There no legal implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

For information

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

N/A

Implementation of Decision:

N/A

Appendices:

N/A

List of Background Papers:

N/A

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