

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE CLAIMANTS UPDATE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress achieved to date towards reducing the numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance in North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 To update on ongoing work in hand to support those seeking work.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council remains committed to supporting people into employment. This is demonstrated via various initiatives, including the introduction of an Apprenticeship programme, the development of the Community Investment Partnership and the opening of our one stop shop for skills and opportunities in October 2015 – the Action Station. The numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) benefits have dropped significantly over recent years, despite a slight rise recorded in January 2016, linked mainly to redundancies at TATA Steel and the associated supply chain.
- 2.2 The Council and relevant partners have worked hard to support those seeking employment into work. This has resulted in the latest JSA claimant figures for May 2016 showing a significant drop of 3.8%, equating to 100 individuals. There are now a total of 2,530 JSA claimants in North Lincolnshire, compared to 2,630 claimants recorded in April. The latest claimant count rate is 2.4%.
- 2.4 The current North Lincolnshire Springboard Programme started in June 2014. The aim is to support unemployed young people aged 18-24 across the Humber region back into employment and training. Funded through the City Deal, the programme in North Lincolnshire currently employs two Progression Advisors and a Youth Ambassador.
- 2.5 To date, the programme has supported 167 individuals with the creation of a personal action plan to remove barriers to work. As a result of this, 113 have now successfully moved into employment, training or another positive activity such as a traineeship. Others have been supported to remove significant barriers to employment such as housing, debt and mental health related issues.
- 2.6 The Council has also successfully delivered the '40+ move-on' advisor role supporting those over 40 back into employment. The Department of Work

and Pensions flexible support fund will continue to provide funding for this initiative for a further year. In total, 10 of the 100 individuals that are no longer claiming JSA came from this programme.

2.7 Based on the success of the '40 + move on' advisor, the Council through the Community Investment Partnership has successfully secured further funding to support a 'Better Opportunities' programme. The need to provide additional support for those with health conditions and disabilities who are claiming ESA and JSA has been highlighted through the North Lincolnshire Community Investment Partnership and is based upon evidence provided by Job Centre Plus colleagues.

2.8 The Better Opportunities Programme will support claimants by providing access to three existing and relevant services in order to overcome their barrier to work. Through the work of the Community Investment Partnership we know that ESA/JSA claimants do not always access the Action Station, Health Trainer or Well-Being Hubs as a matter of course. It is therefore proposed to provide access to the following services for those participating in the Better Opportunities Programme:

- Action Station – based in Scunthorpe Town Centre and available through outreach mobile sessions, including:
 - Support to improve prospects of finding suitable work / training
 - Job Clubs
 - CV workshops
 - Signposting, assessment and referrals
 - Access to Careers Information, Advice and Guidance
 - Access to employers and employment opportunities

- Health Trainers – to devise a Personal Health Plan
 - Cook and eat sessions – advice to support healthy eating
 - Smoking cessation
 - How to achieve a healthier weight
 - Support to become more physically active
 - Build self-confidence, motivation and coping skills

- Well-Being Hubs – offering services across the localities
 - Targeted workshops on issues such as personal safety, nutrition and well being
 - Activities and support for carers
 - Participation activities to overcome social isolation including archery, curling, table top games and crafts
 - Volunteering opportunities
 - Signposting to other services

2.9 The Action Station is holding an open day on 28 July 2016 from 10am to 2pm. This will give Council teams, partners and members of the public the opportunity to attend the Action Station, make links, and better understand the work of the Action Station.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Cabinet is asked to note and welcome the latest reduction in the numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance in North Lincolnshire.

3.2 Cabinet is asked to reaffirm their support to the various initiatives currently in hand and planned in the future to support those seeking work into employment.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Council approved the North Lincolnshire Strategy 2016-20 in February 2016, based upon a vision of “**Aspiring People, Inspiring Places**” and five associated priorities. Key to the priority to “**SHAPE the area into a prosperous place to live, work and play**” is the aspiration to “**increase economic growth and prosperity through higher employment and increased home ownership**”. The information set out in this report contributes directly to the achievement of these aims.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 There are no resource implications to highlight.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Extensive consultation on the various initiatives to support those seeking work back into employment has taken place with relevant partners and funding bodies. Their views inform the programmes that are taken forward.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet welcomes the latest reduction in the numbers claiming Job Seekers Allowance in North Lincolnshire.

8.2 That Cabinet reaffirms their support to the various initiatives currently in hand and planned in the future to support those seeking work into employment.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- **Minute 2424 (16) of the meeting of Full Council held on 23 February 2016 – North Lincolnshire Strategy 2016/2020**