

TITLE OF REPORT:	Review to Address Skills Shortages & Increase Employment Opportunities – Final Report
REPORT OF:	Colin Huntington, Acting Strategic Director, Communities & Environment Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing & Learning

SUMMARY

This final report sets out the findings of the Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to work to address skills shortages and increase employment opportunities in Gateshead. The views of the Committee are being sought on this report and suggested recommendations.

Background

1. Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the focus of its review in 2018/19 will be working to address skills shortages and increase employment opportunities. The review has been carried out over an eleven-month period and as well as the provision of evidence has also highlighted how we or our partners currently work; including gaps in provision and potential effective partnership working opportunities for the benefit of our residents and their ability to access employment opportunities.

Report Structure

2. This final report sets out the findings of the Communities and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee review of work to Address Skills Shortages & Increase Employment Opportunities in Gateshead.
3. The report includes:
 - The scope and aims of the review
 - How the review was undertaken
 - Summaries of key points from evidence gathering sessions
 - Analysis – issues and challenges
 - Emerging recommendations.

Scope and aims of the review

4. The scope of the review was to examine the existing approach to tackling skills shortages and maximising the take-up of local employment opportunities with appropriately skilled individuals from the resident workforce.
5. It was agreed that the above would be considered in terms of the context of:

- Educational attainment – improving the performance of young people in early years and at school (up to Key Stage 4).
 - Post-16 education and training – the opportunities for post-16 learners both in full-time education and work-based settings.
 - Post-18 education and widening participation in HE; Workforce Development – training and progression for those in-work
 - Skills support for the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment - addressing skills requirements for the unemployed and economically inactive.
 - Increasing employment opportunities for local people – maximising the take-up of local jobs by unemployed and under-employed residents.
6. It was agreed that the review would have an employment-related focus and will examine the provision and attainment of young people in compulsory and post-16 education through to the support and lifelong learning provided to those over 50 in the workforce.

Policy Context

7. National funding and policy changes have and continue to see a step-change in education and training delivery across the country. This in turn, has an impact on Gateshead learners and the strategic direction of providers and institutions. Key policy drivers include:
- The **Industrial Strategy** sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It includes ambitions around a new technical education system and investment in skills and employment provision for key sectors such as digital.
 - The **Careers Strategy** outlines the Government's plans to raise the quality of careers education to improve social mobility. With a focus on investing in skills development to meet the needs of workplaces of the future, the strategy calls on careers organisations, schools, colleges, universities and employers to collaborate to ensure people from all backgrounds can realise their potential.
 - The **Post-16 Skills Plan** is the Government's framework to support young people and adults to secure a lifetime of sustained skilled employment and meet the needs of the growing and rapidly changing economy.
 - The Government have set out their vision for Apprenticeships to 2020, through the publication of '**English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision**' which include substantial improvement in both quality and quantity. The aim is for Apprenticeships to be an attractive offer that young people and adults aspire to go into as a high quality and prestigious path to a successful career.
 - The Government intends to undertake a major review of **Post-18 education and funding** to make sure that the system is joined up and promotes access and success in all forms of post-18 education.
8. The North East's **Strategic Economic Plan** (SEP) is a comprehensive document detailing how the North East economy can grow in the coming years and how the region will create more and better jobs for the North East LEP area.

9. Gateshead's ambition, **Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives**, requires a focus on tackling inequality, particularly in addressing inability to work because of long term illness, benefit dependency, low level wages, and the attainment gap between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers. One of the pledges is to invest in our economy to provide sustainable opportunities for employment, innovation and growth across the borough.

Review Methodology

10. The review comprised five evidence gathering sessions. Evidence was sought from the Economic Development Service, LearningSkills, Care, Wellbeing and Learning Service, Gateshead College, Emmanuel College, Northumbria University, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Skills for Care, the Education Development Trust and a local resident. The sessions were designed to examine the current approach to skills, careers, getting in to and remaining in work and can be grouped into these five main activities:

- Improving pre-16 careers guidance
- Increasing participation and understanding of post-16 and post-18 opportunities and choices
- Addressing skills gaps and improving career progression opportunities
- Reducing unemployment and barriers to work
- Addressing the skills needs of the future and maximising opportunities for residents

First Evidence Gathering Summary

11. Presenters at this first evidence gathering session provided an overview of early years childcare and parental employment, as well as an overview of North East Ambition, a regional programme of activity that centres on the Gatsby Good Career Guidance Benchmarks.
12. Jan Batchelor, Childcare Support Lead Officer presented the national picture regarding where you start in life, still so often determines where you finish and that whilst talent is spread evenly across the country, opportunity is not. Key points included:
- Pre-school has a positive and long-term impact on children's attainment, progress and social-behavioural development
 - At school entry (age 5), attending pre-school improved children's academic and social outcomes with an early start (before 3 years of age) and attending a high-quality setting being particularly beneficial.
 - At age 11, high quality pre-school was especially important for boys, pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds through enhanced maths outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and for those of low qualified parents.
 - At age 14, (Key Stage 3), those who attended high quality pre-school had higher attainment and better social-behavioural development. By age 16 (Key stage 4) attending a high-quality pre-school predicted better GCSE results.
 - In terms of Early Education and Childcare in Gateshead, research has shown the importance of high-quality provision in improving outcomes for children.

- Within Gateshead 96% of childminders and 100% of private, voluntary and independent nurseries, pre-schools and out of school clubs have been graded by Ofsted as either “good” or “outstanding”.
- The percentage of children in Gateshead achieving at least expected levels across the Early Learning Goals covering the three prime areas of learning in 2017/18 is 84.60%. This figure compares with the North East average of 79.20% and the national average of 79%.

13. Jan went on to note that there are, however, some challenges in Gateshead, which have been identified as follows:

- The early years entitlements are funded from the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The amount Local Authorities receive from government has been challenged nationally. There is no commitment from Government to review funding allocations before 2020 and this may lead to some providers becoming unsustainable.
- Children’s two-year integrated assessment provides an opportunity for health visitors and early years practitioners to identify children who would benefit from additional support at an early stage.
- This assessment requires review in order that it remains fit for purpose and informs effective allocation of resources.
- Childminder recruitment and retention is an issue
- Since 2012 there has been a national decrease in the number of childminders of 27%, in Gateshead this figure stands at 31%
- Childminders generally provide the most flexible provision
- There is a recruitment campaign underway to increase the profile of childminding and to encourage and support to registration.

14. Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator Careers Education, North East LEP presented the North East Strategic Economic Plan and the challenges around skills including:

- Ensuring the workforce has the skills required
- Attracting and retaining the workforce within the region
- Supporting young people to understand the labour market to make more informed choices

15. Ryan went on to explain North East Ambition, primarily aiming for ‘every young person in the North East being able to identify routes to a successful working life’. He talked about the recent pilot and intention to roll out the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks programme to all schools in the region and following work with Gateshead Council, the LEP have managed to engage with the vast majority of Gateshead schools, together working with them to adapt the benchmarks and enrol on the enterprise advisor programme.

16. By the end of 2018, the LEP aims to:

- Support every secondary school to adopt the benchmarks
- Ensure every secondary school has at least one strategic Enterprise Adviser
- Deliver mentoring programmes to ensure all and every student has access to the right type of guidance and support
- Develop and roll out a pilot benchmark programme for primary schools in the NE LEP area.

Second Evidence Gathering Summary

17. Presenters at the second evidence gathering session provided an overview of extra-curricular activity at school and post-16 learning.
18. Matt Waterfield, Principal at Emmanuel College, gave an overview of the vocational and co-curricular options on offer to students at Emmanuel College, including the importance of that offer being well supported by a wide range of local businesses. Key points included:
 - Good career guidance is key to social mobility; showing young people, whatever their social and family background, the options available to them to set them on the path to a rewarding future career
 - The school is working towards achieving the Good career guidance benchmarks, challenges have included:
 - i. Ensuring every child accesses their entitlement regardless of background
 - ii. Engagement with parents on aspiration and ambition
 - iii. Importance of tracking progress through careers advice pathways from year 7
 - iv. Opportunities for students to talk to employers 'face to face' and benefit from mentoring
 - v. Smart and effective ways of directing students to the right employer/workplace experiences
 - vi. Help students navigate the market place of HE and apprenticeship opportunities
 - vii. Maintain expertise and up to date information across the staff team
19. Matt discussed the difficulties young people face around options and how informed they are as to whether the routes they choose lead on to employment opportunities. Matt talked about the importance of young people having the opportunity to engage with a number of different sources both in terms of education and employment encounters throughout their secondary school career.
20. Kevin Marston, Assistant Principal at Gateshead College provided an overview of the Government's/Department for Education's drive to reform Technical Education by the introduction of Tech or T Levels.
21. T-Levels are currently being piloted across 54 Ofsted rated outstanding or good providers nationally, two of which are in Gateshead – Gateshead College and St Thomas More. They are a new Level 3 technical study programmes and will consist of five key components:
 - Level 3 technical qualification
 - A 45-60-day work placement with one employer
 - Maths, English and Digital skills
 - Other occupation specific requirements – license to practice for example
 - Employability, enrichment and pastoral skills

22. Kevin discussed the need for a change was identified as work placements are not common place and it is known employers want students to be leaving college or sixth form equipped with practical skills for specific roles, as well as general employability skills. Therefore, the main difference with T-levels is the introduction of the 45-day work placement, being occupationally specific and focussed on developing technical and practical skills. Some of the challenges of this within the pilot have included:
- Employers feeling overloaded to provide the work placements
 - Financial constraints for SME's to accommodate students for that length of time
 - Some sectors are more difficult than others – i.e. digital sector regarding confidentiality
 - Pre-16 careers information, advice and guidance, remain patchy.
23. He discussed the need to deliver parity in relation to vocational training verses more academic routes such as A Levels. This work comes in response to employers reporting that learners are not displaying the core behaviours and skills they require for their business needs from the current vocational models.
24. Kevin Pearson, Principal Manager, learningSkills provided an overview on the benefits of learning and how this supports the Council's Thrive agenda as well as learningSkills' delivery of provision to disadvantaged groups and its ability to reach deprived communities.
25. Kevin advised the Committee there remains an issue with low qualification levels in Gateshead, key points included:
- There are 13,000 working age people in Gateshead with no educational qualification and over 36,000 without a full level 2 qualification.
 - Of the 12,200 learners, 1,884 are unemployed, 501 have a learning disability and 1,321 with a physical disability.
 - 75% of learners are from deprived wards in Gateshead.
 - There has been a 30% reduction in adult learners due to increased complexity in funding and a 35% decrease apprenticeship take up since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and the national apprenticeship reforms.
 - There has been a significant increase in the social support and mental health needs of learners
 - The service is funded by the ESFA and whilst there remains uncertainty and change in funding and policy, such as devolution of the adult skills budget and turmoil within the apprenticeship schemes, there has been no increase in the hourly rate for delivery for the last 5 years
26. Not precluding the points raised above, Kevin felt there are still reasons to be optimistic; young people are productive and have an amazing capacity to learn; FE staff are resilient, imaginative and committed and the sector has massively improved over the last 10 years.

Third Evidence Gathering Summary

27. Presenters at the third evidence gathering session provided an overview of post-18 learning and higher education, as well as in-work progression and career development from the perspective of the social care sector.

28. Dr Emma Barron, Business Development Manager and Catherine Manley, Access, Success and Progression Manager, both from Northumbria University updated the Committee on current levels of access for underrepresented groups, outreach activities, developing employability skills, alternative routes into HE, employer engagement and employment and student enterprises. Key points included:

- The Office of Fair Access expect all universities have in place an access and participation plan and highlight who universities need to consider as target groups, including those from low participation areas, estranged from families etc.
- Currently 19% of students at Northumbria are from low participation neighbourhoods, against a target of 21%
- Northumbria run various outreach programmes both pre and post 16, to try and develop confidence with people when applying to university as well as raising aspirations.
- Northumbria also has a strong focus on employability skills with programmes such as:
 - i. Careers employability award – an online tool for all students to gain skills, strengths and achievements in employability
 - ii. Degree content which has been informed by employers and accrediting bodies
 - iii. Northumbria Employability Framework – where courses reflect career developing learning opportunities and employer engagement.

29. Emma talked about degree level apprenticeships as well as the offer of foundation years which helps to prepare students for a degree programme, particularly for those who require entry at lower level UCAS tariff points. This provides students with the chance to experience university-style teaching and gain study skills to prepare them for undergraduate study.

30. Emma also talked about the importance of graduate entrepreneurship and Northumbria's student and graduate support scheme, running since 2004, supporting graduates who wish to set up their own enterprise. Key achievements include:

- Active businesses resulting from this scheme are generating £83m turnover per annum, with the creation of 1,100 jobs.
- Typically, the university sees 30 start ups per year.
- Working in partnership with Gateshead Council to offer incubation space in Council business centres as part of the Graduates in Gateshead scheme.
- Northumbria University are ranked 1st in the UK for supporting Graduate enterprises and has been for the last four out of five years.

31. Peter Northrop, Locality Manager at Skills for Care, spoke to the Committee about the picture of skills gaps and career progression within the Social Care and Health Sector. Whilst Peter highlighted some of the issues he faces in his particular sector, a lot of the issues around perceptions of the sector, unsociable hours, pay, attracting talent, gender stereotyping etc. are all issues which can be applied across a great many sectors and are not unique to the Social Care and Health sector.

32. Peter introduced the sector by highlighting the number of jobs in Social Care in Gateshead and the predicted 33% rise by 2035, due to an ageing population and increased demand for services. He also spoke of the percentage of jobs which were

vacant and emphasised the issues facing in the sector, in its capacity to meet future demand if these and predicted increase in jobs remain unfilled.

33. Peter went on to talk about some of the perceptions of the sector and asked the Committee to think about their own perceptions of Social Care, reminding members of the varying roles within the sector, not just those that immediately people associate with Social Care, such as personal care of the elderly. Those roles included:

- Personal assistant or carer
- Administrative roles
- Cleaning
- Catering
- Activities organisation
- Estates
- Nurse
- Social Worker
- Occupational Therapist
- Management, HR, Workforce Development etc.

34. With the breadth and range of careers available in the sector, it is clear to see the career progression opportunities, yet the sector still struggles to attract young people and make it a career of choice.

35. Whilst it was acknowledged part of the problem is created by the sector itself, in that a great number of employers will not take on young people until they reach the age of 18 years old and by then, quite often, young people have made alternative career decisions.

36. It was acknowledged that while the sector did have many positives:

- Adult Social Care contributes £2bn to the North East economy in 2017/2018, almost all of which was in wages
- Over 90% of care workers report high levels of job satisfaction
- In Gateshead, an average worker has almost 9 years of experience within the sector
- Long-term employment prospects due to increased demand in services
- Good training leading to recognised qualifications and progression opportunities in certain areas

There were also negatives to overcome:

- A relatively flat structure meaning some limited progression opportunities in certain areas
- High levels of low pay and low skilled entry level jobs give perceptions of it being a sector for those with limited qualifications as opposed to a career of choice

37. As with careers in any sector, it was acknowledged the importance of inspiring young people at an early age and for businesses and sector representatives to work with schools to access young people to inspire and motivate them as to the career opportunities available and labour market information regarding availability of jobs in the future.

Fourth Evidence Gathering Summary

38. Presenters at the fourth evidence gathering session provided an overview of retaining and retraining staff, particularly for those people at risk of redundancy or falling out of employment, where their jobs are becoming more technical or diminishing due to automation and those who are no longer able to fulfil their role due to caring, health or age barriers. This session will also look at the current position for those who have fell out of work and/or are furthest from the labour market and what support is available to them to get back into work.
39. Carly Hinds, Operations Manager at the Education Development Trust spoke to the Committee about the Fuller Working Lives Project, in partnership with DWP and the NE LEP. The aim of which is to increase retention of older workers within the labour market and to change the perception of employers and individuals.
40. Carly talked about the fact that the population is ageing, and it is therefore inevitable people need to stay in work for longer to reap both the financial and health benefits of being in employment.
41. However, Carly explained that the current 50 plus working generation face a unique set of issues not seen in earlier generations, of additional caring responsibilities. Those who are 50 plus have the increased chance of working full time and still having dependants, as well as the possibility of having caring responsibilities for elderly relatives.
42. The Fuller Working Lives project supports older workers to remain in work through engagement with employers to facilitate dialogue between the employee and employer to support them during the remainder of their career, looking at flexible working opportunities, understanding the needs and aspirations of the employee as well as increasing retention of staff and realising individuals' potential.
43. Carly also explained the project offers businesses support via:
- Consultancy support to help with succession planning
 - Careers Fairs to get those 50 plus customers back into work
 - Careers reviews between employees and employers.
44. There have been some challenges with the project to date, including:
- NE employers, which acknowledging they face an issue with an older workforce, have been unable to prioritise what could be a problem in 10 years' time, now in a difficult economic environment
 - SME's have been reluctant to engage with the project, feeling it is a threat to allow access to their employees.
45. The Committee then heard from Martin McDonnell, Employment Development Lead and Julie Killick, Employment Services Team Manager, both from the Economic Development Service.
46. Martin talked to members about the current employment and unemployment position in Gateshead, key points included:

- The employment rate in Gateshead stands at 73.4%, higher than the North East but lower than the GB average, however unemployment is also higher than the North East and significantly higher than the GB average at 4.2%.
- Redundancies, seen across many areas in the country, have fortunately had little or no impact in Gateshead, so this cannot be seen to account for the increase in unemployment.
- Universal Credit has gathered pace over the last 12 months, with six former discrete benefit types being replaced by this overarching benefit.
- There remains 8,300 people on Employment Support Allowance.

As far as employment opportunities are concerned, there were some real positives:

- Gateshead has a very robust labour market, with employment sites at Team Valley, Blaydon and Felling, all of which have good infrastructures in place, close to major road and rail networks
- Job density is at 0.81 in Gateshead, compared to 0.73 in the North East.
- Development in Gateshead is expected to bring somewhere in the region of 10,000 jobs by 2030, many of which are hoped to be better quality following the development of Follingsby Max, Gateshead Quays and Baltic Quarter.

47. Julie talked about those residents who are being supported by the Employment Services Team and quite often they are just coping. With a range of complex and sometimes personal barriers to work, the Team aims to support residents and works intensively in partnership with other services, delivering several support schemes including:

- Generation NE – providing support to 18-29-year olds
- Building Better Opportunities, Wise Steps – supporting those furthest from the labour market
- Links to Work – supporting those who are long-term unemployed (24 months plus)
- Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme – support for Syrian Refugees
- Families Gateshead – employment support for those coming under the Families Gateshead scheme
- Make a Change Project – new Economic Development project funded through the European Social Fund

48. Julie also mentioned the importance of the co-located services provided by Economic Development in partnership with both DWP and The Gateshead Housing Company, particularly in a space which is fraught with challenges including:

- Who the support can help
- When support can be provided
- How individuals can be supported
- Restrictive eligibility criteria
- Numbers are capped based on targets
- Over reliance on EU funding
- Fragmented provider market
- Time limited nature of provision leads to a lack of continuity

- Many programmes are nationally commissioned and driven by unit cost rather than localised need.

Fifth Evidence Gathering Summary

49. Presenters at the fifth and final evidence gathering session provided an overview of the support provided to residents to access employment opportunities and businesses to employ local. The Committee also heard about the potential opportunities arising in Gateshead from current and future developments and how supporting significant numbers of unemployed or underemployed residents to take up the jobs created by council investment is an explicit demonstration of the Thrive agenda, in addition to the financial benefits arising from reduced demand and increased local spending as people move into employment.
50. Sarah Douglas, Workforce Development Lead from the Council's Economic Development Service introduced the session and talked about two new programmes which the Council, and partners have recently introduced to help inspire young people into careers and sectors within the region and increase employment opportunities for local people.
51. Sarah talked about Work Inspiration Gateshead, a partnership between the Council, Gateshead College and local businesses to enable young people to be informed and inspired about the careers and opportunities available to them. Work Inspiration was launched as part of National Careers Week in conjunction with young people from Kingsmeadow School in Dunston.
52. The main aims of Work Inspiration, as well as the provision of mentors, is around providing young people with an insight into key sectors in the borough and the region including areas such as:
 - Employability Skills Development
 - Applying for career opportunities and interviews
 - Hands on work tasks on employer premises
 - Insights into progression routes – FE, HE etc
 - Real life challenges
53. Sarah explained the importance of young people understanding what career opportunities they have in the North East, that they don't have to leave the region to access the job of their dreams. Work Inspiration aims to shout about some of the fantastic businesses here and the amazing jobs and opportunities they have on offer and the skills needed to access those jobs and the routeways to get into them.
54. Sarah also informed the Committee about the launch of Gateshead Works, another new programme, in partnership with Gateshead Council, Gateshead College, Northumbria University and DWP.
55. The aim of Gateshead Works is to maximise employment opportunities for our residents and actively encourage businesses to employ local and think beyond their normal routes to access their workforce.

56. Sarah talked about the Council already having a good track record of helping local people access jobs resulting from major developments, starting back in 2001 with the 'Quays to Employment' project and continuing with the likes of Trinity Square and the smaller town centre developments. However, with the numbers of jobs coming through the Quays, Follingsby & Baltic Quarter, alongside the house-building programme, there is an unprecedented opportunity to help thousands of residents into work.
57. The Council have therefore partnered with the local Jobcentre, Gateshead College and Northumbria University as well as internal partners such as learningSkills and GATES to enable Gateshead Works to offer a wider range of training courses and access to local candidates of all skill levels to employers - working with the University will also help with graduate retention
58. Sarah explained Gateshead Works is an opportunity to:
- Extend our current service to wider Gateshead businesses,
 - Broaden and maximise opportunities for residents, including those from disadvantaged groups who often place the highest demand on council resources; such as LAC, Disabled, NEET etc. and
 - Engage more proactively with employers around job quality (e.g. minimising the use of zero-hour contracts, promoting the real living wage), advocate for under-represented groups and encourage career progression and re-training.
59. Gateshead Works will be demand-led and will support single to large-scale recruitment campaigns for both temporary and permanent positions and will also allow us the control to exclude any terms of employment which might be considered unacceptable.
60. The Committee then heard from Neil Pilkington, Employment Adviser from Economic Development and Michaela Wiseman, a local resident supported back to work as part of the support services provided.
61. Michaela was referred to Economic Development by her JCP Work Coach in February 2018 with several barriers to employment, she is a lone parent, has some health problems and was also previously in local authority care from the age of four. Michaela was in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance at the time of her referral and was searching for part time employment and had to work around her childcare commitments.
62. Neil referred Michaela to several different courses and Michaela completed the Council's 6-week Skills Support for the Unemployed training programme, and then began receiving employment support from the Links to Work contract from April 2018. Michaela was given support by Neil to update her CV, develop her job searching skills and to successfully source and apply for suitable vacancies.
63. Michaela applied for and was successful in gaining part time employment, as a Team Member, with Burger King in Trinity Square, Gateshead in July 2018. Michaela was initially given support with her travel costs and with setting up a Universal Credit account, so that she would receive support with her housing costs. Additional financial support was also provided to Michaela, to help her with childcare costs, through the school summer holidays to allow her to sustain her employment.
64. Michaela has now been in employment with Burger King for over 6 months, telling the Committee she really enjoys the role and has received recognition by her manager for continually exceeding the individual sales targets she is given.

65. Claire Cook, Recruitment Adviser with Economic Development spoke to the Committee about her role working closely with local businesses sourcing and generating vacancies to maximise opportunities for Gateshead residents.

66. Claire advised that her work involves identifying barriers to employment for unemployed residents, identifying recruitment needs for employers and delivering an appropriate level of support and work in partnership with other council services, key stakeholders and employers to ensure that residents have access to opportunities.

67. The service is currently involved in partnership with several contracts including:

- BBO – Building Better Opportunities
- Generation North East (18-29 year old)
- Links to Work Programme
- Syrian Resettlement Programme
- Families Gateshead
- GATES – Gateshead Access to Employment Service
- Direct Payments Team
- Looked After Children Team
- DWP
- External Partners

68. Claire advised the Committee that recruiting people isn't just about the qualifications or experience, it is about personality, talent and culture.

69. The bespoke services offer a co-ordinated recruitment and skills package including:

- Labour market information
- Advice and guidance on the recruitment process
- Pre-employment training
- Advertising of vacancies
- Pre-screening of applicants prior to submission
- Premises to conduct interviews
- Recruitment events
- Dedicated point of contact throughout recruitment process

70. The service has been involved in recruitment events for Teleperformance, Taco Bell, Burger King and KFC, to name a few.

71. The Committee were advised that in the last year there have been 106 opportunities with 80 positions filled and 56 residents into employment.

Issues/Challenges emerging from the review

72. The review identified the following issues/challenges:

- Patchy careers education, information, advice and guidance
- Lack of localised labour market information
- Increased complexity in funding following the national apprenticeship reforms
- Increased social support and mental health needs of individuals
- Funding limitations within skills and employment provision

- Incorrect perceptions of certain sectors and lack of commitment from within the sector to tackle issues to overcome myths and attract talent
- Complexities of the whole employment and skills system
- Direction from nationally commissioned programmes, driven by unit cost rather than localised need
- Over reliance on European funding and uncertainties around Brexit
- The perception centrally, based on an increasing employment rate, that the unemployment problem is addressed
- Restrictive eligibility criteria on the provision of support services
- Fragmented provider market
- Time limited nature of provision can lead to a lack of continuity

Recommendations

73. The following recommendations have resulted from the evidence delivered over the term of the review:

Recommendation 1: Childminders provide the most flexible childcare provision, allowing parents to return to work. There is a need to actively encourage more residents to consider childminding as a self-employment option, including opportunities of start-up support, particularly around funding and training, through to completion of registration.

Recommendation 2: North East Ambition aims to ensure every young person in the region can identify routes to a successful working life. We need to continue support to schools around careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) and ensure young people understand the opportunities available to them in Gateshead and the North East, through the delivery of a programme of sector insights.

Recommendation 3: Support the interactions developed between businesses and schools through the Work Inspiration pilot via the establishment of a Business and Education Partnership.

Recommendation 4: Continue to support schools, including school staff CPD, to work towards and achieve the eight benchmarks of good careers guidance and supporting young people through the CEIAG Network.

Recommendation 5: Encourage and support the development of mentors, through alumni from our partners and schools, to inspire and motivate other young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recommendation 6: Encourage the relationship between FE, wider training provision and schools to develop a more collaborative approach, ensuring young people are aware of all the pathways available to them post 16, including IAG support for Apprenticeships.

Recommendation 7: Develop pathways for young people who may have been unsuccessful academically but would be successful in vocational training

Recommendation 8: Actively work with businesses to engage with post-16 learners and offer practical and meaningful work placements as part of the national shift towards technical education.

Recommendation 9: Advocate for those residents with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure parity of provision, including tailoring specific interventions to meet the needs of these residents.

Recommendation 10: Encourage the uptake of apprenticeships, in both levy and non-levy paying businesses.

Recommendation 11: Work with the NELEP and partners to ensure up to date, regional, labour market information is available to young people when they are making important FE and HE study option decisions.

Recommendation 12: Ensure all residents, including young people are encouraged and can access the appropriate routeways into higher education, post 18.

Recommendation 13: Continue to support the Graduates in Gateshead scheme to encourage graduate entrepreneurship.

Recommendation 14: Strengthen partnership arrangements with FE & HE institutions to retain talent and ensure Gateshead graduates and alumni are supported into local employment.

Recommendation 15: Myths and perceptions of employment in certain industries and sectors can result in skills gaps and hard to fill vacancies having to be filled from outside the region or not at all. We must continue to ensure young people and job seekers understand what industries can offer and the skills required to access those opportunities.

Recommendation 16: Improve access to career progression opportunities for all residents

Recommendation 17: Promote career change opportunities for those residents in work, but who may be underemployed, at risk of redundancy or looking for a career change.

Recommendation 18: Promote the Fuller Working Lives contract and undertake further work with businesses to ensure they understand the support available to them to support their ageing workforce.

Recommendation 19: Deliver Gateshead Works, a Gateshead based, demand-led recruitment service, in partnership with Gateshead College, Northumbria University and DWP to maximise employment opportunities for residents and actively encourage businesses to employ local and think beyond their normal routes to access their workforce.

Recommendation 20: Through early preparation for opportunities resulting from development, influence training and employment support partners to ensure those residents furthest from the labour market are well placed to access opportunities when they arise.

Recommendation 21: Increase advocacy to encourage employers to take on a more diverse workforce, to drive up job quality and to support career progression.

Recommendation 22: Increase the use of Social Clauses and Targeted Recruitment and Training (TR&T) methodology to secure wider Community Benefits for Gateshead residents from procurement and planning / development activities.

74. It is recommended that the Committee:

- Gives its views on the report and recommendations and agree that the final report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Contact: Sarah Douglas, Workforce Development Lead, ext. 2030