

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 December 2014



Youth Unemployment

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive and Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with further information for consideration regarding JSA claimants and the broader issue of youth unemployment in County Durham.

Background

2. On 22 September 2014, the Committee received a Performance Management Report in relation to Quarter 1 of 2014/15, from which a discussion was had with members about the reduction in the numbers of people claiming JSA and whether this was contributing to an increase in the number of people moving into employment.
3. Following the above meeting, further discussions were held with Members, the Chair and Vice-Chair to clarify what issues the Committee would like more information about. Officers agreed to focus on the 18-24 year old age group and look further into what data was available, including but not restricted to the following:
 - JSA claimant off-flow destination categories
 - Sanctions and challenges
 - Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants
 - Type of work former claimants were going in to e.g. full-time, part-time, zero hours contracts
4. On 6 October 2014, the Committee received an overview of Durham Employment and Skills (DES) and pre-employment training. While the customers supported by the work of this organisation are not restricted to younger age groups, a proportion of referrals relate to JSA claimants in the 18-24 year old category. The Committee noted that there has been a shift in referrals for customers that were in receipt of ESA and Members welcomed the offer from Officers to see first-hand the work of DES.

5. On 30 October 2014, the Committee also received a presentation from CAS about the Youth Employment Initiative in County Durham. The presentation contained data in relation to the evidence base, challenge and cost of youth unemployment, as well as providing some insights into the views of employers and young people. An outline of the Journey to Employment model, existing programmes, future opportunities and activities under the Youth Employment Initiative was also provided.

Presentation

6. In recognition of the data already provided to Members in previous reports, and the expertise, experience and knowledge available through Officers both in Regeneration and Development (RED) and Children and Adult Services (CAS), the report provides Members with a selection of headlines from JSA and other available employment related data. The data comes from a variety of sources, including NOMIS, the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Xplore stats and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
7. The presentation also offers further insights into the experiences and perceptions of young people about work. Real case studies of young people in County Durham are provided to illustrate the issues surrounding youth unemployment.
8. The presentation does not attempt to make policy recommendations. Instead, the intention is to assist members' by further raising their awareness of the issues around youth unemployment, so they can draw on context when interpreting JSA and other employment related data.

Recommendation

9. That the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the above report and the associated presentation, and consider the issues this raises.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity – None

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Discrimination Act – None

Legal Implications – None