

**ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**6 JUNE 2022**

**LEARNING DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES**

**Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the numbers of people with learning disabilities known to Leicestershire County Council who are in employment, and to advise on the emerging feasibility work to develop more supported employment opportunities. The report is provided in response to a request made by the Committee at its meeting in January 2022.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The Care Act 2014 gives the Council responsibility for ensuring there is a wide range of good quality care and support services available for people to choose from. Emphasis is placed on the importance of enabling adults with needs for care and support and carers with support needs, to participate in work, education, or training where they wish to do so.
3. The Committee has previously commented on the Adults and Communities Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-2024 set out in “Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire”, which was subsequently approved by the Cabinet. This Strategy sets out the Department’s direction of travel in its provision of care.
4. The Cabinet approved the Whole Life Disability Strategy 2017-2022 and associated protocol for young people with special educational needs or a disability “Preparing for adulthood” on 14 September 2018. As part of the Council’s commitment to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) a key focus on supporting young children in preparing for adulthood (PFA) is fundamental to providing the key skills and opportunities at a young age. This approach is embedded in the work across the region and features in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy.
5. On 22 June 2021, the Cabinet approved the procurement of a new Community Life Choices Services (CLC) Provider Framework, and the new service was implemented on 29 November 2021, with 27 provider organisations on the new framework.

**Background**

### Current ASCOF performance

6. ASCOF 1E measures the proportion of adults with learning disabilities who are receiving long-term services and are in paid employment.
7. Leicestershire's performance against ASCOF 1E in 2020/21 was 10.5% - 148 out of 1,405 - and in the top 25% of authorities in England. During 2021/22, performance fell to 9% - 113 out of 1,253 - although this may remain high enough to be in the top quartile of authorities.
8. Of the 1,253 people with learning disabilities who are recorded as receiving services as defined by the ASCOF measure:
  - 113 are recorded as in paid work, of whom, 77 work less than 16 hours per week, and 36 work more than 16 hours;
  - 1,140 are not actively seeking work;
  - 30 are seeking employment status.
9. Employment rates for adults with a Learning Disability (LD) in Leicestershire are amongst the highest in the Country with performance being in the top quartile of local authorities for the last few years.
10. As expected, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative effect on new employment opportunities, and preparation for work has in the main been paused over the last two years whilst Government restrictions have been in place.
11. The pandemic also affected CLC providers who, from March 2020 until mid-2021, had limited service provision available due to staffing capacity and social distance challenges.
12. The numbers of adults with a LD in employment remain good and voluntary work opportunities are beginning to resume. There is a strong link between employment and enhanced quality of life, including evidenced benefits for health and wellbeing.
13. Nationally the employment rates for males with a LD (5.7%) are higher than females (4.4%). In Leicestershire during 2020-21, 12.5% of males with a learning disability known to the Council were in paid employment compared to 5.7% in England. The equivalent figure for females in Leicestershire was 7.6% compared to 4.4% in England.

### Current Community Life Choices Services Provision

14. The CLC Provider Framework was reopened on 27 April 2022 to allow other organisations demonstrating the required standards to enter the framework, further expanding choice, and geographical coverage for people using the service. The key outcomes for the Council's CLC service are:
  - The development of skills and confidence for more independent living;
  - Maximising health and wellbeing;
  - Supporting carers' health and wellbeing, including facilitating access to employment, education and training;

- Providing a choice as to when and where services are delivered.
15. The Council currently has eight providers on the CLC framework who offer some degree of work experience, training or the development of work skills in various formats.
  16. In pursuit of its ambitions relating to supported employment, the Council has commenced a feasibility study to develop its future approach and enable more people to access training for the workplace and employment. A number of options as outlined below are being considered through a cross-departmental working group comprising adult social care, adult learning, and learning and development functions.

### **Future options for supported employment ambitions**

17. The County Council has submitted an Expression of Interest in a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) project which would enable 20 selected local authorities to be awarded funding to support adults with learning disabilities and/or autism in receipt of social care into paid employment.
18. However further information from the DWP with the detail of aspects of the scheme for the Councils considering applying, would suggest that this scheme may present too much of a financial risk to the Council due to the payment mechanisms suggested, together with some concerns in relation to governance and management information requirements.
19. A more sustainable local approach which could prove more cost-effective in the longer term is being considered, with the flexible use of personal budgets resulting in a higher prospect of long-term paid employment. This may include working with existing contracted CLC providers or the use of specialist providers of employment based support working with the Council.
20. The Council is preparing a response to the newly announced Multiply project as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This project gives Leicestershire the option to access significant funds over the next three years. Funding will be confirmed on submission of an investment plan which is currently being developed. A key target area for this funding will focus on adults (post 19) with a disability to support with money management/numeracy skills. The scheme will also work with employers to provide mutual opportunities for both learners and businesses.

### **Resource Implications**

21. Should the Council bid and be successful in joining the DWP scheme outlined in paragraph 17 above, additional establishment resource will be needed to make the project a success (e.g. 1 FTE at Grade 12 for the duration of the project).
22. Bidding Councils must outline a scheme for between 60 and 140 people, with a maximum of £3,500 per person provided by DWP, with the local authority offering a degree of match funding of a minimum of £1,500 per person.
23. Notwithstanding the opportunity to apply for external funding support, the current pressure on the Council's medium term financial strategy is such that any development of employment based support would need to be contained within

existing budgets and demonstrate both improved outcomes for individuals and a sustainable financial position for the Council.

24. The Multiply project is one element of the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund with £559m in funding made available nationally to local authorities and devolved areas across three years. The County Council has been allocated £2.9m over three years with the local programme starting in September 2022 following submission of a robust Investment Plan at the end of June 2022.
25. A Programme Board has been established to oversee the initiative and will ensure that links and joint working opportunities with providers (Educational/businesses) are in place to support delivery of the Multiply project over the duration of the funding.
26. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

### **Conclusions**

27. Despite the challenges of the past two years, the Department remains a high performer in the ASCOF indicator for people with a LD in paid employment and although numbers have decreased the Department's ambition to support people into employment is strong.
28. Work will need to take place with local employers and CLC service providers to achieve the Department's ambition of wellbeing and opportunity for the people who are actively seeking employment.

### **Background papers**

Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24

Whole Life Disability Strategy

<https://leics.sharepoint.com/sites/childrenandfamilyservices/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fchildrenandfamilyservices%2FShared%20Documents%2Fwhole%2Dlife%2Ddisability%2Dstrategy%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fchildrenandfamilyservices%2FShared%20Documents>

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/12/2/SEND-LLR-Joint-Commissioning-Strategy-2021-24-Easy-Read.pdf>

Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 24 January 2022 – National Performance Benchmarking 2020/21 and Performance Report 2021/22

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6838&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet: 22 June 2021 – Procurement of Community Life Choice Services

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6444&Ver=4>

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

29. None.

**Equality and Human Rights Implications**

30. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report. Any ongoing work that results from the feasibility study (paragraph 16) will be subject to an individual Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment. People with learning disabilities are within the group of people with protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and as such the Council is under a duty to advance equality of opportunity between this group and those who do not share this protected characteristic.

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