

Adults and Health Committee – June 2025

Written responses to questions raised by Committee Members

Question 1:

Members requested details of the Earmarked Reserves. Officers committed to sharing the minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee which took place on the 12 June 2025 concerning the Earmarked Reserves, so that members could see the discussion and the proposed amendments to the recommendations which took place.

Response 1:

The details were contained within the [Corporate Policy Minutes available here](#) on page 2.

Question 2:

Members requested details of the successes the Cheshire East Supported Employment Team had had over recent years, and details of the 55 sustainments in paragraph 7 of the report.

Response 2:

Cheshire East Council Supported Employment Team 2024/25:

Outputs 2024/25	Outcomes 2024/25	Impact 2024/25
691 people supported with skills (Includes Multiply, E34 Basic Life and Career Skills and E36 Digital Skills)	648 completers 323 people getting accredited qualifications 108 Non-Accredited Course / completing the programme	691 people closer to employment / improved confidence
Outputs 2023/24 (academic year)	Outcomes 2023/24 (academic year)	Impact 2023/24 (academic year)
47 people aged 16-25 who hold an (EHCP) were on the Supported Internships programme	25 securing paid employment within 12 months 3 gained a voluntary role 3 moved onto further training	47 people becoming more independent through work

Outputs 2024/25	Outcomes 2024/25	Impact 2024/25
252 people started on programme with the internal Supported Employment Team or Fedcap team to find volunteering or paid employment	91 people found a volunteering role 71 people found a paid role 2 people became self-employed	252 people now have more confidence/ reduced isolation/etc. 69 people sustained employment for longer than 13 weeks

The service was delivered through a mix of internal delivery and outsourced commissioned provision.

National Context

The Work and Health Programme Pioneer achieved a 40% Programme Start to Job Start conversion rate and a 16% sustainment rate.

Cheshire East Delivery

The Inspiring futures programme was an externally commissioned service to work with customers who are economically inactive. These are customers who are identified as having disabilities and health conditions and have limited capability for work.

The programme was specifically designed to support individuals who were facing multiple barriers to employment due to health conditions or disabilities. Many participants had either never worked or had been out of the workforce for several years, which presented significant challenges in re-entering the labour market.

The targets that were set for provider were in line with national expectations as follows:

November 2023 – March 2025	Programme Targets	Actual Achieved	Actual %age Achieved
Job Starts	100	120	120%
Sustainment's	50	55	110%

Some of the further detailed outputs which led to these achievements are below:

889	Cheshire East residents were referred to the programme for support
211	Starts on Programme
120	First Job starts
32	Subsequent Job Starts (Participants moving from a voluntary role to a paid role, or supported to find an alternative opportunity)
*55	Sustainment's (Participants in work for 13 weeks or more)

**Customers who started work during the final quarter of the programme (Jan-March 2025) were not able to be included in the sustainment figures because their anticipated sustainment dates were after the year 3 contract end. (This was a total of 14 customers, if these were removed from the calculation the sustainment achievement percentage would be 52%).*

Both targets set were exceeded by the commissioned provider with 46% of customers sustaining work for 13 weeks or more.

There were a variety of reasons why customers did not sustain employment which included:

- **Ill-health**, or changes in customers health & wellbeing
- Changes in customers **personal circumstances**
- Customer **commitment to work** and understanding of work-place behaviours and expectations
- Customers who **tried different roles** to build confidence and find the right 'fit' for example 1 customer trialed 4 x roles, before sustaining employment
- Some roles were **casual / seasonal** and were undertaken to build confidence and skills
- Customers started a **volunteering role initially** and then moved into a paid role, as per their agreed action plan
- Customers required **further support** at work
- In some cases, this was a customer's first job following **long-term unemployment** and required more time to adjust.

Question 3:

Members requested details of the levels of referrals Cheshire East was taking, and how the investment made by Cheshire East Council differs from that of CWAC and Warrington Borough Council.

Response 3:

DWP have utilised a complex data set, including IMD and population Demographics to accurately determine programme start targets for each individual Local Authority.

Extract from DWP Grant Guidance: The Grant Formula estimates shares of total volumes and total funding. The Grant Formula has been designed to estimate volumes and funding in a consistent and transparent way, using the same publicly available data sources with Local Authority level data for all areas as far as possible. Shares of total volumes are estimated based on an area's working age population and demand indicators, which include the proportion who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness, disability employment gap, and measures of deprivation (for disadvantaged groups Participants). Shares of total funding are based on estimated volumes with cost adjustments to reflect variations in staffing and premises costs and the additional costs faced by rural areas. As the scale of delivery will depend on Delivery Plans, the indicative unit costs (relative to total funding levels) better express the Grant Formula's cost adjustments. Indicative estimates for the number of Programme Starts at peak and the overall unit cost are provided for information and to assist with the framing of planning. **They are not guaranteed. Funding and volumes for each Accountable Body will be agreed as part of the approved Delivery Plan and the Grant Funding Agreement.**

[Connect to Work: Grant Guidance for England - GOV.UK](#)

The DWP Supported Employment Programme Grant Guidance confirms the performance measures as below:

Job starts – Performance Measures

- At least 50% of total Programme Starts to achieve first earnings ('Out-of-Work' Participants).
- To be achieved up to 456 calendar days from the Participant's programme start date, or if extended up to 638 calendar days from the start date.
- Note that first earnings are any allowable earnings recorded by HMRC PAYE data.

Job Outcomes – Performance Measures

- At least 40% 'Out-of-Work' Participants of total Programme Starts to achieve a Lower Threshold Job Outcome. Earnings threshold calculation (9hrs x 13 weeks x NLW) and Self-employed equivalent measured over 13 cumulative weeks.
- To be achieved up to 456 calendar days from the Participant's start date, or if extended up to 638 calendar days from the start date.

- At least 29% 'Out-of-Work' Participants of total Programme Starts to achieve a Higher Threshold Job Outcome. Earnings threshold calculation (18 hrs x 26 weeks x NLW) and Self-employed equivalent measured over 26 cumulative weeks.
- To be achieved up to 456 calendar days from the Participant's start date, or if extended up to 638 calendar days from the start date.
- At least 80% of 'In-Work' Retention Support Participants to achieve a Higher Threshold Job Outcome (higher only – Employed and Self-employed Job Outcomes). Earnings threshold calculation (18 hrs x 26 weeks x NLW) and Self-employed equivalent measured over 26 cumulative weeks.
- To be achieved up to 365 calendar days from the Participant's start date.

Although the Connect to Work 2 programme is targeting some of the same cohort of economically inactive residents, the delivery model differs to the current Inspiring Futures model so a direct comparison with the number of programme starts required to achieve Job starts and sustainment volumes wouldn't correlate.

Connect to Work model differences compared with Inspiring Futures:

- Economically inactive residents in priority groups (disabled or in specified disadvantaged group)
- Support for residents who are in work already but at risk of losing that employment and need support to retain their role
- All outcomes are for paid work, not voluntary roles
- Outcomes are defined between full-time and part-time roles and earnings from HMRC real-time data is used to verify performance
- There is a longer period of time for WPO's (Work Placement Officer) to work with programme starts, compared with IF (up to 12 months with possible extensions) IF is a shorter contract in terms of timescale, and works on the premise that programme starts will move into work within 4-8 weeks of starting with the provider.

Question 4:

Members requested details of how officers would ensure the Connect to Word programme would support people living in rural areas.

Response 4:

Economically inactive people in Cheshire & Warrington total – 100,000+ aged between 16-64.

Economically inactive people in Cheshire East total – 49,600 aged between 16-64.

The Supported Employment Team will be expected to track all people that start the programme by a range of data so communication efforts can be targeted where uptake is low.

A robust engagement and marketing plan will focus on promotion of the programme and specific barriers to services that those individuals in rural locations across Cheshire East experience. The team will also seek to use a range of community

venues to ensure opportunities to engage with the service are accessible to those without transport or in rural locations.

Where a customer, due to disability, qualifies for Access to Work and Fares to Work we support applications and utilise these available resources.

Data is taken from the Evaluation Report for UKSPF People & Skills for Year 3 2024-2025, and provides evidence that marketing and promotional activity reached those in rural locations and harder to reach communities and they did access the UKSPF People & Skills programmes:

The table shows the 511 programme beneficiaries' location by care community area:

Care Community	Total
CHAW	3%
SMASH	12%
Nantwich & R	5%
BDP	5%
CHOC	28%
Macclesfield	24%
Crewe	22%
Knutsford	2%
Unidentified	1%
Total	100%

Question 5:

Members queried details in the table provided on page 147 of the agenda pack.

Response 5:

Query – scheme coded as ‘Other’:

- Planning guidance information in relation to expenditure coding:
- The use of ‘Other’ should be used when the scheme is not adequately represented by the above scheme types.

Query – scheme recorded as ‘Grants’:

- As part of the system blueprint developments, system leaders understood that to support good health and wellbeing within our communities, we require to have the right services in the right places that create those healthy neighbourhoods.
- The Healthy Neighbourhoods Fund was developed to help reduce health inequalities and to support the creation of a sustainable health and care system through a grants fund that will support the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in the borough to respond to the needs of their beneficiaries through intervention, advice and support.
- The Grant £182,860 was awarded to VCFSE across Cheshire East.