

OPEN FOR PUBLICATION

Adults and Health Committee

18th November 2024

Supported Employment – Proposed Policy Position

**Report of: Helen Charlesworth-May, Executive Director of Adults,
Health and Integration**

Report Reference No: AH/05/2024-25

Wards Affected: All Wards

For Decision or Scrutiny: Scrutiny

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to set out the rationale for investing in supported employment and describes the best practice approaches. The Council looks to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of supported employment within the borough, irrespective of the means of delivery. This will form an integral part of our transformation of learning disability services.
- 2 This is aligned to the following Corporate Plan objectives:
 - Increase the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs (page 17)
 - Increase in care-experienced young people who go on to further education, employment and training (page 21)
 - Leisure, life and meaningful employment opportunities are developed to improve life chances for young adults (page 22)
- 3 This content of report is also aligned to the endorsed policies presented to Corporate Policy Committee on 21 March 2024: “Cheshire East Approach to Transformation”. This sets in out in paragraph 2.1:
 - Support the Council to address the 4-year funding gap of £100m as outlined in the MTF5.

- 4 In addition it is aligned to the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy February 2024. On page 41 in the Adult Social Care section, it states:
 - ...there is more work to do across all elements and the savings proposals contained within this budget focus on core Care Act principles of prevent, reduce, delay for all adults who seek to draw on care and support. There are two programmes of work which will form the core of our transformation strategy over the period of the MTFs, one focusing on the work we do with people aged 18 – 64, and one focused on the work we do with people over the age of 65
- 5 This report sets out an approach to developing quality outcomes for adults and young people and at the same time, bring about significant and long-lasting cost savings. These elements will underpin the development of a Supported Employment Strategy.

Executive Summary

- 6 This report sets out the rationale for investing in supported employment and describes the best practice approaches.
- 7 The aim is to ensure that any provision (commissioned or provided directly), maintains a high-fidelity adherence to the Supported Employment model¹, which will yield effective value-for-money outcomes for people who use the services, significant savings and ensure that all opportunities to maximise external income are taken. This is a recommended policy position which will be incorporated into the creation of a Supported Employment Strategy.

8 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Adults and Health Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the content of the report and request a further paper comes back to Adults and Health Committee when there is a substantive decision to be made.

Background

- 9 Supported employment is fundamentally important because it creates opportunities for people with additional needs to achieve their ambitions and live the life they choose.
- 10 The people with most to gain from the support we are able to provide, are set out in the table below, together with the rationale for support, the outcomes sought and achieved.

Cohort	Why?	Outcomes
<p>People known to social care with an existing support package. This will include people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health conditions and physical/sensory conditions.</p>	<p>Supporting people who have been assessed as having an eligible need under the Care Act is a statutory duty. Around 70% of adults with learning disabilities want to work. This equates to around 620 people known to Adult Social Care in Cheshire East. Currently around 90 people from this cohort are in paid work. As people are supported into work, their care packages reduces. On average this equates to £4,148 per year on going savings per person. Quite often, initial support is intense, but this reduces over time (typically 6 months). This dynamic model of service delivery allows for a constant moving on to new referrals which is a highly cost-effective approach, compared to static PA hours or day service sessions. At the same time, this approach generates long-lasting outcomes for people and can solve some recruitment challenges for employers.</p> <p>DWP services and DWP commissioned out services do not have a mandate and resource to support this cohort effectively and therefore will focus their efforts on people with less complex needs.</p>	<p>CEC customers gain long-lasting independence outcomes and cost savings are routinely achieved.</p>
<p>Care leavers and veterans.</p>	<p>Care leavers and veterans may not always have a costed care support package. However, as a Council we have duties as a corporate parent and our commitment to the Military Covenant.</p>	<p>It is widely known that people from these cohorts do tend to have a greater interaction with health and social care services. Early intervention through employment support can be a great boost to their overall well-being and help to reduce the reliance on</p>

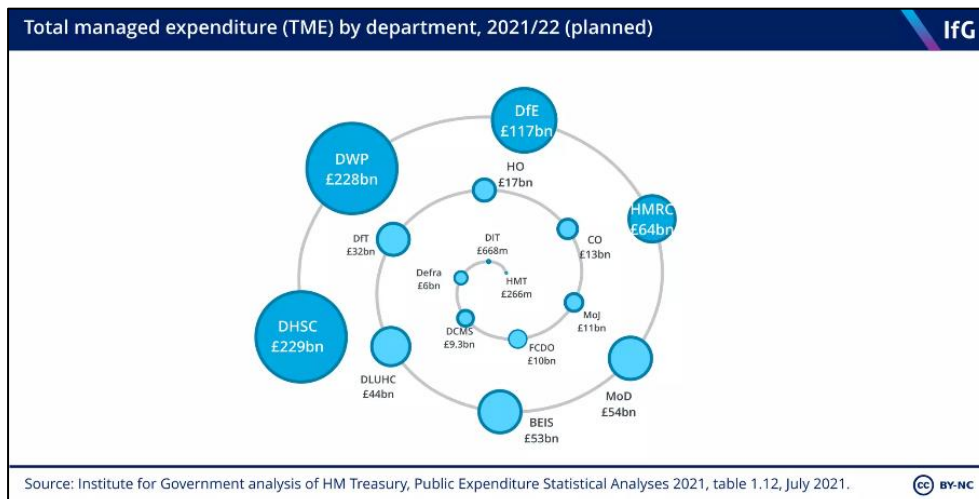
		services and benefits.
Young disabled people in transition	Cheshire East Council has over the past 4 years, developed a UK-leading Supported Internship offer for young people in transition with an Education Health Care Plan. This has been achieved by adopting the best practice model of supported employment and making extensive use of in-work 1:1 PAs supporting and training the interns, all fully funded through Access to Work. It makes good sense (both for great outcomes and external funding) to continue, to extend and develop supported internships further and to explore supported apprenticeships	Young disabled people with an EHCP gain long-lasting independence outcomes and cost savings are routinely achieved.

We know from the data and information that there is a clear increase in the number of Education and Health Care Plans and that this has long-term implications for people's quality of life in adulthood. This also has the potential to drive increasing costs in adult social care.

Cheshire East Education Health Care Plan Statistics				
	People aged 18+ with an EHCP	No. of these young people with a current funded package	Total cost to adult social care per week	Total cost to adult social care per year
2018	698	133	£105,340	£5.48m
2020	953	176	£157,260	£8.18m
2023	1436	230	£195,290	£10.16

- 11 The number of supported interns for 2024/25 is expected to be at least 60 an increase from the previous year's 42. The average unit annual cost avoidance savings from the table above (from 2023) is £44,174 per person supported.
- 12 The average in-year progression rate into paid employment on the supported internship programme is 74%. This means that there is an expectation that at least 44 will achieve long-lasting outcomes with a total on-going annual saving of just over £1.9m.

- 13 The Cheshire East and UK trend is evidencing a clear upturn in the number of economically inactive people. This includes those people on benefits that do not require them to look for work. This typically, is the persona of the people we support in adult social care. Research is indicating that there has been a significant and on-going rise in this cohort since the pandemic.
- 14 The number of people claiming Universal Credit (UC) and out of work in Cheshire & Warrington has increased from c.19k in April 2019 to c.46k in March 2024. The number of claimants not required to look for work has increased from 5,400 in April 2019 to 27,000 in February 2024. The number out of work on UC in Cheshire and Warrington that have been so for more than three years increased by almost 23,000 between April 2019 and April 2024, an eighteen-fold increase (from 1,342 to 24,149). In March 2024 those claiming for more than three years accounted for 52% of all claims compared with 7% of all claims in April 2019.
- 15 It is clear that central government policy is increasingly focused on tackling economic inactivity and long-term unemployment.



- 16 The Department of Work and Pensions is the second largest government department by spend. The chart above sets out spend by department.
- 17 Alongside this, [Published data](#) shows that between 2019 and 2022 (in Quarter 3, July to September), the number of [economically inactive](#) people (aged 16 to 64 years) in the UK increased by almost 500,000, from 8.6 to 9.0 million (seasonally adjusted). Most of this increase comes from those who are among the youngest and oldest working-age people.
- 18 This increasing trend of economic inactivity and the new government measures and programmes to tackle this, was one of the principle developments in recent Autumn (2023) and Spring (2024) statements. There will be two new opportunities to address the challenges outlined above.

Universal Support (Now renamed Connect to Work)

- 19 All councils will be receiving DWP funds to deliver a new programme called Connect to Work. This is to focus on economically inactive people and uses the models as outlined above. It is likely that this money could be used to at least part-fund (if not fully fund), the members of the team who are currently funded through the base-budget for three years.
- 20 Initial indications are that the level of investment will also allow for an expansion of the team over this funding period. This will increase the number of great outcomes for people with disabilities and generate further cost savings. It is to be recommended for this service to be partly commissioned out and partly delivered directly. Due to the general election, this programme has been delayed and is now expected to start between April and September 25. (£13.5m for Cheshire East, West and Warrington).

Access to Work +

- 21 *Access to Work + is a new and enhanced version of its predecessor. It offers employers on-going annual grants if they take on a person with disabilities. It can also fund up to £35 per hour for 1:1 in-work PA support for as long as it is needed. This will enable more people with significant disabling conditions to be supported into work. The specialised training that support staff need to train people 1:1 in the work place is also currently free. It would be possible to offer development opportunities for existing CEC employed care staff to receive this training and support people with existing costed support plans into work. On analysis, the figures show that Access to Work + could in each case, fund up to a grade 7 staff position with on-costs and expenses.

*Paused now until Autumn 24

- 22 Over the past 35 years there has been a great deal of research, development, training and rolling out of best practice in respect of supporting people with disabilities into work. This has been spearheaded in the UK by the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) and across Europe by the European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE). BASE together with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has, over the past few years, conducted assessments on a wide variety of supported employment services across the UK. These services have spanned DWP funded, European funded, local authority and voluntary sector provision. These assessments provided clear evidence that those services with the highest success rates of supporting people into work and the best value for money all adopted the Supported Employment model ¹ and Individualised Placement & Support² (IPS) models.
- 23 These models require highly specialised staff trained in Systematic Instruction³ and IPS support techniques. It also requires in-work 1:1 support for initial periods of time. It is essential that any services resourced by the Council (directly provided or commissioned) follow these models of delivery. Diverting from these models will lead to lower outcomes and poorer value for money.

24 There are no existing DWP funded programmes set up to deliver this type of support in Cheshire East. However, the Council has supported such schemes through a small budget and grant funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund.

25 The Council's own budget currently supports 2.5 FTE Work Placement Officers, one manager and a Supported Internship lead officer. The other five members of the team are funded by various external grants. In addition to this, the Shared Prosperity Fund has been used to commission out a supported employment service via FedCap. The latter service is focussed on people who are economically inactive. However, this service has limited capacity to provide 1:1 in-work support. The 2.5FTE Work Placement Officers in the Supported Employment team are able to provide more intensive support. However, due to the downsizing of the team over the past two years and increased referrals, the capacity for 1:1 in-work support is limited.

¹ See Appendix I

² See Appendix 2

³ See Appendix 3

26 Evidence suggests that moderate investment utilising high-fidelity adherence to the Supported Employment models, will yield effective value-for-money outcomes for customers and significant cost savings as set out above.

27 2025 will see the introduction of the newly funded programmes and it is therefore of paramount importance for Cheshire East Council to maximise external funding opportunities. We will therefore examine the full range of emerging external funding opportunities to determine which opportunities are most relevant to the Council's core business and the level of investment and its beneficial effects on the current overspend. We will also determine how our most vulnerable residents will benefit and simplify the process for bid authorisation to create greater agility and efficiency and increase external income.

28 We will continue to analyse data to ensure services are correctly tuned to emerging demands to ensure that adult social care interests are well represented in strategic economic development discussions.

29 It is also the case that more people in work equates to more council tax income, improved health and well-being outcomes, and reduced reliance on benefits and services.

Co-production and customer focus

30 Cheshire East Council hosts a Welfare to Work partnership group that meet quarterly. This is a partnership of all organisations who have any input into supporting people with disadvantages into work. The ongoing work of this group includes:

- A coordinated approach to employer engagement
- Maintaining a directory of services (for customers, parents & carers and support staff)
- Developing a coordinated approach to transition support
- Sharing best practise
- Coordinating feedback from customers on what's working well and what needs improving
- Updates on new schemes, DWP services, benefits and funding opportunities

This partnership maintains an excellent forum for co-production.

Well Being, Public Health and the Tartan Rug

31 It is known that being in employment increases a sense of self-esteem and well-being. The following statistics demonstrates the gap between need and delivery:

- 90% of people with severe mental ill health want to work
- 8% of people with severe mental ill health are actually in work
- 1.2m people in the UK on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with a mental health issue and little contact with a Jobcentre Plus work coach
- Only 11% of people with a severe mental health condition are in a work support programme

32 By using the right support approach (IPS²) great outcomes and cost-savings can be achieved:

- IPS achieves twice the rate of job outcomes for people with severe mental illness versus traditional employment support
- IPS clients have reduced relapse and spend fewer days in hospital
- IPS clients sustain jobs for longer and earn more per hour

33 We will examine existing mental health services (directly provided and commissioned) to see if any existing resources could be re-designed to provide IPS support.

Consultation and Engagement

34 The proposals outlined in this report will be shared with the Learning Disability Partnership Board, the Mental Health Forum and the Welfare to Work Partnership. Any feedback will be used to refine the required approaches.

Reasons for Recommendations

35 These recommendations ensure that the most cost-effective and outcome-focussed model is used. This then ensures that on-going cost savings against existing care packages are made and at the same time generating great outcomes for people with complex support needs.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
To disinvest in Supported Employment	This is not recommended. Currently 5 of the team are funded through external grant income and it is anticipated that the remaining members could also be funded externally (for 3 years) via the new Connect to Work programme commencing in 2025 and the team expanded further. This would generate further outcomes for customers and increase cost savings against care packages.	High

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

36 Legal has already been briefed about the Connect to Work funding; and will as the same is made available review the grant terms and advise on any implications arising therefrom. In so far as this is a noting report; there are no other issues that Legal would flag at this juncture, other than to note its support of the initiative going forward.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

37 Finance has already been briefed about the Connect to Work money that will be available. This ensures a timely set of preparations are made re governance, financial and contractual issues. This includes obtaining the appropriate approvals (such as fully funded Supplementary Revenue Estimates) in a timely manner. In addition, the financial implications such as savings being delivered will be accounted for and reconciled to both the overall financial position and the Transformation Plan.

Policy

An open and enabling organisation	A council which empowers and cares about people	A thriving and sustainable place
This recommended policy position approach to Supported Employment will broadcast a clear and valued set of messages to the residents of Cheshire, that as an authority we are committed to giving disabled people the	This recommended policy position approach is about increasing job outcomes for disabled people across Cheshire. Employment is a crucial ingredient to gain and maintain	Data shows that there are several sectors in Cheshire struggling to recruit including social care, retail, hospitality logistics and construction. There are a number of on-going projects aimed at engaging with employers to help

right chances to gain work and as a result increase independence and well being	independence empowering people	develop more inclusive recruitment policies. This opens up more opportunities for disabled people and helps solve some of these recruitment issues and gives a boost to the local economy
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

38 A draft EIA will be completed. However, it is anticipated that the recommendations will have a positive impact on people from protected characteristic groups.

Human Resources

39 No new posts requiring additional CEC money is needed. In fact, one of the proposals here is to not only fund some existing posts with external money, but increase the size of the team and bring about further significant cost savings for three years.

Risk Management

40 There are no perceived financial, legal, HR, reputational or equality risks associated with these proposals.

Rural Communities

The rural economy is likely to benefit.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

41 Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) will be one of the target groups for the new Universal Support funding later this year

Public Health

42 These proposals will have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents. The Tartan Rug and other measure of PH determinants already have strong links to the outcomes provided by the correct supported employment approach.

Climate Change

43 There is a strong track record in external bidding successes for Carbon Reduction projects. The Universal Support (now Connect to Work) funding will have built in green and carbon reduction policies.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 What Is Supported Employment? Appendix 2 Individual Placement & Support Appendix 3 Systematic Instruction
Background Papers:	

Appendix 1

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What Is Supported Employment?



- 1 Supported Employment has been successfully used for decades as a personalised model for supporting people with significant disabilities to secure and retain paid employment. The model uses a partnership strategy to enable people with disabilities to achieve sustainable long-term employment and businesses to employ valuable workers. Increasingly, supported employment techniques are being used to support other disadvantaged groups such as young people leaving care, ex-offenders and people recovering from drug and alcohol misuse.
- 2 Work plays a pivotal role in defining an individual's quality of life and must be an integral part of a person's overall life experience. Supported employment offers an innovative process that enables employment as an achievable goal for people with disabilities just as it is for non disabled people in our society.
- 3 Real jobs means that the terms and conditions for people with disabilities should be the same as for everyone else including pay at the contracted going rate, equal employee benefits, safe working conditions and opportunities for career advancement. BASE has produced definitions of some of the terms used, such as support and employment.

The Model

- 4 This model has at its heart the notion that anyone can be employed if they want paid employment and sufficient support is provided. The model is a flexible and continuous process, designed to meet all anticipated needs. The European Union of Supported Employment has produced position papers and guides to the supported employment model.
- 5 The model is equally applicable to supporting job retention. The ethos of supported employment services is the development and integration of adequate mechanisms to secure long term sustainable employment.

Customer engagement

- 6 Many potential jobseekers are using traditional day services or receiving support from health and social care agencies. Others may be isolated at home or in danger of exploitation. People leave education every year with the hope of finding employment. In the past, professionals and families have had low expectations of people with disabilities finding sustainable work. It is important that expectations of employment are raised across health and social care services. The co-location of staff is particularly useful to achieve this.

Vocational Profiling

- 7 This is a "getting to know you" process where we identify the aspirations, learning needs, individual skills, former experiences and job preferences of the participant. Carers and support workers should be involved so that we get a holistic picture of the jobseeker. The profile informs the practical job finding and makes it more likely that we find a high quality job match. We look to identify the type of occupation that best suits a person's skills and preferences. Many people have never worked or not worked for many years and will need support to make informed choices about career opportunities.

Employer engagement

- 8 The third crucial element is the job marketing process. This close engagement with employers helps them to overcome traditional recruitment and selection barriers. We know that traditional recruitment techniques can be overly rigid and formal interviews seldom result in offers of employment. Employers are increasingly recognising the value of "working interviews" which allow individuals to demonstrate their skills in the workplace and allow the employer to gather the sort of evidence that a formal interview seeks to capture.
- 9 Generally, our aim is to secure 'employment and training' rather than 'training then employment'. This means that a participant gets a job from the beginning. We know that most people learn skills better in situ rather

than in artificial environments. By doing this we overcome the "job readiness" barrier where people can get stuck in permanent training. It also increases people's motivation significantly because they see from the beginning that they are employed.

Job Matching

- 10 Once we secure employer commitment, a job analysis is usually undertaken. This checks out any assumptions made in the job description and thoroughly investigates the job on offer so that we can describe all its aspects and those of the work place, including health and safety. Although it is common practice for employers to set out the basics of a job for new recruits, it is not common for a detailed analysis of the job and environment to be available. The job analysis might point towards ways of carving together parts of job descriptions that suit the workers' talents, or creating new job descriptions that suit the worker and are cost effective for the employer.

In-work Support

- 11 The job analysis and profile ensure that support is properly considered and appropriate. Support is individually tailored and targeted where it is needed most ensuring a cost effective use of resources. It is important to offer appropriate levels of support and encourage the involvement of the employer and co-workers. BASE members ensure that induction and ongoing training takes place and may offer out of work support if needed. Individual goals are agreed and recorded on a development plan.

Career development

- 12 Not many people stay in the same job for the whole of their working lives and people with disabilities are no different in having to adapt to changing labour markets and wanting to improve their working lives. Supported employment should encourage the career development of individuals by promoting training opportunities and seeking options for increased responsibility

Appendix 2

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Individual Placement & Support

- 1 IPS is an employment support service integrated within community mental health teams for people who experience severe mental health conditions. It is an evidence-based programme that aims to help people find and retain employment. For the service user the benefits of being in employment include an income and a greater sense of purpose and wellbeing, while for the health system there is an overall reduction in the use of primary and secondary mental health services, leading to improved efficiency and savings.
- 2 Nicola Oliver, Recovery Lead, Individual Placement and Support, at the Employment Services and Recovery College, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT), says: “IPS supports individuals to gain and sustain employment and helps them live the type of life they want to lead, irrespective of their symptoms, diagnosis or previous experiences.” For many people who have experienced mental ill-health employment is an important part of their recovery which is why NHFT provides this popular service. NHFT believes it is important to extend healthcare services beyond simply providing clinical interventions.
- 3 “Quite often a service user with a mental health condition, perhaps struggling with their symptoms and isolated at home, wants to work. If you help someone into a job they really like – which means they are inspired to get up in the morning and want to manage their symptoms – they’re likely to say to their clinician ‘This is what I want to do, help me to overcome these barriers.’”

Appendix 3

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Systematic Instruction

- 1 The methods of Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) fit broadly into the in-work support element of the 'Supported Employment' approach. It was originally devised by Dr Marc Gold, an American Psychologist who conducted his pioneering research in the mid 1970's and early 80's. It was first introduced into the UK in the late 1980's. TSI is an approach intended for those working directly with people who require additional support to learn the practical skills involved in work and independent living. Originally, it was conceived with those with learning disabilities in mind, but its relevance and effectiveness to reach across many vulnerable groups has become obvious, including to people with autism, Asperger's syndrome, users of mental health services and basically anyone who lacks confidence and/or needs support to successfully undertake and learn the practical tasks involved in work.
- 2 Systematic Instruction is a specialised set of training techniques that work extremely well for people with complex learning disabilities enabling them to learn real skills in a place of work and real independent living skills. Over the past four years in Cheshire East the Council has pioneered the development of supported internships. This programme specifically for people with complex learning needs who have an education health care plan. A detailed vocational profile is completed for each individual. This profile is intended to provide all the information that is needed to find an accurate job match for the person. A job coach will usually do the job themselves first, to learn and breakdown all the tasks. One-to-one in work training with the person then takes place using systematic instruction. Initially the support can be intensive including physical assists. As the person starts to gain the skills the intensity of these supports fade eg to occasional verbal prompts. The person then becomes skilled in the requirements of the job working from the natural supports from the job environment rather than constant support.
- 3 This model of supported employment is based on the absolute requirement of no work preparation. Work preparation has been found to be largely ineffective for people with complex learning needs. This is because they can find it challenging to transfer skills and knowledge from one environment to another. It is far more effective to place the specialised support in the actual place where they need to learn the tasks. This approach has enabled a conversion into paid work rate in

Cheshire East of between 74%-79%, which is one of the highest in the UK.