

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 11 June 2021

By: Director of Public Health

Title: Covid Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) – Supported Apprenticeships proposal for people in supported accommodation

Purpose: To seek approval for accessing COMF funding to support people living in Supported Accommodation (as well as Temporary Accommodation and those at risk of homelessness) to undertake a Supported Apprenticeship, enabling them to move into independent living.

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1. Approve drawing down up to £615k COMF funding for the delivery of a Partnership Apprenticeship programme to help some of the most marginalised residents in the county with:**
 - accessing learning, work and independent living through Supported Apprenticeships; and
 - improving the availability of Supported and Temporary Accommodation in the county.
- 2. Should this project be effective in supporting 50 Supported Accommodation residents in the first instance, to approve drawing down additional COMF funding of £70,000 per ten additional Apprentices within the allocated timeframe to expand the project, up to an additional value of £350,000 (which would represent an additional 50 Apprenticeships and an additional 50 places in supported housing made available).**
- 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health to take any actions necessary in relation to the implementation of the proposals set out in the above recommendations.**

Background information

1.1 Housing, health and employment are inextricably linked. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated homelessness and unemployment. There are around 930 people in Supported Accommodation and a further 800 people in Temporary Accommodation in East Sussex. A lack of employment opportunities, and increased unemployment (particularly among young people – currently 11% for the 16-25 age group) caused by the pandemic has put those who are living in Supported Accommodation at an increased likelihood of long-term unemployment.

1.2 Not only does this disadvantage them on a personal level, but it also means that the Council's ability to move people through its commissioned Supported Accommodation is significantly restricted.

1.3 Public Health and Adult Social Care established Employment brokerage schemes, to address the issue of unemployment in East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Supported

Accommodation settings and for homeless people in Temporary Accommodation. This new service, the ESTAR (Employability for Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refuges) initiative, in the Employment and Skills Team, helps accommodation providers to support and best enable their residents into learning and work.

1.4 The Employability Coordinators in the ESTAR team, working with the District and Borough Housing Teams, have identified that Apprenticeships offer a pathway out of Supported Accommodation and Temporary Accommodation and can also prevent homelessness. A working group of Further Education, Housing, Community Organisations, and consultation with employers via Skills East Sussex task groups identified a range of obstacles for those in Supported Accommodation which prevent them accessing Apprenticeship provision. These include:

- Residents who take up an Apprenticeship generally will not benefit financially (and may end up with less financial income) as often Apprenticeship wages do not compensate for the loss of benefits, and the salary does not enable them to save up a deposit for, or pay for, private rented accommodation.
- Colleges are often reluctant to offer Apprenticeships to 'harder to reach groups' as their OFSTED ratings are affected by completion rates. Harder to reach groups are more likely to drop out of their provision due to a lack of support, motivation or struggles with learning and/ or believed to have 'chaotic lifestyles'.
- Employers are reluctant to take on those who have been out of work for a significant period or who have had personal issues such as drug use or poor mental health in Apprenticeship roles, due to potential drop-out rates.

1.5 ESTAR propose a Partnership Programme to offer Supported Apprenticeships to residents in Adult Social Care (ASC) funded Supported Accommodation in the first instance, to enable them to access training, and earn sufficient income to move into independent living, thus freeing up places in ASC funded Supported Accommodation settings.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The proposed project would request £615K COMF funding to deliver a Supported Apprenticeship programme for people who are normally residents of East Sussex (therefore not those temporarily resident / placed from other areas). The priority is to help those people in Supported Accommodation (including those young people previously Looked After by ESCC), those at risk of being homeless (identified via the floating support service, Homeworks and the Department for Work and Pensions) and those living in Temporary Accommodation (identified via the new ESCC ESTAR, and Refuges; and Wellbeing Co-ordinator services).

2.2 Led by ESTAR, working with East Sussex College Group (ESCG), Sussex Council of Training Providers (SCTP) and Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) via Skills East Sussex Task Groups, Borough and District Housing and Planning Teams, and ESCC (Social Value) contractors, the project will:

- offer Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPS) for up to 120 adults (18+) to develop skills in key sectors where there are currently opportunities (construction, horticulture, health, care, visitor economy)
- identify up to 50 of these SWAP participants to move into Supported Apprenticeship opportunities with local employers in these sectors
- offer an incentive of £4000 to employers to take on this cohort of employees – enabling them to pay a living wage to the Apprentice which makes it financially viable for an unemployed resident in Supported Accommodation to undertake an Apprenticeship

- employ mentors to support individuals in their learning and workplace, to help maintain motivation and successfully complete the apprenticeship
- offer incentives to the Apprentices to maintain motivation in the form of a 'deposit bonus' linked to participation in financial management/budgeting training, to enable them to move into independent accommodation when ready to do so.
- align the project with the ESCC Transform (Apprenticeship Levy transfer) project, so that the ESCC Levy is used to support the learning element of the supported apprenticeship
- free up to 50 places in Supported Accommodation and/or prevent the need for places in Supported and Temporary Accommodation.

2.3 This project is of fixed duration and there are no legacy costs beyond the duration of this funding, to East Sussex County Council or the partners (without express agreement).

2.4 The Project would draw down core funding for staffing and systems. The project will cost from £261,000 (for the first 25 participants) up to £615,000 for 125 participants. A full break down of costs are outlined in Appendix 1.

2.5 The proposal will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and should there be demand for additional apprenticeship opportunities over and above the 50 target, greater economies of scale would be achieved and (timeframe and work placement offers permitting) could be scaled up at a cost of an additional £70,000 per SWAP and per ten Apprenticeship placements.

2.6 The National Audit Office has calculated Social Values for moving people into work or learning. Using these calculations, the Social Value contribution of this project for up to 50 Apprenticeships placed is £1,082,235

- Apprenticeships undertaken (5): £517,500
- People moving into work at end of year (assuming 50% move into further work): £475,575
- People moving into further L2 learning (per 10 people): £75,240
- Employment support £13,920

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Lead Member is recommended to approve that up to £615,000 COMF funding is drawn down to fund a proposal to support people who are vulnerably housed into skills and employment to provide them with financial stability and the ability to live independently. This in turn will free up placements in Adult Social Care funded Supported Accommodation and could also prevent some homeless presentations.

3.2 The project addresses COVID recovery and the needs of a vulnerable group of our local residents who have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. The funding provides an opportunity to deliver a one-off project that offers training, creates new employment, supports local employers in addressing skills gaps and should free up places in Supported Accommodation at the same time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Cost Breakdown

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Contract management costs	£25,000
Kit and support resources (work clothing and kit, learning materials, ICT kit per learner* , travel passes, childcare) accessed via their mentor (SCTP to hold budget) *if library digital loan not possible	£40,000
Mentor for Apprentices x 2- (to ESCG/SCTP) and on costs	£75,000
Learning administration (to ESCG) (SWAP coordination) and Apprenticeship coordination	£20,000
Bespoke SWAP provision and development (ESCG) five SWAPS for up to 120 individuals 3 weeks	£50,000
Apprentice incentive scheme (50 Apprentices from SA and EA Housing) £4k to each employer to offer placement) *Placement must be offered at min of £6.51 ph to enable individual to pay rent in SA placement and save funds towards deposit. This is £4000 more than they would normally pay an Apprentice.	£200,000
Apprentice incentive scheme (mid and completion bonus linked to undertaking financial management support, setting up a savings plan (50 Apprentices - £3k per Apprentice).	£150,000
Apprentice scheme incentive oversight (SCTP)	£40,000
Promotion, Administration and Evaluation	£30,000
Total	£615,000

*there is the ability to both scale up (£70k per additional cohort of 10 apprentice places above the original 50 if 50 places are taken and there is further demand) and to scale down (a reduction of £70k per 10 apprentice places below the original 50 if they are unable to be recruited to)