

# Towards Work Programme

Year Three Evaluation Report – 2019 Delivery

Executive Summary



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

- E1. In January 2017 ERS was commissioned to lead the evaluation of the three-year Towards Work Programme that is funded via the national Building Better Opportunities (BBO) Programme and delivered across the D2N2 area by Groundwork Greater Nottingham. The programme supports unemployed or economically inactive people experiencing social exclusion and poverty who need help to overcome barriers, take control, learn new skills and move into employment (or education and training).
- E2. This third annual report provides an evidence-based picture of progress made during the 2019 calendar year, includes preliminary evidence covering the cost benefit analysis. This report has been informed by a number of primary and secondary methods of data collection, including one to one interviews with staff from Groundwork Greater Nottingham, Hubs and Micro-Hubs and Stakeholder Managers alongside a review of monitoring information and quarterly review documents for each Hub area. We interviewed 93 participants.

### *Programme Approach*

- E3. The Towards Work Programme is well managed by Groundwork Greater Nottingham. During 2019 there has been a considerable acceleration of delivery, with the majority of outputs, results and outcome targets either achieved or likely to be at project end. The Programme Management Team should take credit for redefining partner involvement to ensure that BBO funding is administered in an effective and efficient manner.
- E4. The Towards Work Programme has a robust plan in place to ensure that cross-cutting themes are embedded in day to day delivery across the D2N2 area.
- E5. The rationale for the Towards Work Programme and the priority groups to be supported remain entirely relevant. There has been a significant increase in the number of economically inactive participants accessing support in 2019, a key of management and delivery.
- E6. Frontline delivery by Hub Coordinators, Work Coaches and Job Brokers has underpinned delivery. There remains a need for greater consistency of approach in how the role is delivered, to ensure that high standards are achieved and participants receive the best possible service. A number of delivery partners would benefit from increased senior management attention from within their organisation to better support frontline delivery.
- E7. The Stakeholder Managers have added value to the Towards Work Programme. Operating at a strategic level, they have been proactive in building relationships to improve referral networks and leave a legacy of better coordinated services. There remains a need for improved communication between Stakeholder Managers and Hub Coordinators to ensure that all activity is adding value to the delivery of outcomes and results for participants.
- E8. During the early months of 2019 the four part-time Ambassadors made a valuable contribution to the programme through supporting events, assisting Work Coaches with direct delivery at job clubs, etc. and adding value to the evaluation process by engaging with participants. Looking forward into 2020 there is a case for continuing participant involvement in shaping programme activity.

### *Progress Made Against Targets*

- E9. During 2019 progress made across most output indicators was impressive. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 a total of 2,516 people had been supported, 76% of the expected lifetime total. Targets in relation to the number of participants with disabilities and those with self-declared mental health problems have already been achieved. It is expected that during 2020 the lifetime target for the number of people supported aged 50+ years will be achieved.
- E10. Throughout 2019 there was greater focus on targeting economically inactive participants due to the need to boost validations from this cohort. Validations for this cohort continued to increase, the figure of 34%, compared to 66% of unemployed status represents a significant increase on the levels recorded both at the same period last year (13%) and the end of December 2017 (8%). This highlights that efforts to target economically inactive participants has been successful.
- E11. The Towards Programme is on target to achieve lifetime results targets. By 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 the profile target for the number of participants moving into education or training on leaving has been achieved. The 31<sup>st</sup> December target for the overall number, and the number of unemployed participants, moved into employment, including self-employment has been achieved.
- E12. Formal monitoring of employment results undervalues the real impact of how many participants have moved into work. On the basis of our survey of participants we estimate that the programme has supported 621 participants into employment.
- E13. The total tax-payer savings that have accrued to Towards Work, up to December 2019, are estimated to be almost £3.2m, with most of this value derived from reductions in Universal Credit claims. For those participants finding work, their estimated total tax payments amount to almost £1.1m per annum.
- E14. The total estimated employment costs for the 621 participants is in excess of £8.1m, including Employers NI. Assuming the national average held true, this could be expected to increase the value of GVA by over £15.9m. However, a number of economic effects operate in the D2N2 area which mean that the additional net benefit generated is £4.2m GVA.
- E15. We estimate the wider economic impact generated from wider societal benefits will be in the region of £3m to £4m by December 2019. As the programme moves into the extension stage there is a need for delivery staff to record data to inform a bespoke model to inform the final evaluation.

### *Impact on Participants*

- E16. At the outset of support half of all participants recognised they needed support to build their confidence. Over nine in ten (91%) stated that the programme had made a difference to their confidence to look for training and employment opportunities. The support has clearly boosted the level of confidence of participants to look for training and employment opportunities.
- E17. Work Coaches offer tailored support that really helps people to move forward. Support from Towards Work helped participants feel less isolated and motivated to make positive changes. Since working with their Work Coaches, the participants have gained a deeper understanding of the opportunities that might be available to them and how to go about accessing those opportunities.

- E18. Almost nine in ten participants (89%) now had a better understanding of the employment opportunities available to them. This shows that the Work Coaches are really helping participants to understand the different types of job roles that could be appropriate for each individual and suggesting roles that people may not have previously considered. Eight in ten participants (80%) had a better understanding of the learning opportunities that are available to them following support from Towards Work.
- E19. As a result of the support received from the Towards Work Programme almost a quarter of participants (24%) had moved into employment. This is impressive, reflecting the true impact of the programme, over and above that claimed with the formal evidence required as part of outcome reporting.
- E20. Two thirds of participants (67%) agreed that they now felt that a range of career options were now open to them. This shows that although some of the participants may not have yet found employment, they are more aware of the opportunities. Over six in ten participants (62%) who have yet to find work expect to do so in the next six months.
- E21. The Towards Work Programme has supported the personal development of participants. Over eight in ten participants (83%) felt that they were better able to bounce back after disappointment. In addition, 87% further stated they were feeling more confident to have a go at new things and 82% feel more optimistic about the future. This shows that in addition to supporting participants to progress into job and training outcomes, the programme is also providing participants with the appropriate tools to improve confidence and resilience.
- E22. Mental health problems are prevalent amongst the participants upon joining the programme, but the support offered helps them to better understand and manage those conditions as well as offering assistance to alleviate some of the underlying issues that cause mental health problems, such as housing issues, debt worries, drug and alcohol problems and a lack of opportunities.
- E23. Included below are some quotes which outline participant's experience of the support from the programme and their Work Coaches:

*"You get support and encouragement from them, they bring out and highlight strengths that I have in myself. They gave me self-respect and belief that I could progress into what I needed to be. She guided me into where I needed to be. I cannot tell you how much difference it has made to me and my life."*

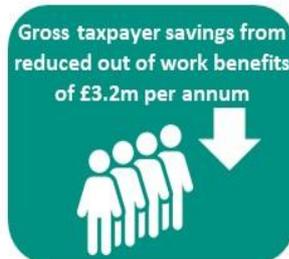
*"Building my confidence back up so I can be around people. She has been amazing. Having a heart attack and stroke plays on my mind and she knows my situation. She's going to put me on a confidence course, and putting me on a maths and English course to improve my writing. My writing has gone out the window. Building confidence really before anything else. Before couldn't be in the room with 5 people."*

*"We just talk. She understands human beings. She sees you as a person, a complete person. We talk through my situation and what has happened, and how we can make that better. It's a two-way conversation. She signposts and prods me to encourage me."*

*"He has taught me how to sell myself better on application forms. I wasn't putting enough in forms so unsuccessful in getting interviews. I am better at selling myself in application forms now"*

### Key findings:

- 621 participants have progressed into employment, representing a quarter of all participants.
- 91% are now confident to look for new training and work opportunities.
- 83% of participants are better able to bounce back after disappointment.
- 90% are now more confident in having a go at new things.



### The majority of participants indicated that the support had an impact on their understanding of:

- Employment opportunities available (89%).
- The skills required for the job roles they were looking for (90%).
- Learning opportunities available (80%).



*"Knowing that someone is there when I need help and support is a real confidence boost."*

*"My work coach provided clarity on options available to me and what I'm best suited for."*

*"Support from my work coach keeps me motivated and proactive, feedback on what I have done is really valuable."*

## Towards Work Programme: Participant Journey



91% of participants are more confident to look for training and employment opportunities



83% of participants feel as though they are better able to bounce back after disappointment



80% of participants have greater understanding of learning opportunities available to them



62% of participants who have yet to find work expect to do so within 6-months



82% of participants feel more optimistic about the future

89% of participants have greater understanding of employment opportunities available to them



621 participants have moved into employment, representing 24% of all participants engaged

*This infographic was developed by ERS Ltd, informed by interviews with programme participants alongside programme monitoring data.*