

**Report to the Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 5 February 2025

**Report of the Director of Adult Care and Provider Services**

**Supporting People with Learning Disabilities into Employment**

<b>Part I</b>	<b>Corporate Priorities:</b> Better lives for all;
<b>Electoral Division(s):</b> (All Divisions);	
<b>Contact:</b> Paul Lee, Director of Adult Care and Provider Services Nicola Clear, Head of Service - Disability Charlotte Hammond, Head of Service - Learning Disabilities and Autism	

**Summary**

**Purpose of the Report**

To advise on the progress made in relation to the Department for Work and Pensions Local Supported Employment (LSE) programme and update on next steps including integrating it into a mainstream offer. To include a focus on employment style day services.

**Recommendation**

The Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider the information provided.
- ii. Discuss and identify any further recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet Member for Adult Services.

**Background**

1. This report sets out the national context, role of Lancashire County Council's social work service and the work of the Disability Employment Team in supporting adults with learning disabilities into employment.
2. At present adult social care support 4,200 people but it estimated that approximately 30,000 people with a learning disability live in Lancashire. The focus in this report is on those we support into employment. We work effectively with local colleges and employment providers across Lancashire and have been



proactive in bidding for national funding to ensure we provide effective and high-quality interventions.

## **National Background**

3. Nationally we have seen a rise in economic inactivity over the last four years. In 2023, The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub reported that a significant proportion of the increase was due to health issues. The report showed that over half of those affected were under 40, and that there was a correlation with areas of disadvantage. At the time of publication, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department for Health and Social Care, published a competitive call for 15 'WorkWell' Partnership Programme vanguards across the country. The Integrated Care Board was successful in their bid and WorkWell launched in seven places across Lancashire and South Cumbria in late 2024. WorkWell aims to support people in work with health conditions and struggling to stay in work, as well as people newly unemployed due to health conditions or disabilities. The pilot will run until March 2026 and aims to 'stem the flow' and retain people in the workplace.

## **Connect to Work**

4. In December 2024, the Government published the 'Get Britain Working' White Paper, which includes 'Connect to Work'. Connect to Work is a large scale five-year Supported Employment Programme targeted at people who are economically inactive with health conditions, disabilities, and those with barriers to sustained employment such as refugees, veterans, carers, care leavers and ex-offenders.
5. The Government wish to fund Combined Authorities or lead Local Authorities in functional economic geographies to take forward the programme. The programme has the potential to support 10,000 people over a five-year period across Lancashire. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub is taking forward the development of a pan-Lancashire programme, working in partnership with Adult Services and Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils, building on the Local Supported Employment Pilot in LCC and Individual Placement Support (IPS) delivery for people with severe mental health conditions in Blackpool, with view to launching the programme later in 2025.
6. Lancashire County Council's plan reflects the government ambition for securing and maintaining people with ill health or disabilities in employment, setting out:
  - Economic Ambition - We will work with the business community to equip people with the right skills to secure rewarding work, invest in Lancashire, improve transport and digital connectivity, and grow the local economy.
  - Better Lives for All - We will ensure more children and young people have the best start in life, families are more resilient, adults are supported to live more independent lives, and that everyone can live a healthy and happier life.



## **Social Work Activity**

7. The work of social work teams is underpinned by the Care Act 2014:

'Supporting people to "access and engage in work, training, education or volunteering" is a key outcome for local authorities where someone has needs that arise from a physical or mental impairment or illness and that this results in there being a significant impact on the adult's wellbeing'.
8. By focussing on supporting citizens to 'Live Better Lives in Lancashire', workers signpost people to informal support (such as voluntary organisations) and provide advice and information about how work or education settings may make reasonable adjustments to enable people to maintain these activities. Social care staff include employment, volunteering, or training in support plans, and this may include support to enable someone to participate. Where someone has particular needs to increase their independence, a referral to the Enablement Service can make a big difference in areas such as independent travel.
9. Welfare Rights can support people who may mistakenly believe that they cannot have paid work as that would impact so significantly on their welfare benefits that they would lose their home; this is particularly pertinent for people living in supported living who may not be aware of the potential for part-time employment.
10. Several social care providers have developed work-style day provision, which gives people experiences of employment type activities through social enterprises. We are working with these providers to further develop these enterprises into micro-enterprises, offering employment or self-employment to people. A post is being created in the Commissioning Team to support micro-enterprises which may create opportunities to work more closely with providers to further develop this work.

## **Adult Social Care Disability Supported Employment Service**

11. The purpose of the service is to support adults with disabilities in job searching activities. This is by using personalised, flexible, and fully responsive support packages and action plans which identify and address individual barriers to securing sustainable employment.
12. The service is delivered by Lancashire County Council's in-house adult disability provider. The service works with adults with a learning disability, physical disability, sensory impairment, autism, and mental ill health. The following section is an update on the delivery of the Department of Work and Pensions Local Supported Employment programme. Furthermore, the Adult Social Care employment team will continue to be one of the providers supporting the new Connect to Work programme to enable adults who have a disability to move into paid employment.



## Local Supported Employment (LSE)

13. Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care is one of 23 Local Authorities who secured a place on the Department of Work and Pension employment trailblazer pilot. This is known as 'Local Supported Employment' and the programme aim was to support 60 participants from August 2022. This was increased to 120 participants in July 2024, allowing the service to accept referrals up to July 2025. The overall programme ceases in May 2026 and will transfer to the new Government programme, 'Connect to Work' (as outlined earlier in this report).
14. The aim of the current local supported employment programme is to support adults with learning disabilities, autism, or both to move into competitive employment, providing the support they need.

## Quality

15. The programme is funded via a grant and recipients must ensure their delivery is assessed against the Supported Employment Quality Framework. (SEQF).
16. The SEQF fidelity model is intended to establish a core set of values and quality standards that supported employment service providers should uphold. The model was developed with the notion that supported employment services should ensure that everyone with a disability and/or neurodivergence seeking paid employment receive high-quality support to find, maintain, and flourish in well-matched employment.
17. The Employment Support team secured the quality rating of 'good' which means they now have the Kite Mark, a nationally recognised standard of quality and accreditation in delivering employment support.

## Delivery and Outcomes

18. The programme is delivered using the five-stage supported employment model.
  - Initial assessment
  - Vocational profiling
  - Job searching
  - Employer Engagement
  - On and off the job support

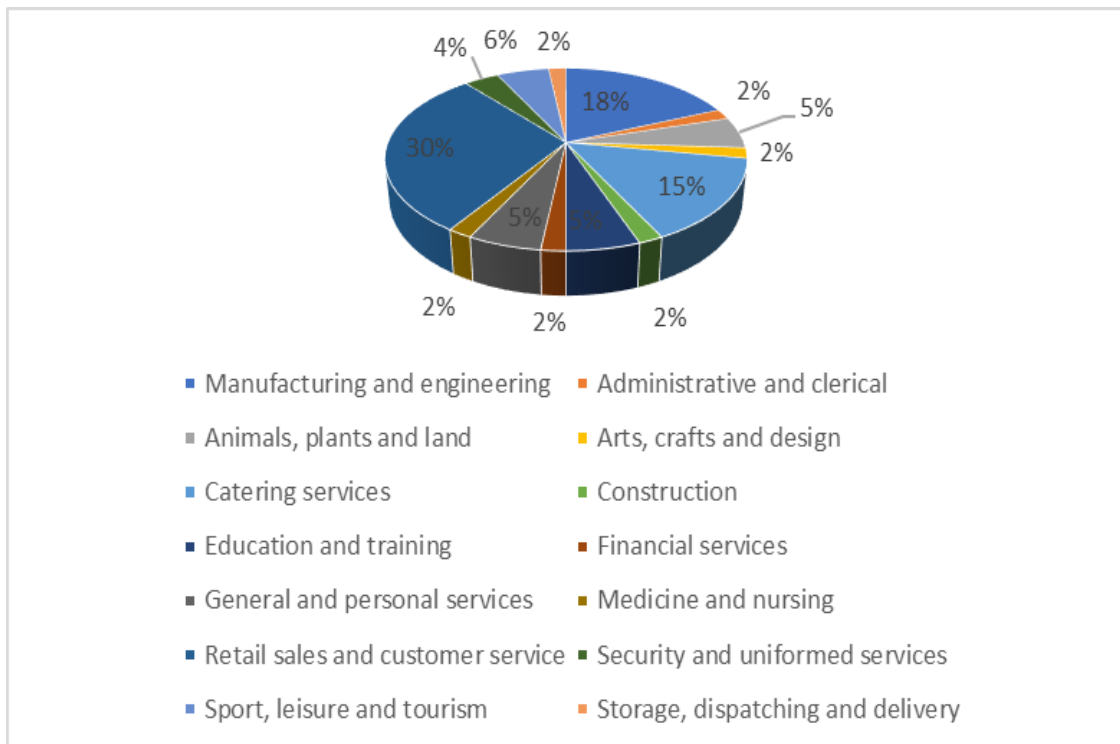
86 people have been supported on the programme.

45% of people have secured paid employment – the target is 30%.

69% have sustained paid employment for a period of 26 weeks or more.



People have been supported into a range of different employment types as highlighted below:



### Success Story

19.X secured paid employment at a large retail store, following a period of volunteering to develop skills, supported by the Employment Service, X flourished and grew in confidence. Feedback from the employer has been excellent: "We have been very impressed with the support we have received from Lancashire County Council Employment Team". The individual has been nominated 'best newcomer' in the store. Because of the positive outcome and support, the company have now recruited two more people with disabilities.

20.A manager said "working with X has been amazing. They just fit so well into the team. It's been enlightening to work with X, and it has introduced me to how different ways of working can really help to support people. Being slightly more flexible and less rigid in how we do things are simple changes that can be implemented to help support people with disabilities into employment.

### Access to Work

21.The Adult Social Care Employment Support Service will remain involved with an individual on the local supported employment programme for up to 12 months after which, if longer term support is required, other forms of funded support are available. This is individually determined.

22.Access to Work is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and



financial support for people who have a disability or physical or mental health condition. The grant is not for business start-up costs but to support individuals to do their job or get to and from work.

23. The Employment Support Service has supported six people with applying for Access to Work, one person has a Personal Assistant to provide support, three people have transport to and from work funded, and two people have some assistive technology funded by Access to Work.

## **Context and Implications**

### **Legal (including Human Rights)**

24. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to promote the well-being of individuals, which includes supporting them in achieving employment outcomes.

25. The Local Supported Employment (LSE) Initiative, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, provides a framework for local authorities to help adults with learning disabilities move into and maintain competitive employment.

### **Financial**

26. There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

### **Equality and Diversity**

27. Supporting people with disabilities into employment and removing barriers associated with preconceptions or structural arrangements will increase participation and increase the life chances of people with learning disabilities.

### **Risk Management**

28. There are no significant risks associated with this work.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
none		

### **Part II Reason**

N/A

