

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>HELP OUT SERVICE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CONSULTANT IN PUBLIC HEALTH</b>

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks approval for a direct award to Involve Northwest for the continuation of the Help Out service to support employment opportunities to improve health outcomes. The Help Out service supports the Wirral Worklessness Support Service contract and the Council's wider Wirral Ways to Work Programme managed by the Economic Growth Team. The programme is Wirral wide but has a specific focus within Wirral's most deprived communities. It is designed to engage eligible workless young people and adults and support their progression into education, employment, and training via a suite of flexible, tailored employment support services.

The Help Out Contract will operate from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, aligning with the Wirral worklessness contract and allows for options to be explored regarding the merging of the two contracts for the 2024/25 financial year onwards contingent on the service demonstrating the continued successful delivery of outcomes.

The activities outlined in this report support the vision of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026, the Wirral Economic Strategy 2021-26 and the Wirral Health and Wellbeing 2022-27 strategy to 'create opportunities to get the best health outcomes from economy and regeneration programmes' and will contribute directly or indirectly to delivering the following themes of the Wirral Plan:

- Brighter Futures
- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

This matter affects all wards within the Borough and is not a key decision.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Director of Public Health is recommended to make a direct award of a contract with an 11 month term to Involve Northwest for the increase of employment support and improvement of health outcomes, through delivery of the Help Out service.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Help Out service has been in operation for nine months, having initially been appointed through a direct award, and has successfully engaged with 245 individuals. The service has proven that in conjunction with the Worklessness Support Service, job outcomes and health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals are significantly improved. Through engagement with the service the number of people moving into employment has increased by 10% with 50% of individuals sustaining employment at six months. Extended provision of the service for a further eleven months at a reduced financial envelope aligns contract end points and allows for options to be explored regarding the merging of the two contracts when the Wirral Worklessness contract expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This programme is designed to engage eligible workless young people and adults and support their progression into education, employment, and training via a suite of flexible, tailored employment support services.
- 1.2 The previous knowledge and experience held by Involve North West makes the engagement of any other party unsound due to the time which it would take to develop the operational foundation from which to deliver the required outcomes. The basis for making a time and value limited award without competition is therefore robust in these circumstances.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Consideration has been given to not continue the service given that one off grant funding is ending as well as several other funding options and models. Several different options for delivery have been considered. Given the positive outcomes the service has demonstrated to date the recommendation is to continue the service within a reduced financial envelope.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 When compared to other areas Wirral has high numbers of health-related worklessness. Many residents, particularly focused in the east of the borough, experience a range of physical and mental health issues, and are often detached from the labour market or employed in fragile jobs that offer them too little security and little prospect for progression. Evidence shows that good quality work is beneficial to an individual's health and wellbeing and protects against social exclusion through the provision of income, social interaction, a core role, identity, and purpose. Progress has been made in reducing health related worklessness at a rate of double the national average. However, high levels remain, and the pandemic and the recent cost of living crisis has further highlighted the need to augment work

that supports people to enter the job market and maintain economic independence for themselves and their families.

- 3.2 The Help Out service supports the Wirral Worklessness Support Service Reach Out contract and the Council's wider Wirral Ways to Work Programme managed by the Economic Growth Team. The programme is Wirral wide but has a specific focus within Wirral's most deprived communities. It is designed to engage eligible workless young people and adults and support their progression into education, employment, and training via a suite of flexible, tailored employment support services.
- 3.2 The Help Out service has been funded through the 2022/23 financial year via through one-off grant funding which concludes in April 2023. The core objectives of this service are:
- To support the wellbeing/mental health of unemployed Wirral residents with their journey prior to starting work and whilst in work to help support sustainable employment;
  - To provide financial and holistic support for well-being barriers with pre-employment support;
  - To enable the community campervan to continue to deliver effective resident engagement to raise awareness of ReachOut and the support available to local people;
  - To continue with a 7 day a week ReachOut service; and
  - To add value to the ReachOut service with increasing overall job outputs by 10%.
- 3.4 The programme has provided benefit to residents who have been supported into employment and training opportunities. This not only supports a more inclusive Wirral economy, but also improves the health and wellbeing and life chances of individuals and their families through increased household incomes, improved mental and physical health, personal confidence, social networks, and aspirations. Between May 2022 and January 2023, the Help Out service has engaged with 245 individuals and delivered 715 supportive health and wellbeing interventions, 119 individuals have gained employment and 50% of those have sustained employment at six months. 97% of those engaged reported an improvement in their wellbeing as a result of being engaged with the service.
- 3.5 Due to the positive outcomes the Help Out service has achieved to date it is proposed to continue to fund the service from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 utilising Public Health Grant funding. Due to capital investment during 2022/23 the service is able to operate within a reduced financial envelope for 2023/24. An updated service specification outlining key activity, outputs and outcomes has been developed.
- 3.6 Extending the Help Out Service until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 aligns the contract with the Wirral worklessness Reach Out contract managed by the Economic Growth Team

and allows for options to be explored regarding the merging of the two contracts for the 2024/25 financial year onwards, contingent on the services continuing to demonstrate successful delivery and outcomes.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The proposed contract is of a value of £174,780. The contract will be funded through the Public Health Grant. The value and availability of the Public Health Grant for 2023/24 onwards has been recently announced and provides each local authority with a 3.3% cash terms increase.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Paragraph 12.4.1 (c) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules provides for a waiver of the requirement to carry out a competitive tendering exercise when it is in the interest of the Council, is lawful, and provides value for money. The previous knowledge and experience held by Involve North makes the engagement of any other party unsound due to the time which it would take to develop the operational foundation from which to deliver the required outcomes. The basis for making a time and value limited award without competition is therefore robust in these circumstances.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 Staff have been recruited by Involve Northwest to deliver this service as part of existing contract arrangements and will continue until the funding ceases.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The activities outlined in this report support the vision of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026, the Wirral Economic Strategy 2021-26 and the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27. There is a risk if funding is not maintained that we will not deliver on the agreed local priority of reducing health-related worklessness within the borough which will have negative impacts upon local people and communities.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 The Services described within this report are designed based on and respond to findings from a range of insight, including research conducted with local communities throughout the last year and through working with the Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector Forum, and wider Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector in Wirral.

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact

Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

- 9.2 The Equality Impact Assessment for these decisions can be found <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-january-202-6>

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Delivery of the Worklessness Support Service will be based in a range of accessible community locations across the borough, therefore reducing the requirement for residents to travel to a central Wirral location to access the service. The procurement criteria for this contract included a social value assessment, with the recommended supplier providing some measures in relating to carbon savings from energy efficiency measures within their tender response. Involve Northwest has a full organisational sustainability plan for all employees to adhere to.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Community Wealth Building is a people-centred approach to economic growth which reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities, towns, and cities, and instead places control of this wealth into the hands of local people, communities, businesses and organisations. A key theme in the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is Fair Employment and Just Labour Markets and the Worklessness Support Service contract supports residents of Wirral back into the labour market via a community-based delivery model.

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## APPENDICES

N/A

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Worklessness Support Service Ltd Wirral Council Services Contract (DN410281)

Wirral Economic Strategy 2021-26:  
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=50083184>

Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27:  
[https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/3681/209\\_healthandwellbeingstrategy\\_v8.pdf](https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/3681/209_healthandwellbeingstrategy_v8.pdf)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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Health and Wellbeing Board	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022
Health and Wellbeing Board	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2021