

jobcentreplus

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Scrutiny Manager

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for London

cc: Patrick Hughes
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Comments on EDCST Recommendations

Dear Richard,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EDCST recommendations made in the London Assembly's Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee Report – Time to Skill: *The Mayor's role in employment and skills in London*.

Please find below comments from Jobcentre Plus London.

Recommendation 1

The Mayor should clearly set out in the January 2010 update of his Economic Recovery Action Plan:

a) What actions he expects of the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council in the short-term to tackle the issues highlighted by the London Skills and Employment Board and the Committee in this report.

Jobcentre Plus works in partnership with The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the London Development Agency (LDA) and a number of other pan London partnerships to provide employment and skills services to Londoners. This partnership approach to the delivery of services in London enabled us to respond quickly to the economic downturn working, through the Joint Action Plan, to produce, coordinate and deliver a range of new services to jobseekers and employers in London.

In addition to support we provide to all newly unemployed, the additional services include:
Before Unemployment

- Employment and Training Support for Employers and staff facing redundancy including the rapid response service action fund.

From the first day of unemployment

- Support for Professional and Executives
- Mentoring for 18-24 year olds
- Group sessions for 18 year olds
- Self employment support

- Apprenticeships
- Basic Skills
- CV development
- Training

After 6 months of unemployment

- In work training
- Work focused training
- Support Contract provision
- Graduate/non Graduate internships
- Self Employment Support
- Future Jobs Fund
- Routes into work

We are working closely with LSC and the nextstep service to roll out an integrated employment and skills adviser service across London. This is currently available in 44 Jobcentres and will be available in all of London's Jobcentres the beginning of April 2010.

b) What actions he expects from the delivery agencies to address the increased Jobseeker's Allowance caseload in some outer London boroughs.

We are unclear why the outer London Boroughs have been identified for additional action. All Boroughs within London have experienced an increase in Jobseeker Allowance register size. Although percentage changes in outer London have been high, the total numbers remain low when compared to inner London Jobcentres. The way in which Jobcentre Plus and its partners have responded to the recession has provided additional help to those out of work in all parts of London. These services, along with the recruitment of new staff, have been allocated to meet specific demand as a result of the rise in Jobseeker Allowance registers.

c) How he intends to respond to the identified need for short courses targeted at skilled professionals discussed in the revised Skills and Employment Strategy for London.

Our additional services in response to the economic downturn include advice and coaching sessions for professional and executives, to meet their identified job search needs. During the period April 2009 to January 2010 over 25,000 professional & executive customers accessed this additional service. These sessions are delivered by specialist organisations in London.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should from the next financial year:

a) Set out an expectation that the London Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council commission a specified proportion (set by the Board) of services jointly.

Jobcentre Plus, along with the LSC and the LDA have contributed to the Joint Investment Plan as a response to the LSEB's strategy to work towards a more integrated approach to commissioning programmes and make the most of the resources available. Work is currently progressing on the ways in which we might effectively do this. In terms of making the most of resources available we have been working closely with partners to map/align

and identify gaps in our customer journeys, currently focussing on services provided for young people, one of the Mayors identified priorities.

However, we do not feel that Joint targets for co commissioning is a sensible way forward. Commissioning for Jobcentre Plus services is undertaken at a Department of Work and Pensions level and are large contracts of national design.

We can however, work more closely with partners as co-commissioners of the European Social Fund and are committed to doing so.

b) Asks the Board to monitor reports and information provided by the delivery agencies about the jointly commissioned services, and hold them to account for their performance against a common target for sustained employment outcomes.

c) Determine the first priority for joint commissioning to be services that provide skills for people young people at greatest distance from the labour market.

There are currently a number of services that provide skills for young people from their first day of unemployment as well as through the young persons guarantee which is available after 6 months unemployment (or earlier if they are disadvantaged and at greater distance from the labour market). These services include: Apprenticeships, basic skills, mentoring, group sessions for 18 year olds, Routes into Work, Work focused training, Graduate and non Graduate internships, Future Jobs Fund and Community task force.

The Individual Programme Board is currently working on the mapping/aligning and identification of any gaps in the provision for young people across the agencies in London. The initial findings of this work were presented to the Mayor at the LSEB on 19 January 2010.

Recommendation 3

a) The Mayor and the London Skills and Employment Board should agree a process with the London Development Agency and the Learning and Skills Council that ensures that the Board has sufficient information at an early enough stage in the planning process to enable it to influence the allocation of funding for adult skills services.

This is not for us to comment.

b) The Mayor should report back to the Committee by April 2010 stating how he will ensure that he and the Board intend to influence spending in 2010/11.

This is not for us to comment.

Recommendation 4

a) The London Development Agency should consult the London Skills and Employment Board about its proposals for adult skills and employment in its forthcoming Investment Strategy.

This is for the LDA to comment.

b) The LDA should demonstrate how it has taken the Board's comments into account and, where it has decided not to follow the Board's advice, provide detailed reasons why.

This is for the LDA to comment.

Other Comments

Whilst we agree the figures quoted for Jobcentre Plus under Figure 1: Funding for employment and skills services in London, note 4 appears misleading. The £176 million quoted for frontline services does indeed fund programmes and services provided for our unemployed clients, however the £225 million quoted for Jobcentre staff actually funds the delivery of the support and frontline advisory services we provide for unemployed Londoners.

We appreciate that any figures included in the report will be correct at a particular date, however, it is worth noting that the figures quoted at 2.20 concerning the numbers of previously unemployed Londoners who were employed on the Olympic Park have now increased by 500 and this figure continues to rise.

Please let me know if you would like clarification on any of our comments.

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