

Appendix 3

Draft RCT Employment Strategy 2019-22 – Developing skills for success

Context

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council delivers a wide range of programmes and courses to support the development of skills and improve employability of people aged 16 and over. The provision is delivered across a number of services including the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, Community Services, Education, Employment and Training service.

The Council's employment and skills programmes support the Council's corporate strategies and contribute to strategic priorities as identified in the Council's Corporate Plan – The Way Ahead 2016-20:

- Prosperity – building a strong economy
- People – promoting independence and positive lives for everyone
- Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

This strategy is has been guided by themes identified by the Welsh Government in their strategic documents including Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan, the 2018 Employability Plan and Adult Community Learning policy. It has also been informed by regional priorities identified by the Regional Skills Partnership and Cardiff City Deal developments.

Where are we now?

Population profile

Rhondda Cynon Taf's resident population is 240,100, of which 19% are under the age of 16. The ONS census data indicated that 97.1% of residents speak English or Welsh. There has been an increase of almost 3% since 2011 in the number of people who identify that they can speak Welsh bringing the figure up tot 15% of the local population. Only 1% of the population indentify themselves with an ethnicity other than White British, Welsh, English or Scots.

The working age population of the county (16-64 years) is 149,300, of which 73,700 are male and 75,600 are female.

116,700 (76.4%) of the working age population are economically active. In terms of occupations:

- 39.1% of the workforce are in managerial/professional roles;
- 19.9% in administrative/skilled trades;
- 20.3% in caring/leisure and service occupations; and
- 20.7% in process/plant and elementary occupations

In terms of job by industry the highest proportion of workers are in Human Health and Social Work activities (19.2%), Wholesale and Retail (15.1%), Education (13.7%) and Manufacturing (13.7%).

The level of jobs per resident aged 16-64 (job density) is 0.56.

Self employment attracts far more males than females. Data for March 2019 indicates that 7,300 men and 2,900 women were self-employed.

There remains a significant gap in the full-time salaries of male and female residents with the hourly rate for male full-time workers being £13.54 compared to the hourly rate for full-time female workers of £11.70.

The total claimant count for out-of-work benefits in July 2019 was 4,835. The table below indicates the distribution across age groups:

| Age | Number |
|-------------|--------|
| 16-17 year | 15 |
| 18-24 years | 1,050 |
| 25-49 years | 2,370 |
| 50+ | 950 |

35,200 people are economically inactive, of whom 12,100 are affected by long-term sickness. On a positive note, 6,500 people who are economically inactive have identified that they want a job.

The number of workless households (that is households that contain at least one person aged 16 – 64 where no one aged 16 or over is in employment) is 16,500. While worklessness can be an indication of poverty, it should be noted that recent research has indicated that 55% of people in poverty are in working households, with in-work poverty more common for younger workers and those who work part-time or who are self-employed.

Skills play an important part in determining employment rates and employment rates decline with lower levels of qualifications. People with no qualifications are among the most disadvantaged. 10.8% of working age adults (16,100) in Rhondda Cynon Taf have no qualifications (December 2018) as compared to the Wales comparator of 8.6%. However, 70.6% of the working age population have qualifications at NVQ Level 2+ while 31.2% have qualifications at NVQ Level 4+.

The factors outlined above will have an impact on the type and range of provision being offered to support individuals to gain skills and qualifications as well as the employment advice and support provided to help them into work and support them to stay in work.

Business

In 2018 there were 6,490 enterprises in Rhondda Cynon Taf, of which 90.4% were micro-sized employing 0 – 9 employees. This is a higher percentage of micro-sized businesses than the comparator for Wales (89.1%).

The rate of VAT/PAYE enterprise births remained relatively constant between 2002 and 2012 hovering around the 500 mark. However, a substantial growth can be seen in 2016 and 2017 with business births rising to 1,240 and 2,935 respectively. Business deaths for the same period were 640 and 765 respectively.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Annual Monitoring Report 2018 on the Local Development Plan indicated that both the housing and commercial markets in the county borough were

experiencing growth, but there is a concern that the decision taken to leave the European Union may lead to the stagnation or decline in sectors such as production, construction and agriculture.

However, there is the potential of significant opportunities in specific sectors becoming available within the county as a result of major infra-structure and other capital investment, the development of the Metro and the impact of Cardiff City Deal as well as the Council's development of key town centres across the county.

The needs of local businesses and opportunities offered on a regional basis for employment must be considered when developing learning and skills programmes so that individuals who want to work are provided with the qualifications and work experience to achieve their goal.

Where do we want to be?

We want to live in a community where:

- all people have access to the support they need to develop their skills and knowledge so that they can achieve their potential and live healthy and rewarding lives;
- everyone who wants to work is supported to gain and stay in employment;
- those who want to progress in work are able to benefit from opportunities to further develop their skills and gain promotion;
- there is access to training and learning throughout a person's life as a commitment to lifelong learning is essential for prosperity

How do we get there?

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's key priorities for the next 3 years are to:

1. Work with partners to maximise the resources available in Rhondda Cynon Taf for skills development and employment support so that more people are supported to:
 - gain skills for life
 - gain skills for employment
 - secure and stay, and progress in paid employment
2. Work with employers to identify and respond to current and projected skills gaps;
3. Prepare for the impact of Brexit by exploring alternative options for supporting employment programmes in the county e.g. harnessing community benefits to better support the development of employment opportunities for residents.

Commercial business needs must be a driver for the number and type of courses and programmes being delivered so that customers have a realistic prospect of employment, and/or promotion for those already in employment.

In order to achieve these priorities we will:

- Work with training provider partners to ensure there is access to a wide curriculum at all levels with pathways for progression onto higher level programmes
- Work with training and advice provider partners to ensure there are programmes to support people to address barriers to employment and personal development
- Work with employers to prepare people for current and future vacancies and provide on-going support once an individual has gained employment
- Work with employers to promote opportunities for progression, personal development and career enhancement
- Encourage and influence employers to take positive action and promote equality for disabled people when recruiting, selecting, managing and developing staff
- Work with local communities to identify the learning and skills needs of their residents
- Deliver employability support and access to community learning at local venues including community hubs across the county

Outcomes and impacts

We aim to achieve the following outcomes and impacts:

- there will be an improvement in the self-esteem and confidence of customers who engage with our programmes
- an improvement in the health and well-being of people participating in learning programmes
- an increase in individual skills and qualifications so that the percentage of people with no qualifications in Rhondda Cynon Taf will be lower than the average for Wales
- training programmes offered will be relevant to the skills needs identified by employers
- more volunteering options will be available
- more people will benefit from good-quality work experience opportunities
- more in-work support will be available to people once they have entered employment
- customer satisfaction with the level of support offered will be increased
- more opportunities will be available for people who have a disability or a long-term health condition to re-enter or sustain employment

What actions shall we carry out to achieve these outcomes?

We will work with partners in a co-ordinated way that makes sure people receive effective and targeted support to develop skills and knowledge, and gain and remain in work. Appendix 3 includes the Action Plan developed to implement the strategy. This will be monitored regularly by the Strategic Employment Group that includes Council services and a wide range of training provider and advice provider partners from a variety of sectors.

Evaluation

The methodology used to evaluate the success of this strategy and associated action plan will include analysis of:

- relevant quantitative data (facts and figures)
- relevant qualitative information (case studies of individuals and customer views)