

Borough Report 2022
Kingston



Introduction

Welcome to our Better Working Futures Borough Report 2022 for Kingston.

We are pleased to present the latest information on delivery of our employment support to job-seeking residents in the borough.

This year we have seen the programme continue to make a difference in the community. Against performance targets for helping people into employment, we have seen some of our best ever results over recent months.

This performance is set against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions lifting and our team continuing to adjust our support to reflect an ever-changing labour market.

Given many people's experiences of the past two years, the need for joined-up support that addresses employment and health priorities has never been more important.

Across the UK there are now **one million more disabled people in work than five years ago** (ONS, May 2022).

The employment disability gap – the difference in employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people – has narrowed. It is currently 28.2%, down from 33.8% in 2017.

Funding for programmes like Better Working Futures was provided to achieve results like these.

There is clearly still more to do to make work accessible for everybody.

The agility and dedication our team at Reed in Partnership has displayed since I joined as Programme Director for the programme last year means we are well placed to continue playing an important role.

I have also been inspired by so many of the other local support services and community partners in Kingston that integrate with what we do here to support local residents.

I hope that this report provides a good overview of the work and impact I believe we are having.

As always, we are very happy to hear from you. If you are ever interested in dropping in to see our programme in action, or have your questions answered, please do feel free to contact me at chris.paterson@reed.com

Best wishes



Chris Paterson
Programme Director



Programme overview

The Better Working Futures service, our name for the Work and Health Programme, launched in March 2018.

The programme is commissioned by South London Partnership and co-funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the European Social Fund. It is delivered across the five boroughs of the South London Partnership: Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton.

Better Working Futures provides support to help people find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people who have early entrant access.

It also provides support to those who have been unemployed for over two years. For this group, the programme is compulsory.

Participants have been identified by their Jobcentre Plus Work Coach as needing more intensive support to overcome their barriers to employment and are therefore referred to Better Working Futures.

On referral a designated Employment Adviser is allocated. A personal action plan is developed based on a comprehensive diagnostic of the participant's circumstances, needs and ambitions.

Minimum fortnightly one-to-one meetings take place with the Employment Adviser who organises all the support required by the participant.

A Better Off Calculation takes place to ensure that the participant will be financially better off in work.

Funding is available for help with the cost of travel, childcare and work/interview clothing.



Seven areas of support



1. Mindset

We help participants to get motivated and start thinking positively about employment and their own abilities.



2. Employability

Practical skills development for job searching, CV writing and interview skills. Self-employment support is also available.



3. Skills and qualifications

Work specific skills development that match local employer needs. Access and funding is provided for accredited training and qualifications. Sector taster sessions are available.



4. Personal circumstances

An extensive range of support, confidential advice and advocacy to overcome personal barriers, including housing issues, caring responsibilities, financial issues and previous convictions.





5. Health and disability

Our delivery was developed in partnership with Disability Rights, the UK charity run by and for people with lived experience of a disability or health condition. Health and Wellbeing Advisers provide one-to-one and group support to help participants manage a health condition, in and outside of the workplace.



6. Employment options

We have links with employers across South London. We work with employers of all sizes and types to source a wide range of appropriate vacancies that match the ambitions of our participants. We support employers to develop their understanding of health conditions and make reasonable adjustments through our role as a Disability Confident Leader.



7. In-work support

An In-Work Plan is produced that provides ongoing support once the participant starts employment. A progression review is offered to help increase the participant's salary, hours or review trading for self-employed participants.

Additionally, a wide range of support through external provision is available. Our Route Planner Tool contains details of local Kingston services that can provide coordinated support with specialist interventions for health and lifestyle factors and training options.

Programme data

March 2018 - August 2022

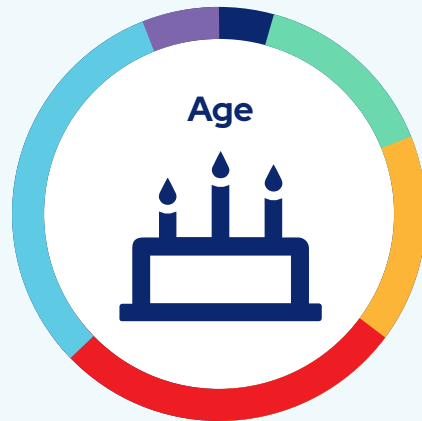
Location

Norbiton Ward	10%
Grove Ward	9%
Canbury Ward	8%
St. Mark's Ward	8%
Chessington North and Hook Ward	7%
Tolworth and Hook Rise Ward	7%
Beverley Ward	6%
Chessington South Ward	6%
Surbiton Hill Ward	6%
Old Malden Ward	6%
Berrylands Ward	6%
Coombe Hill Ward	5%
St. James Ward	5%
Alexandra Ward	4%
Coombe Vale Ward	4%
Tudor Ward	3%

4%
18-24

15%
25-34

16%
35-44



6%
65+

31%
55-64

28%
45-54

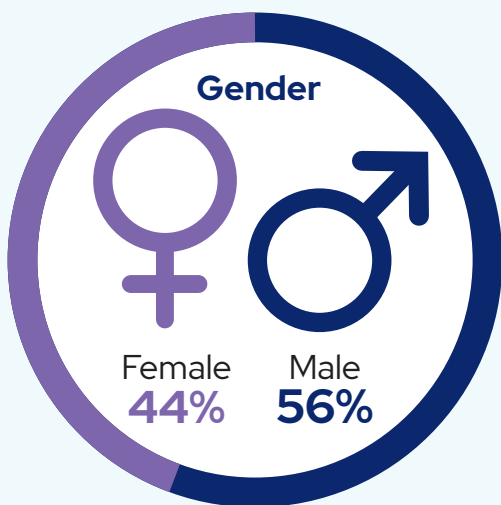


77% (54% male, 46% female)
Disability / Health Condition (Voluntary)

12% (63% male, 37% female)
Vulnerable Early Entrant Access (Voluntary)
Includes people who are: a carer or former carer homeless; a former member of the armed forces or a reservist; the partner of a current or former member of the armed forces; a care leaver; a young person in a gang; a refugee; a victim of domestic violence; have or have had a dependency on drugs or alcohol; an ex-offender

8% (65% male, 35% female)
Long-Term Unemployed (Mandatory)
People who have been unemployed for 24 months or longer

3%
Autism Spectrum Group





76% Disability / Health Condition

11% Vulnerable Early Entrant Access

13% Long-Term Unemployed

White (British) **62%**
Black (African / Caribbean / British) **18%**
Mixed / Multiple / Other **14%**
Asian (Bangladeshi / Chinese / Indian / Pakistani / British) **7%**



Most common health barriers to work

- 1** Mental health issues
- 2** General poor health and lifestyle
- 3** Learning difficulties

Most common barriers to work

- 1** Not knowing how to customise a CV
- 2** Poor interview skills
- 3** Poor IT skills

Most common job goals



Service performance

Participant starts to date	639
Job starts to date	205
Job sustainments to date	98

Sustainments are achieved when the participant has reached a specified level of earnings from employment or has reached 6 months of being in self-employment.

Benefitting Kingston

Local job starts

5,727 South London unemployed residents – **639** of them in Kingston – have had the opportunity to access the programme and make a plan to find employment since it launched in March 2018.

205 participants from Kingston have started working with our help. **58%** of those using the service in Kingston come from jobless households, where inter-generational unemployment often increases the number and severity of barriers to finding work. Breaking this cycle is important to the prospects of all household members.



Generating income

The average wage for jobs started by residents in Kingston is **£10.38** and the most common contracted hours are **40 hours** per week. We can see from our data that **98** of the participants supported into work have sustained until they have earned **£3,000** in income from their job so far, with many more approaching this figure soon. This shows that the roles participants are supported to access are meaningful, secure work.

However, only 17% of participants start work earning above the London Living Wage. With the current cost of living issues facing people, we are helping participants by working with our key partners such as **Citizens Advice Bureau, Shelter** and **Beam**.

We are also running Cost of Living events for our participants where they can discuss their challenges and concerns with Kingston-based representatives from local Housing Authorities, financial wellbeing organisations, foodbanks and the Citizens Advice Bureau.



Partnerships that break down barriers

In Kingston, the top three most common health barriers participants report are mental health issues, general poor health and lifestyle and learning difficulties.

Our Health and Wellbeing Advisers provide a range of in-house personal and group support that address these key barriers, including managing anxiety, stress awareness, sleeping well, mindfulness, being more physical active, understanding nutrition and mood management.

We also work in partnership with local health support organisations to complete our service. This includes **IAPT, Croydon Talking Therapies, Chiltern Clinic** and **Living Well CIC** - who provide our participants with a six-week programme if they have a long-term health condition, such as diabetes, arthritis, chronic pain, depression, HIV or long Covid-19. The programme helps participants learn new skills to manage their condition with a healthcare professional, meet others and share experiences and use their new skills and knowledge to improve their quality of life.

Participants also benefit from our local partnership with **The Nehemiah Project**, an independent charity with five houses in South London where male participants with a history of substance misuse can access a therapeutic programme with keywork meetings, counselling, psychotherapy, Family Support Service, and supported attendance at AA meetings.

The other most common, non-health related barriers to work among Kingston participants are not knowing how to customise a CV, poor interview skills and poor IT skills that hinder their search for work.

We help participants overcome these issues through dedicated support from their Employment Adviser, access to CV builders and workshops, and integration with community services. This includes **South Thames College Group** and **Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)**, who complement our service with additional bespoke CV support, digital skills training and ESOL skills.

Participants in Kingston are most likely to want to work in retail, administration or customer service.

To ensure suitable job vacancies and opportunities we have our own Recruitment Managers who are responsible for the Borough of Kingston. We also liaise with the local Employment & Skills Lead from the Borough Council as well as **Kingston Work Match**, the jobs board specifically for Kingston residents.

“We are delighted to work with Better Working Futures. Both organisations are committed to working collaboratively and taking a person-centred approach in supporting our clients.”

Living Well

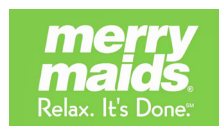
Employer relations

WH Smith

Following the success of a job fair that we held last year, we have continued to maintain a strong relationship with WHSmith, with over 17 participants now placed into their South London and Gatwick branches. Additionally, WHSmith has particularly encouraged applicants with disabilities and has been very flexible with our participants' barriers to work, including accommodating flexible working arrangements.



Merry Maids is an international franchisor which sells and supports residential cleaning services around the United Kingdom. We built a relationship with Merry Maids in Croydon and they were so pleased with the quality of our services and participants that they then began working with us in Kingston. We have placed participants into a range of differing cleaning roles which have proven popular with our participants predominantly due to the work being flexible around school hours.



We have built a strong relationship with the West London arm of Visiting Angels, who provide home care services. With the support of our Recruitment Managers, three people have been placed into work with Visiting Angels so far. Vacancies in the Care sector are notoriously difficult to fill, so following our success Visiting Angels have asked for further support from us as they have many more vacancies to fill.

Hilton

We built a relationship with Hilton after attending their careers open days. Taking participants to these events resulted in on-the-spot interviews and an invitation to have our own Reed in Partnership stand at Hilton events. Roles available from Hilton can be anything from front of house, reception, housekeeping and more. We have had a total of 10 job offers to our participants with five of these already in post.

People's stories

Hilary joined Better Working Futures having been out of work for a number of years due to health issues and personal losses, which meant her confidence was extremely low. Hilary's Jobcentre Plus Work Coach initially referred her to the service to help her engage more with others and build up her confidence to start work again.

Hilary began working with her Employment Adviser to create an action plan to identify which of her barriers to employment needed to be tackled. In the following weeks, Hilary's Employment Adviser referred her for counselling, which she found to be very helpful. Her Employment Adviser also referred her to one of our self-confidence health and

wellbeing session, which helped build her confidence to find work. Together, the two of them continued to work on establishing job goals and improving Hilary's CV.

Hilary said: "Since joining the service I feel like a new person. My mental health has improved greatly, and I now know what I want to do in the future. I have found work as a Care Assistant and would like to remain within the care sector and do a course on Children and Young People's Mental Health.

"I am a completely different person to the one I was when I started the service. I'm the happiest I've been in five years and I'm so grateful for all your help."

Elena joined the Better Working Futures service having been out of work for over a decade. She was previously employed as a domestic cleaner but had since stopped working due to depression and poor physical health.

After joining the service, Elena's Employment Adviser, Kevin, supported her with an application to a cleaning agency which would give her the flexible hours she needed. Kevin had been working to form a relationship with the agency, Berry Recruitment, for a few months and was able to be in contact with their Recruitment Consultant throughout Elena's registration process.

After only three weeks on the service, Elena was successful in securing the part-time role as a cleaner, her first paid employment in 20 years. She was very pleased with her progress, saying:

"I was so lucky to meet my adviser, Kevin. He helped me a lot and after a couple of weeks I got the job. This changed my life. Now, I get up early and I prepare to go to my job."

better
working
futures
WORK AND HEALTH PROGRAMME

