

Parents and Employment

December 2013

1. Introduction

Overview

Child poverty and barriers to parental employment are two separate issues which demand individual strategies, but there is also a strong correlation between the two and barriers to parental employment can lead to underemployment and a lower household income. This paper will therefore primarily focus addressing parental employment, including:

- analysing the profile of parents who are not in employment;
- the barriers to parental employment including consideration of childcare provision and the availability of quality part time jobs;
- what provision is available in the borough that facilitate parental employment;
- how successful our local approaches have been in getting parents into work; and
- What the gaps are in our local approach.

Recommendations centre on three areas of potential intervention or enhanced activity:

- Childcare – both addressing the immediate barriers for lone parents moving into employment and affordability and take up issues
- Engaging parents who are least likely to be in employment
- Influencing employers to offer more flexible ways of working

This report will form a supplement to both the 2014/15 Child Poverty Needs Assessment and Action Plan the Local Economic Assessment due to the clear interactions between these work streams and will be used as a bridging evidence base to:

1. Develop creative and innovative approaches to tackling barriers to childcare and inform the childcare provision report
2. Inform and influence mainstream activity in improving blended childcare packages in order to help parents into employment and stay in employment; and
3. Contribute to Ways into Work's Business Plan and future funding bids, in particular any forthcoming ESF funding.

Questions for the Regeneration Steering Group:

1) Focus and target:

The recommendations propose a particular focus on:

Supporting lone parents

Tackling affordability and flexibility in the current offer – whether that is childcare or the out of hours and holiday offer for school age children

Should there be a more specific focus on an age group of children?

2) Innovation and creativity

There is a recommendation that we look at creative and innovative ways of providing affordable and flexible childcare that exist in the borough or in other boroughs and seek to replicate these.

To what extent should we intervene in the existing market? Who should we work with (e.g. Registered providers)?

3) Flexible employment

How do we best work in partnership with employers to promote the benefits of flexible employment and a diverse workforce?

It is worth noting that the Government is to announce a new strategy for child poverty this week (24th February) which will also inform this work.

Background

Approximately 36.8% (21,745) of children in Hackney live in families that earn less than 60% of the national median household income, which is considered to be the poverty line. 28.6% (16,900) live in households that do not work compared to just 4.2% (2,490) who live in poverty in working households. For the remaining 4% (2,360) it is unknown whether anyone in the household works.

Overall, 31% of households with children in Hackney do not work; double the national rate (14.5%) and significantly higher than the rate for London (17%). A critical factor underlying in Hackney's high child poverty rates are the low rates of parental employment, specifically for lone parents. There is a 12% gap between the proportion of lone parents working in Hackney and the national average.

With low rates of parental employment being strongly correlated with child poverty, increasing the rate of parental employment should play a part in alleviating it. When the London Child Poverty Commission examined the causes of poverty back in 2008, it noted that:-

“The underlying causes of this entrenched child poverty are surprisingly simple – the employment rate among parents, in particular mothers, is much

lower than elsewhere in the country, driven in part by a lack of part-time jobs and flexible childcare, as well as higher housing, childcare and living costs.”

Hackney recognises that there is a need to maintain a focus on the protection and promotion of family incomes, particularly at a time when the poorest residents are being adversely affected by the government spending cuts and welfare changes. Theme six of the current Child Poverty Plan, “Supporting Household Incomes”, sets out our commitment to “*use all available levers and flexibilities at the local level to support families to maximise their incomes*” by:

1. Supporting poor families through the tax and benefit changes and to avoid getting into financial difficulties;
2. Influencing government and other organisations on key issues which impact on family incomes; and
3. Supporting people into work and addressing barriers to work for parents, such as the cost and quality of childcare.

As part of the work emerging from the third objective, this paper on parents and employment has been developed to examine the barriers to employment parents’ face that ultimately drives poverty in Hackney.

2. Emerging Recommendations

Child care

Issues:

Ensuring childcare is as flexible, affordable and high quality as possible is a central element to increasing the demand for maternal employment, especially in low income households and those either at risk of poverty or experiencing poverty (for example lone parents, BME parents and parents of disabled children).

There are few levers open to what LBH can do without additional funding from central government in light of reduced spending in local government, however, childcare planning and childcare policy ought to actively take into account what types of families are most in need of childcare and most unlikely to be able to afford it: our evidence indicates that lone parents are more likely to be workless than households with two parents and their children are more likely to live in poverty than any other group and they are also one of the groups in the former Childcare Sufficiency Assessment that stated they didn’t use formal childcare due to the cost and inflexibility. National research shows that lone parents rely less on informal childcare, with the absence of a partner to rely on, and therefore formal childcare is the only option available to them. If it is perceived as too costly or inflexible, then childcare becomes a barrier to employment.

The two main ways that LBH currently subsidise childcare is within children’s centres and through providing some subsidy for low income families and vulnerable children in voluntary and independent provision (PVI).

Another issue which needs to be considered is the disincentives inherent in government policy related to childcare. Under Universal Credit (UC) those who increase earnings and move off benefits by working longer hours and/or move into higher paid work will lose the 85% childcare subsidy to be paid to those eligible for UC. Once they earn enough to no longer qualify, the subsidy that parents will receive for childcare will reduce to 20% (under the new announcement) due to be implemented in autumn 2015.

Recommendation:

Lone parents

- Given the historically high levels of unemployment amongst lone parents, identify ways to target childcare support at this group, using JCP flexible support fund or ESF (if eligible):
 - i. Work with JCP to develop options for operating a small loans or bursary system to assist lone parents in paying for the first month of childcare costs (Islington has bursary scheme, that is integrated with the Jobcentre Plus flexible support fund, in order to minimise application processes for parents). (Discussions between LBH and Jobcentre Plus have already started and the first step is to establish the current Jobcentre Plus childcare offer).
 - ii. Explore the scope for subsidising the cost of wrap around support in the form of breakfast clubs and after school clubs and holiday provision for lone parents in the areas with the highest levels of child poverty, as part of a blended offer of childcare support.
 - iii. Consider the scope for using Troubled Families “results” money to subsidise wrap around childcare support and to help families with the costs of childcare where this is a major barrier to work.

Blended Childcare Packages

Recommendations:

- Work with schools to access any available funds to reduce the variation in the costs of providing breakfast clubs or/and after school clubs that run from school premises across Hackney based on duration of sessions. Currently costs run between £0.50 and £15.00 per session as some schools generate income to subsidise the offer.
- Work with Early Years to consider the feasibility of extending blended childcare packages into the evenings and weekends at childcare provisions, including child minders, across the six childcare areas.

General

Recommendations:

- The uptake of 15 hours weekly early learning provision for 3-4 year olds is now at 96% (up from 83% three years ago) and we should continue to encourage uptake, specifically to lone parent families on a low income. We

- Draw on best practice from other local authorities particularly how Camden funded an additional 10 hours free childcare per week for 3-4 year olds (taking up the offer to 25 hours free care a week). This is likely to cost about £50-£60 per child
- Continue to work with London Councils to lobby central government to increase funding for childcare provision.
- Investigate flexible ways in which people work in Hackney and what they need and how this can be introduced into the borough in our policies and approaches , looking at child minders and other examples like: .
 - Third Door Workhub and nursery in Wandsworth, which provides integrated, shared working space with an on-site day nursery, might be applicable to Hackney. Childcare is flexible and parents can chose sessions and days to suit them, whether their needs change on a week to week basis or stay the same.
 - Workfree which is an organisation that promotes the concept of co-working space and flexible crèche provision and has worked with local authorities. They have been involved in small schemes like the Library Lab project in Brent. Parents could book a maximum of 2 hours free childcare whilst they remained on site to use the Library Lab and other spaces within the Willesden Green Library centre. This was initially funded by the GLA as part of a wider regeneration project.
- Investigate innovative and creative approaches to developing affordable models of childcare as part of a blended offer of childcare particularly where they make effective use of existing community space with a view to supporting or replicating these. For example a pilot project in Clapton, where affordable childcare is offered by using parent volunteers alongside professional staff and where a Hackney small grant is supporting an extended hours pilot to better support parents.
- Continue to lobby about the government policy issue of working parents moving off Universal Credit only to be impacted by the reduction in childcare subsidy from 85% to 20%.

Engaging with parents who are least likely to be in employment into adult learning and employment

Issues:

Households with children are more likely to be unemployed than households without children. The rate of non-working households with children in Hackney is higher than regional and national averages.

Women fare worse: the employment rate for females is lower than that for males, as is the rate of economic activity. Both the female employment rate and female economic activity rate have decreased over the past two years

with the most common reason for inactivity being looking after family and home. The rate of employment for lone parents in Hackney is lower than regional and national averages and the female lone parent employment rate is lower than the rate for male lone parents.

Although poverty is largely concentrated in households with young children, research shows that it is women aged 25-34 and 45-54 who have the highest rates of unemployment, leading to the possibility that although they have access to JCP, they miss out on the access and signposting to adult learning and facilities available at Children's Centres. It is therefore important to consider how older parents can access employment support and training in a non-statutory setting.

Solutions need to be targeted at lone female parents seeking employment, for whom there is no service specific offer and female parents who are not accessing Job Centre Plus (JCP). Partnership working between Children centres, JCP and HLT are central to better enabling these cohorts to access pre employment and employment support.

Performance data for programmes targeting parents suggests that their impact is not being fully realised at present. The Reed in Partnership employment support for families with multiple problems placed 15 out of 150 eligible clients in employment between February 2012 and September 2013 (10%). The work programme has a 10% success rate for lone parents.

It is noted that Ways into Work Programme do support parents, but cannot readily analyse the success rate of placing parents in employment currently although this data is captured on the Ways into Work registration form and we anticipate this being resolved once a new database has been procured.

Better support and focus on parents

Recommendations:

- Explore whether Ways into Work team could focus future resources on support for parents and how they can influence and encourage employers to see the benefits of employment part time staff and flexible working arrangements (including term time arrangements), including entry level jobs, working with the Timewise foundation.

Parents and accessibility to employment support

Recommendations:

- Encourage partnership working between HLT, Ways into Work and JCP in promoting Employment Support Days in schools in order to increase accessibility of employment support and adult learning to parents of school children who might be missing out on the offer via Children's Centres. This should involve employers- a similar scheme has proved popular at LB Islington.
- Continue to promote pre-employment support with childcare at Children's Centres, where the children can be cared for in familiar surroundings.

- Consider how the idea of “parent champions” volunteers could be introduced in Hackney in order to engage with parents at schools and talk to them about their experience in finding employment support and work placements and to signpost parents to adult learning facilities and employment support in Hackney. Friendly, peer support has been shown to have excellent effect in engaging parents across national studies. This would enable better engagement with parents whose children are over 5 and therefore don't have access to adult learning at children's centres.

Corporate Policy

Recommendations

- Continue to monitor demand and performance data on the impact that employment support projects have on child poverty; for Ways into Work this will be once a new database has been procured.
- Lobby for a greater share of employment support funding being shaped and managed locally, based on the low outcomes from national programmes.

Using the Council's leverage to influence businesses and employers

The Council's main levers are in procurement and commissioning, spatial planning, and as an employer. In parallel with considering how to expand and target the childcare offer, developing the demand for parental employment by influencing the creation of quality, part-time careers for local people is central to increasing parental employment in Hackney.

LBH should consider options for at what can be done to stimulate demand for maternal labour and develop a labour market with sufficient quality, part-time jobs suitable for working parents. Research undertaken by JRF showed that 30% of employers would be interested in receiving free support and advice on part time working and said they would consider recruiting more part time staff if presented with a greater supply of suitable part time candidates. Although this research was undertaken at a regional (London) level, the implications for Hackney should be acknowledged.

Research has shown that as well as a lack of part time vacancies, part time jobs in London do not attract a London wage premium at the same rate as full time positions, meaning that parents – especially those more vulnerable to poverty, including lone parents – who face additional costs such as travel and childcare, may not be able to take them up. There is scope for LBH to consider what can be done to ensure wages are as fair as possible across the borough.

As an employer, LBH should ensure that in recruitment policies, in house flexible working policies and work force monitoring is as accessible and complete as possible.

Advertising and recruiting as a flexible employer

Recommendation:

- Despite operating a comprehensive flexible working policy, LBH vacancies are not currently advertised as being flexible. It is recommended that vacancies where flexible working is possible are advertised as such in order to promote LBH as a flexible employer and to encourage those with parenting/caring responsibilities to apply. This might include offering term time opportunities when business need can cater for this.

In house policy and monitoring

Recommendations:

- Hackney offers comprehensive support to managers and employees through a maternity policy (including guidance on returning to work), a flexible working policy and a dependency leave policy. However, managers might benefit from finding all this information packaged under one heading for Parental Support on the intranet. It is recommended that Human Resources consider amending the intranet policy page to reflect policies for parents under one heading in order to ensure managers have ease of access to all the relevant information and requirements in order to ensure policy is followed on every aspect of parental rights.
- There is currently no guidance for managers on whether or not to meet with new fathers returning to the workplace after paternity leave in order to discuss working options as there is for women returning from maternity leave. It is recommended that Human Resources consider providing guidance for managers outlining the requirement to meet with employees who are fathers when they return from paternity leave in order to consider available working options available and suitable.
- LBH offers a flexible working policy that states all jobs Hackney are available on a flexible basis unless there is a good reason why not. It is recommended that LBH monitor the split of part time and full time positions within the organisation.
- It is recommended that Human Resources monitor employment retention rates for employees who take maternity leave and their patterns of employment following the return to work.

Influencing contractors and commissioners

Recommendations:

- Build on LBH's work in relation to committing to the London living wage to encourage all subcontractors and commissioners pay the London living wage.
- Investigate the use of community benefit clauses within LBH procurement arrangements and consider the feasibility of inserting a clause that companies LBH contract with offer a proportion of advertised jobs as

- Examine the use of community benefit clauses to encourage businesses working with LBH to offer flexible training and work experience.

Influencing businesses and employers in the borough

Hackney has become increasingly popular as a good place for business. LBH could use this leverage to influence local businesses and employers wishing to set up in the Borough in making the business case for part-time employment, flexible working options all paid at the London Living Wage.

Recommendation:

- Policy to work with Human Resources and Ways into Work to consider whether Hackney's Employment Charter can encourage businesses to consider flexible and part time working and discourage zero-hours contracts in order to reflect our ambitions for equality in employment throughout the borough.

3. Data Digest

1. Profile of parents and families

Households with children are more likely to be workless than households overall

- Mixed households (defined as one parent working and the other not) are the most common type of household with children in Hackney, followed by workless households then working households.
- 31% of households with children are workless compared to 25% of households overall: more than double the national average (14%) and almost double the regional average (17%).
- 26% of households with children are defined as working households compared to 44% of households overall - 10% behind the regional average (36%) and over 20% behind the national average (47%)
- The proportion of working households with children and the proportion of mixed household with children has been in decline since 2009, whereas the proportion of workless households with children has been increasing. This does not reflect the national or regional picture, where, since 2010, the proportion of working and mixed households with children has increased and the proportion of workless households with children has declined.

The more children, the more likely a household is to be workless or mixed

- In couple families, the rate at which both parents work decreases steadily with the number of children in the household; from 53% with one child, down to 48% with two children to just 28% with three children. Correspondingly, the proportion of just one of the parents working

- The pattern is similar for lone parent families.

Less than half of lone parents are in employment; of those who are in work the split between those in part time work and those in full time work is close

- Approximately 60% of lone parents are in employment across England. For Hackney, however, that figure is just 48%: 22.8% on a full time basis and 25.2% on a part time basis; the remaining 52% are unemployed. Lone parents make up 11% of households in Hackney.
- Research shows that lone parents do want to work¹. The reasons behind the low employment rate likely relate to lack of flexible part time work, poor financial incentives at the lower end of the part time job market and the cost of childcare (see below). National research shows that lone parents rely heavily on formal childcare due to being unable to operate on “shift parenting” schedules as couples have the option to do. Informal childcare is less likely in London, especially in first generation immigrant families or families who are new to the region and who do not have established family and social networks.

Living as a workless, lone parent drives child poverty

- Poverty statistics relating to children living in workless lone parent households reflect the low employment rate for this cohort of parents: poverty in workless households account for 77% of child poverty and 70.1% of child poverty in Hackney is concentrated in lone parent households. Overall, children in workless, lone parent families account for 80% of workless child poverty in Hackney.

Females are more likely to be lone parents than males and are therefore at higher risk of worklessness and poverty

- Females comprise 92.2% (9,871) of all lone parents in the borough. 26% of female lone parents are in part time work, 22% are in full time employment and 52% are not in employment. In totality, the maternal employment rate² for Hackney (48%) is 9% lower than the total female employment rate (56.9%).

Females are more likely to be economically inactive due to reason of looking after the family and home than males

- Females who are economically inactive are most likely to be inactive due to family commitments (42.2%) and are eight times more likely to be inactive for this reason than males.
- Between 2007 and 2010, there was a 20% decrease in the proportion of inactive women claiming this reason behind economic inactivity. However, since 2010 there has been a rapid increase in the proportion of female economic inactivity due to family commitments, reflecting the increase in female inactivity in general.

¹ Gingerbread 2012

² The proxy used for the maternal employment rate is the female lone parent employment rate.

- This trend is not reflected across London and England where the proportion of females citing this reason for inactivity has decreased.

Asian women most likely to be economically inactive and most likely, together with women from any other ethnic background, to be economically inactive for reason of family and home commitments.

- Broad patterns from Census demonstrate that women from ‘any other ethnic group’ (including Arab backgrounds) and Asian groups, especially Bangladeshis and Indians, are more likely than any other ethnic group to be economically inactive for this reason. Intelligence from relevant projects across Hackney confirm that it is mostly likely that cultural leanings underpin the high inactivity rate and rationale for inactivity, however, language barriers and low confidence in approaching employment opportunities also play a role³.

Black women are most likely to be unemployed and seeking employment

- Although Asian women and women from Other Ethnic Groups are most likely to be economically inactive, it is women from Black and Mixed Black and White backgrounds that are most likely to be unemployed and seeking employment, particularly those aged 45-54.

2. Welfare reform and its affect on families claiming benefits

Females with children are more likely to claim benefits

- Whilst females are more likely to claim out of work benefits than males overall, childless females are half as likely as childless males to claim out of work benefits and females with dependent children are five times more likely to claim benefits than males with dependent children, most likely reflecting the over representation of females in the lone parent population in the borough.

Welfare reform will impact families with children

- Welfare reforms that have been introduced and will continue to be introduced over the next 3-5 years are estimated to impact on around 7000 children in Hackney. However, data on this is live and so this figure is liable to change as reforms progress. The major risks identified for families affected by welfare reform are rent arrears, eviction and ultimately homelessness.
- Looking at the impact of universal credit to parents, research undertaken by Gingerbread shows that the average income for single parent families is slightly lower under universal credit than under the current system, and on average single parents are forecast not to benefit from its introduction.
- In terms of work incentives, the research showed that under universal credit many non-working single parents who currently have weak incentives to enter work will see these improved, mainly because of the removal of the minimum limit on hours worked per week, as well as slower benefit withdrawal.

³ See Annexe 5 for details

- Similarly, some working single parents who currently have weak incentives to work more will see these improve. However, it is also important to note that, despite this improvement, single parents will still face some of the weakest incentives to work at all and to progress in work compared to other household types, and especially when they are working 20 or more hours per week.
- This will be compounded by the fact that part time work, especially at the lower end of the labour market, does not carry the same “London Premium” as full time work, and therefore carries less financial incentive.

3. *Childcare in Hackney*

There is currently 96% uptake of the free early education entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

- All three and four year old children are entitled to 15 hours free Early Years (EY) Entitlement per week, across 38 weeks of the year.
- 20% of 2-year-olds from some of the poorest families have been eligible for 15 hours per week of free childcare from September 2013 with this figure set to increase to 40% from September 2014.

Parents who use childcare provisions in Hackney do so because it enables them to work and train.

- Users of childcare in Hackney do so because it enables them to train/work and because they perceive it as good for their children. For those not using childcare, preferring to stay at home (38%), currently looking for childcare (27%) and not being able to afford childcare were the main reasons (27%).
- 40% of parents of disabled children, 60% of lone parents and 39% of parents on low income cited cost as the primary reason for not using childcare.
- General satisfaction with childcare is high in Hackney. However, the most common areas of dissatisfaction are cost, opening hours and flexibility.

The majority of childcare is only open during term time, leaving approximately 20% of children without their regular childcare during holiday time, although it should be noted that childminders can and do fill this gap.

- 63% of childcare is open during term time only; 5% are open during the holidays and 37% is open all year round, leading to around 20% of children being without childcare during term time, although it should be noted that childminders can and do fill this gap. Options for parents of these children include placing them in a holiday scheme, alternative child care options or taking time off work to look after their children, with the latter not being a realistic option for many working parents.

Almost every primary school in Hackney runs a ‘breakfast club’ (50p - £3.50 per day) enabling parents to drop off their children at school from 8am and many run after school provisions (at a cost of between £3 - £9 a day, averaging around £5)

- Out of the sixty primary schools in Hackney; nineteen provide after school childcare and activities from the end of the school day until between 17:45 and 18:30 or else provide transport for children taking them to alternative providers; forty schools provide after activity sessions after school hours, usually until 16:30; and one primary school does not currently offer after school provision.
- A further twelve providers across the borough run after school services, with three of these running until 18 :00
- There is currently dissatisfaction with wraparound childcare support. Conversations with Children's Centres and projects that operate across Hackney through the VCS reveal that after-hours and out-of-hours childcare is one component that negatively impacts a parent's decision as to whether or not to seek or continue in employment.

4. Children's Centres

All Children's Centres across Hackney support excellent adult learning facilities: from ESOL classes to practical training courses that may enhance parents' skills enhancing their employability

- All children's centres across Hackney provide access to "English as a Second Language" (ESOL) classes for parents of under fives, with the numbers of clients completing ESOL courses increasing by 42% over the past two years.
- Numeracy and literacy classes are widely available too, enabling parents to develop the most basic skills necessary for employment.
- Almost half of children's centres provide ICT courses (from basic PC lessons to NVQ level 3) with general career development and employability sessions being widely offered across centres too, further enabling parents to develop skills that may help them into work.
- Overall, 2,127 parents either completed a training course or found an employment placement through Children's Centres in 2012/2013, an increase of 33% over two years.
- Children's centres clients are largely from workless homes (60%) and reach a range of ethnic backgrounds and so are well placed to encourage unemployed or economically inactive parents to consider adult learning courses, pre-employment support and work placements.
- Proposals for 2014 include ensuring adequate employment support services are available in area D (Kings Park and Wick), which has high levels of child poverty. Support will include employment support outreach through partnership work with Crisis, for those in temporary accommodation.
- Additional proposals include setting up job clubs throughout Centres in the borough which will take place on a weekly basis for six weeks. Children's Centres are hoping to engage JCP in providing materials and live job lists for this initiative.
- Children's Centre officers reported that key to their engagement with parents is establishing a friendly, trusting relationship and providing a space which is both child friendly and is equipped to enable learning. As a

- Children's centres report an excellent partnership with Ways into Work, with the programme providing jobs lists to centres on a regular basis and referring clients to learning programmes. They wanted to see more outreach from JCP. They also wanted to ensure that advisers proposed vacancies that were realistic as this was not always the case.

The main barriers to employment to parents identified by Children's Centres include

- The first month of childcare costs for parents who have recently found employment but have not yet been paid;
- Out of hours childcare, for instance, those who work past 7pm or at the weekend, although childminders can be used to fill this gap as part of a blended package.
- Inflexible childcare provision for part-time or shift work. Although blended packages involving childminders can again be put together.

The two main ways that LBH currently subsidise childcare is within children's centres and through providing some subsidy for low income families and vulnerable children in voluntary and independent provision (PVI).

5. The voluntary and community sector: projects that facilitate working parents

In addition to extensive funding Hackney provides grants for a number of projects that either provide some aspect of childcare and activities for children during the school holidays that will facilitate parents who work as well as projects that provide employment support to parents experiencing barriers to employment and to harder to reach groups, such as homeless residents and those with limited English

The main barriers to employment to parents/the client groups identified by these organisations include (details can be found in Annexe 5, page 55):

- Unrealistic expectations of clients in terms of flexible employment, childcare support and wanting jobs they are not qualified for;
- English as a second or other language;
- Families with multiple problems (including homelessness);
- Poor attitudes to work and low motivation, especially for those who are long term unemployed and women from specific ethnic backgrounds where employment outside the home is not the cultural norm;
- Lack of awareness of the legal requirements to operate business in the UK;
- Long term unemployed residents lacking job readiness and a relevant and up to date skill set; and
- Unsuitable hours in vacancies, including zero hours contracts which are unsuitable for parents who require formal childcare.

6. Employment services

Job Centre Plus offers both generic employment support and employ a specialist parents adviser within every centre, intended to give one-to-one advice on the range of support available including training opportunities, childcare, help with job applications, “better off” calculations and details of part-time or family friendly working in their area.

- Despite these facilities, key partners including Children’s Centres, report that JCP advisers are encouraging clients to apply for roles for which they have no experience or qualifications, including childcare roles, because there are creche facilities and hours
- Ways into Work also report that a lack of one to one support and case work with clients at JCP, which is regarded as the best way of engaging with and supporting residents into employment.
- Due to reduced resources, JCP can no longer commit to sustained weekly outreach with Children’s Centres. Instead, a pilot for a new programme of “Employment Support Days” was trialled in November to plug this gap.
 - The afternoon of support was held at Morningside Community Centre and run in partnership with Ways into Work, Children’s Centres, Crisis, HLT, Groundwork East, The Childminding Network and Family Information Service who were there to advise attendees on a range of information relating to volunteering, housing, employment and childcare.
 - It was generally considered a success, with two parents signing up to a literacy course and one parent registering as a volunteer, however, no Children’s Centre clients were at the event and so a proportion of the target audience was missed. Additionally, no employers were present at the event which might have encouraged further turn.
- JCP has a “Flexible Support Fund” and “Emergency In Work Payments” to assist clients who require money for employment related equipment or training
 - Money is awarded on a discretionary, case by case basis. As well as being available for travel costs, equipment (i.e. clothes for work) and training, awards have been made to lone parents for assistance in paying for childcare costs whilst in training or a work experience placement.
 - JCP were unable to quantify the value of the FSF and Emergency In Work Payments Fund; how many payments had been made, for what and to whom over 2012/13 and so we were unable to analyse how many parents benefit from this type of support

JCP representatives identified the following barriers to work for parents:

- Skills and sectors have developed rapidly over the last 5-10 years and many clients who are long term unemployed do not have the requisite IT skills;
- Technology also presents practical challenges in applying for jobs, especially those with online application forms; and
- Some clients feel unmotivated due to the financial aspect of returning to work in considering travel costs and childcare costs

The Work Programme

- Data for Hackney shows that, although below the national average, lone parents perform equally to other groups, with around a 10% success rate of contacts finding employment.
- However, this represents just 90 lone parents finding employment through the programme over the course of a year: with lone parent households estimated at around 11% of all households in Hackney, and half of these being workless, this amounts to 5,500 out of work lone parent households in Hackney: the 90 parents that have found work through the work programme represent a very small proportion of this cohort.

Ways into Work complements mainstream provision and offers employer engagement, job brokerage and support to unemployed residents. The majority of referrals are made through Hackney Homes, Young Hackney and word of mouth

- Although Ways into Work monitoring forms capture whether the client is a parent and/or lone parent and how many children a client has, the team were unable to provide any monitoring data for the programme and so we were unable to clarify what proportion of the Ways into Work client base are parents and how successful Ways into Work had been in facilitating parents into employment.
- From case studies Ways into Work clients, key concerns appeared to be around confidence and lack of recent experience in applying for jobs, as opposed to more complex issues such as language barriers, literacy and numeracy issues, skills deficits and arranging inflexible/costly childcare around inflexible working hours. This reflects the fact that Ways into Work are referred to other organisations if they are not 'job ready' after generic employment support.
- Ways into Work suggested that it is not always appropriate to request part time and flexible employment for clients due to the fact that positions are often entry level. This suggests there is scope for WiW and LBH more widely to try to influence local employers in seeing the benefits of part time and flexible working.

Reed in Partnership run employment support for families with multiple problems and is intended to holistically support those furthest from the labour market to make progress closer to the goal of sustainable employment

- Performance data from February 2012-September 2013 demonstrates that only 148 were considered eligible for the programme: roughly 15% of the

- Around 60% of clients either have no support activity planned or their case is dormant (meaning that although eligible, the member has failed to attend appointments or respond to attempts to contact them); 10% specifically stated they did not wish to participate on the programme; 7% are currently active and a further 7% have been referred and just 2% completed the 52 weeks of the programme or else became ineligible (through being on the Work Programme)
- Reed has demonstrated a low rate of success (10%) in terms of placing clients in employment with just 15 eligible clients finding employment placements over this period.
- Children's Centres referred 50% of Reed's clients, but have now stopped referring to Reed due to lack of outreach with the Centres and lack of contact and progression with clients.
- As a result, Reed has taken a secondary referral route for clients from the JCP which leads to the risk that the original targets for this scheme – families most in need with multiple problems – are being missed through a circumvented referral process.

Young Hackney manage the Troubled Families programme, which aims to “turn around” families who meet particular criteria identifying them as having multiple problems.

- The indicators include, but are not limited to, a member of the households claiming out of work benefits, a child in the household having two or more fixed term exclusions and an under 18 year old having committed a crime in the past 12 months.
- The Troubled Families team works to identify the estimated 1000 troubled families in Hackney through JCP data base searches, HLT absentee and exclusion lists and links through the police, pupil referral units and partnership organisations.
- Once identified, a family unit is assigned to work with the family in addressing their problems, including, where appropriate, supporting household members into work. Once the family workers have completed an Integrated Assessment Process with the families, assessing their problems and their capability and readiness for work, they arrange for a Troubled Families Employment Adviser to provide employment support to the client. The Troubled Families Unit has two seconded JCP workers and two Ways into Work officers in the role of Employment Advisers, who help with CV preparation and job searches.
- As of October 2013, Young Hackney had identified 50% of the estimated number of troubled families, the fifth lowest proportion out of all participating London boroughs. Most (88%) of the families identified are being worked with, but despite this Hackney is in the bottom 20% of all outcomes, including families achieving a crime, ASB or educational outcome, employment outcome and total proportion of families ‘turned around’.
- Planned improvements for 2014 include developing a better engagement strategy with families and developing a volunteer programme through the

- The second phase of the Troubled Families programme starts from April 2015. The government's aim is to work with a larger number of families using wider criteria for identification. The new criteria being discussed include: younger children, as well as health issues for any member of the family including disabled parents and children. It is intended to work closely with children's centres to ensure attendance at children's centres; inoculations are up to date and support children in need – whose welfare will suffer unless they get support. Money coming through results of the Troubled Families work could be used to help with childcare, where this is a major barrier to work .
- Phase 2 will also see an increased focus on getting an adult in the family into work which will mean building on the close working arrangements already in place with the Ways into Work team, which includes DWP funded JCP secondees.
- Government also believes that too many agencies are working with families at present so there is an overall objective to encourage more joined-up approach,. It is expected that the money for the Reid *Families with Multiple Disadvantages* programme will come to Troubled Families.

7. What works?

In Hackney

Summarising conversations with providers of employment support across Hackney, the following approaches are considered the most effective at engaging, motivating and supporting parents into employment or pre-employment support:

- One to one advice and a case work approach work best in understanding the needs of clients;
- The setting for advice is important: Children's Centres are popular and demand for service is high due to the child friendly setting, staff that encourage uptake of employment support and adult learning and the sense that parents are on their own 'turf'
- Partnership working between Ways into Work, Children's Centres and JCP is considered crucial in providing parents with the best support available.

School Gates Pilot

The School Gates Employment National Pilot, that Hackney was a part of, saw the following initiatives prove most effective at engaging, supporting and motivating parents:

- The role of trusted, friendly Parent Support Advisers (or the equivalent) in schools provided a gateway into parental engagement with JCP and employment support services;
- The fact that employability support was largely being delivered in schools, which offered convenient access and was a familiar and informal setting for parents was regarded as particularly important;

- A specific area of value from JCP was their ability to do “better off” calculations for parents so they could assess the financial impact that working might have on their income

Other London Boroughs have used the following approaches to reduce barriers to employment and increase the parental employment rate:

- Camden has subsidised a further 10 hours free child care onto the current offer of 15 hours per week; an information request on uptake and impact on parental employment has been requested by LBH;
- Islington has introduced paid “parent champions” to attend employment sessions in schools as a means of providing peer-to-peer support to parents;
- Islington has also introduced child care bursaries to pay for the first month of childcare for parents returning to the work place, administered through the JCP flexible support fund;
- JCP in Islington have adopted an approach whereby every aspect of a clients need is assessed when parents feel there are barriers to employment, including assessing parents’ job-specific skills, job-search skills, their stability (e.g. their housing situation), basic skills, social skills for work, and any additional challenges they face;
- Jobcentre Plus workers have access to a directory of local authority officers who can help them to deal JCP workers in Islington have access to a directory of local authority officers who can help them to deal with specific issues raised during this process e.g. housing officers; and
- Newham’s employment team have specific employer engagement teams working on specific sectors, which have established bespoke training and pathways to work for specific employers.