



THE
ISLINGTON
EMPLOYMENT
COMMISSION

Working Better

The final report of the Islington
Employment Commission



Working in partnership



ISLINGTON

Working better to help Islington people to get, keep and enjoy their job.

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Unemployment in Islington is far higher than it should be



Maggie Semple OBE and
Cllr Robert Khan
Co-Chairs of the Islington
Employment Commission
November 2014

Islington is a thriving borough at the centre of the London economy, with 1.34 local jobs for every person of working age in the borough. But it is also a very unequal place, with inequality rising and with high levels of poverty. While some people are very wealthy many are not. In Islington, poverty is concentrated amongst people who are unemployed and we believe that employment is the single best way to reduce poverty, improve people's lives and give them the confidence in their ability to make a valuable contribution to society.

The Employment Commission was established to understand the nature of unemployment in Islington and what could be done to reduce it to the lowest possible level and to keep it there, while making employment meaningful and enjoyable for all.

Over the past nine months, the Commission has brought together local employers, public services, the voluntary sector and residents to shine a bright light on employment and understand how we can work better together to bring about dramatic and long-lasting change.

We have visited job centres, local job clubs and employers. We have spoken to unemployed workers, the people working to help them into employment and businesses, ranging from small local companies to large international corporations. We've heard people's stories about the challenges that they face, in particular for parents, disabled people, people with long term conditions and from some minority ethnic backgrounds. We've been struck by how difficult it can be to get help and to find and keep a job. But mostly, we have been

struck by how long term unemployment destroys people's confidence and makes people lose hope that they will be able to fulfil their potential.

This report sets out our vision for employment in Islington, what needs to change and how we can get there, by working better together. Our ambition is to ensure that everyone is given the help that they need to get the job and career they want, deserve and that they will ultimately enjoy. It doesn't matter what your situation is, we believe that if you want to work, and need help getting it, there should be the support available.

To deliver this, we need radical change in how the system works, bringing together everyone involved in providing employment support to build a new service which meets people's needs. We need employers to commit to creating good quality, flexible jobs which pay the London Living Wage, respect employment rights and make them available to local people. We need to create change for the next generation and improve a careers education and employability offer that just isn't consistently good enough at the moment.

These are ambitious aims and we all need to work together to make them happen. It will require some change at a national level, to allow local communities to do what is best for people who live locally, but mostly it is about working together to create a culture of employment for Islington and to help people to get, keep and ultimately enjoy their job.

Summary

We need a radical change in employment support in Islington



We need to **expand and improve the support available to Islington people to get, keep and enjoy their job**. We need to target and tailor our help to reach those who really need it, finding creative solutions, in particular through coaching and mentoring to help people into work. We need to bring together services to maximise our resources and provide seamless support to get people into employment.

We need to **enable employers to recruit better locally** by engaging with and supporting their local community. We need to create one place where employers can get the help they need to recruit flexibly and we need dynamic businesses who can get involved and make real change happen for the local area.

We need to ensure that **all young people get the support they need to confidently pursue their ambitions and get the careers they deserve**. The council, schools and local employers must all work together to create a culture of employment in our schools and colleges.

1 Creating change for the people who need it

We heard that there are real barriers and challenges that stop people from getting into work, but low self-esteem is a common issue affecting many different types of people and one which affects all aspects of getting and keeping a job.

We found no evidence of people not wanting to work or being benefit scroungers, people want the opportunities that work provides for them and their families. Sometimes people feel trapped on benefits and are worried about getting stuck in low paid work that will not pay enough to cover their costs and from which they will not have any chance to progress.

We didn't find a lack of services to help people get into work, there are plenty out there, but they aren't well co-ordinated, are often small scale, and the quality and consistency frequently aren't good enough. Services, like the Council and Jobcentre Plus are doing jobs that they were never set up for and are finding it difficult. This is particularly the case for those on sickness and disability benefits who don't get good enough help. Support isn't well targeted, lots of people who lose their jobs find work again within six months and don't need any extra help from local services – the help could be better targeted at those who really need it.

To improve the system, we need to

- Forge a stronger partnership between everyone involved in employment support, including Jobcentre Plus, the council, the local NHS and the voluntary sector to pool our resources and provide seamless and good quality support targeted to the local people who need it most.
- Ensure that intensive, tailored support is provided to those who need it most.
- Promote a targeted case work and coaching approach for all those working to provide frontline employment support.
- Maximise the contribution of all local services to boost employment, making it a priority for health, housing, social care and training.

2 Employers creating change

The Islington and London economy is strong and growing, with lots of employers based here with good opportunities which local people could take more advantage of. We heard that there is a strong business case for recruiting locally and many businesses are committed to helping their local community. In order to do this, employers need to recruit in different ways, to open up the pool of candidates and to offer more opportunities. Employers just want really good people and need an easier way to recruit local people and to offer training and skills support to make sure people can take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

To enable employers to get involved we need to

- Create a single place for employers to go to get information on local services to help them and support local people looking to get into employment or progress their careers.
- Work with employers to recruit better locally and put something back into the communities in which they live and work.
- Create champions across public, private and voluntary sectors who lead by example in creating inclusive and flexible workforces.



3 Creating change for the next generation

We heard that there is no shortage of aspiration amongst young people – Islington young people are ambitious, determined to succeed and realistic about starting from the bottom and working their way up.

However, we heard that barriers to social mobility can hold them back and make the odds feel stacked against them. On top of this, like most schools across the country, careers education, employability and vocational education are not good enough and young people don't get enough opportunities at school or college to get a better understanding of the world of work. Businesses could do much more to provide opportunities for young people to understand the type of work that they do, but at the moment links between schools, colleges and businesses aren't very well co-ordinated.

Outside of school or college there is even less support for young people who opt out of, or are excluded from, the system, which just stores up problems for the future and stops us from creating real change for the next generation.

To support young people to get the careers and jobs they want, we need to

- Create a much stronger link between education and businesses.
- Ensure all Islington young people get the high quality careers education they are entitled to, with resources for teachers and parents as well as young people.
- Do more to support unemployed young people who opt out of, or are excluded from, the system entirely.

1. Creating change for the people who need it

We need to expand and improve the support available to Islington people to get, keep and enjoy their job. We should target and tailor our help to reach those who really need it, finding creative solutions, in particular through coaching and mentoring, to help people into work. We need to bring together services to maximise our resources and provide seamless support to get people into employment.

This means:

- 1 Forging a stronger partnership between everyone involved in employment support, including Jobcentre Plus, the council, the local NHS and the voluntary sector to pool our resources and provide seamless and good quality support targeted to the local people who need it most.
- 2 Ensuring intensive, tailored support and coaching is provided to those who need it most.
- 3 Promoting a targeted case work and coaching approach for all those working to provide frontline employment support.
- 4 Maximising the contribution of all local services to boost employment, making it a priority for health, housing, social care and training.

What we heard

Many long-term unemployed people have significant challenges to overcome in returning to work - but low self-esteem and confidence is the most common issue.

We heard from lots of unemployed people about why they are finding it difficult to get back into work.

Parents are one of the largest groups of unemployed people in Islington and they need to balance employment with family life and childcare responsibilities. Finding affordable and suitable childcare remains a big challenge for many parents. Out-of-work parents told us that childcare for work, and for getting ready for work, is not always affordable. There are national childcare subsidies available including 15 hours a week free provision for all 3 and 4 year olds and many 2 year olds. In Islington however, subsidies are more significant. Here, most pre-school 4 year olds and some older 3 year olds are offered a 25 hour a week place, free of charge. The council subsidises childcare costs for working parents in its community nurseries and children's centres, and there are bursaries for parents returning to work or training to help them with costs.

Disabled people or those who have a long-term health condition or are recovering from illness may need more support and some practical adjustments to enter the workplace.

Lots of people have limited work experience or few skills. We have heard how people from some minority ethnic backgrounds, for example Muslim women, continue to feel discriminated against and feel excluded from the labour market.

Language and literacy skills are significant factors affecting many people in getting work. People over 50 can face discrimination in their search for work, as well as needing to update their skills. Carers have to balance their responsibilities with searching for and getting into work. Advisors in Islington have also seen the high rates of domestic violence and poor mental health amongst clients, which are huge challenges to overcome in returning to work.

"When you get over 50, you're shunted sideways. You become obsolete to them even though you keep up your skills, so it gets very, very hard. They don't want to look at you. They don't even want to give you an interview, never mind a job, and you're quite capable of doing it"

These are serious barriers and they can act as discrimination within the system, stopping people from being able to access opportunities and get the job they want. Low self-esteem and confidence is often a consequence of all of these experiences and it can affect how people present themselves, stopping people from getting the skills and experience they need to get into employment. Low self-esteem and confidence was a common factor across all of the frustrations and challenges that people face.

Residents told us that this affected their health and made it more difficult to be motivated, especially when they had been unemployed longer than six months and had received a large number of rejections when applying for work.

“The issue of being depressed and lack of motivation, people lose confidence if it’s more than six months to a year and you’re out of work, whether you’re starting from the bottom or got up to the top that does something to people”

The people we spoke to told us that generic, untailored support did very little to help their confidence or motivation and often caused additional stresses. Personalised, bespoke support

is more able to take people’s individual circumstances into account. It provides more intensive support so that people are able to know where to go and what to do for the best in seeking out the right jobs and careers for themselves and their families.

“So it’s like well, I’m not asking someone to sit down and hold my hand, but I’d like to be able to phone someone and say, I’m absolutely stumped here, what do you think I should do, where is the next point of action...I think you need a mentor that’s got more experience in that type of a role, and that can give you the ideas”

People just want to be given a chance

The people we spoke to want to work and many are persistent in their efforts to improve their skills and employment prospects; but a lack of experience, as well as their low confidence, often holds them back. Some people said they felt judged by advisors or employers, who make assumptions about them and their lives, rather than listening to and understanding their ambitions and motivations. When it came to their job search, people struggle without strong social networks, often complaining that

lots of jobs just aren’t advertised or assuming that employers wouldn’t want people like them. We know there are some groups that continue to face discrimination in their job search: we heard from older people, disabled people, people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and Muslim women in particular, about this issue and heard time and again that people just want to be given a chance to show what they can do.

Despite all the rhetoric and media portrayal of so-called ‘benefit scroungers’, we didn’t meet anyone who met that description in our evidence-gathering process. People might have low confidence or self-esteem, and a feeling that they were trapped or not getting anywhere, but there was always a desire and a determination to work.

“These TV programmes make us out to be scroungers, that’s not me. I don’t want me and my family to live on peanuts, I want to contribute and find work.” *Abdi is training in accountancy and aspires to find a bookkeeping role*

Lots of people on sickness and disability benefits want to work but existing services aren’t very good at supporting them to do so

There are some people on sickness and disability benefits who want to work but have little access to employment support because their benefit does not require them to look for work. There are others that are supposed to be looking for work, but the help they receive is just not good enough. Employment support professionals are increasingly seeing that those who claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) have been very poorly served by the government’s Work Programme and there is limited voluntary sector support for these groups.

There is more that health services could do to promote the idea of employment for people with health conditions. Whilst employment is sometimes linked to mental health programmes, and well understood as part of a person’s recovery, this is less so for people with physical health conditions. Health services are often quite disconnected from employment services and frontline health staff don’t feel comfortable or confident talking about returning to work with their patients.

“All my life I was a builder... and then suddenly I lost my eyesight quickly... then my world changed and everything that I was good at is no longer part of my life anymore”

People get stuck in low-paid work and sometimes turn down work for fear they'll get stuck there

We know that some people are struggling even though they are in employment, often in low-paid work. They feel stuck, with little prospect of progression and not having the time or resources to do training or gain experience elsewhere. They don't feel as though there are services out there to help them once they are already in work to progress in their jobs. Many people, in particular refugees and migrants with qualifications from overseas, are under-employed and end up in entry level roles as their professional qualifications aren't recognised in the UK, which can be frustrating.

Some of the people we spoke to didn't always want to take the first job they were offered when it was low paid – as they feared they would get stuck in that job forever, with little prospect

for progression and would lose all the support they had been getting to find work. However, we heard from employers and others that it is always easier to find work from being in work and that sometimes people need to take a job that isn't perfect to get the first step on the ladder.

“My dream job is in IT, but I will do any job now to enter the job market and build my CV and progress, like driving, traffic marshalling, security but people say I don't have enough qualifications or experience.”

“Yes, everyone would love to work. I would love to work, but at the same time, you know, I've got pride in certain things, you know. I don't want to do, I don't want to do any job”

Most people who lose their job find work again within 6 months, with relatively little help from local employment services

Most people who claim out-of-work benefits find work again relatively quickly and have little interaction with

public and voluntary employment support services. They go to the Jobcentre to make their benefits claim and make a commitment to look for work, which they do. They may attend a workshop to help update their CV or get some tips on looking for work, but on the whole they are ready and able to get themselves back into the labour market.

Of much more concern to public services are the roughly 20% of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants who don't make this transition so easily and remain unemployed for longer periods of time (though this figure is much higher for people claiming other types of benefits.) We found that 6 months is the tipping point at which the negative impact of being unemployed starts to become more significant, exacerbating people's challenges in returning.

There are lots of services and resources, but they are not always well co-ordinated

As the Employment Commission attempted to map all the employment services that exist in Islington, it

became apparent that there is plenty of provision and many different organisations, in the public, private and voluntary sectors, working with Islington people to support them into work.

Whilst there are some great examples of partnership working, many parts of the system are not well co-ordinated and unaware of the work of other organisations. For example, our mapping found that there are lots of services which support parents and young people, but very few which support people aged over 50, despite this being a sizeable group who find it really tough to get back into work.

Although there are significant resources spent locally, we know the funding landscape is often complicated. Some programmes are national, some are regional, some are local. Services are funded by the European Union, several different government departments, regional government and bodies, Big Lottery, charitable foundations, local government, private philanthropy, by local NHS

“It's very much like a maze... I kind of don't quite know what direction to go to, I feel like each kind of path is almost like a dead end, I mean, do I go back into full time work, do I go back into education, do I continue with voluntary, which path do I need to take, kind of thing, or do I try and get to, I guess, the kind of goals, but I don't know what my goal is. So it's very confusing. And with all the changes that are going on, I don't know what kind of route to take really”

organisations and even by rent revenue of local social landlords. Local organisations, particularly in the voluntary sector, may be funded by multiple sources. It can be difficult to understand what there is, how it works and how long it will be around for, making it difficult to plan for the long term.

“I’m being passed from pillar to post, going ‘go on ESA, no, go JSA, no, go on ESA, I was like a headless chicken in the end”

The main responsible agency, Jobcentre Plus, was not set up to deal with the challenges it now faces

A lot of the people we spoke to told us that they had not had a good experience with Jobcentre plus.

Often, people felt the Job centre didn’t have the time to find out about their skills and experience and sometimes pushed them towards jobs that weren’t really suitable.

Part of the reason for this is that Jobcentre Plus has two main tasks. It administers the benefit system and

provides some employment support. However, as the expectations of who will look for work has grown, it now works with a much wider group of people including parents of young children and disabled people or those with long-term health conditions.

It was not set up to meet the more complex needs of these groups and struggles to provide the tailored support that these groups require to move into employment that works for them over the long term.

For lots of services the idea is good, but the quality and consistency of the service is not

There is plenty of help out there in the form of CV workshops, mock interviews, job clubs and workshops. Some of it is excellent and really makes the difference in helping people, but these can often be small scale, the quality is mixed and there is little formal evaluation of what works.

Some CV workshops encourage people to produce very generic CVs which are not very helpful to their job search. They don’t address tailoring your CV for a particular role or employer, or making sure they reflect

the person and their individual skills and experience. For some of the people we heard from, this type of general job search help just doesn’t work – for example those who haven’t worked recently, or who have long term health conditions. The best services take time to listen to the individual and what they want and build from there.

There are lots of great people working to help, but little sense of a profession of employment advisors and what it means to be an excellent employment advisor

Just as we believe that almost all unemployed people want to be in work, we have seen that there are many people working in employment support who are passionate and dedicated to helping more people into work.

Lots of employment support, or the potential to talk about getting into employment, doesn’t happen through specialised support services – but through the wider services on offer, in particular through healthcare – but it can be very difficult for these professionals to know what is out there and how to help for the best.

We need to harness this energy better and enable success to spread across the whole system, creating change everywhere for everyone, not isolated in pilot projects and pockets of good practice.

Our call to action:

People who need it should get high quality, tailored support to find and keep work

This means:

1. Forging a stronger partnership between everyone involved in employment support, including Jobcentre Plus, the council, the local NHS and the voluntary sector to pool our resources and provide seamless and good quality support targeted to the local people who need it most

- Redesign the system locally to pool and target the resources of all of the organisations involved to the people who need it most.
- Bring teams from different agencies together into a single offer with shared aims – because people care more about getting a good service, than about who provides it.
- Create a cohesive employment support workforce for Islington, building a team spirit amongst professionals involved in helping people to get and keep a job.

2. Ensuring intensive, tailored support and coaching is provided to those who need it most

- Most people in Islington who lose their job find another one fairly quickly, without the need for specialist support. Those who can help themselves just want to get in and out as quickly as possible, without too much hassle and to get high quality support. This should be linked to real job opportunities through partnership with employers, based on peer support and be easy to access, including online.
- For a targeted group of people who need it most, Jobcentre plus, the council, Work Programme providers and others must work better together to make sure that people have a radically different experience of employment support than they have now. This will mean triaging and focusing the majority of our time, support and resources on those claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support and people who have been claiming Job Seekers' Allowance or not claiming any benefits and who have not worked for a long time. We should put employment support services where the people we need to target already go, such as GP surgeries.



3. Promoting a targeted case work and coaching approach for all those working to provide frontline employment support

Targeted employment support, which takes a coaching approach, and listens to what people want to do, whilst drawing out their talents and motivations should be targeted to those who need it most. This means a high quality service, which uses modern technology has high expectations for both clients and caseworkers and which:

- Provides a named job coach or caseworker who will be the main point of contact and will focus on working with people to get them the job they need.
- Provides bespoke support to create options for what people want to do and listen to what people are interested in, with good knowledge of the local labour market including active connections with local employers.
- Is there for the long term, recognising that this kind of work takes time and giving caseworkers the space to work with people who need extra help over time.

4. Maximising the contribution of all local services to boost employment, making it a priority for health, housing, social care and training

- For lots of services, employment is not the main responsibility of the organisation, however we know that being in good employment is good for health and wellbeing and these services have an important role to play in promoting employment.
- We need to open up how we talk to people about employment, including asking healthcare professionals to have conversations about work with patients, as part of their recovery. We need to give professionals the information and tools to help them to do this.
- We need to build on good models of health led employment support, especially in mental health, to make employment everyone's business and help people to plan returning to work, in particular those who have been temporarily out of work to make sure they get back into work quickly.

Our message to employment support professionals

Our ambition is to create a cohesive employment workforce for Islington, providing the high quality and consistent support that people need, no matter which organisation they are working with. For employment support professionals this means a change in the way they work with each other and with the people they are helping.

The role of employment support professionals

We are asking everyone working in employment support to:

- Take a coaching approach that treats people as individuals and starts with their interests and motivations.
- Have honest conversations, recognising that sometimes people need a reality check in thinking about their financial situation and employment opportunities or may need to take a job now that acts as a stepping stone to the job they ultimately want and promise that we will work together with people to get where they want to go for themselves and their families.
- Think about what will work for each individual, sometimes using traditional services like CV workshops or mock interviews, but also more creative ways like building up their social networks, or accessing the hidden jobs market.
- Take time to build confidence, trust and self-esteem, rather than settling for the first job that comes along and provide in work support to help people keep their job and progress in their career towards the job that they will ultimately enjoy.

Our offer to employment support professionals

Employment support professionals provide specialised support to some of the people who need the most help. However there is little training or development of what it means to be an excellent employment advisor and what this means in practice. We are committed to changing this, including;

- Creating a stronger sense of an employment services workforce for Islington, with a team spirit among employment advisers in different organisations in Islington.
- Training to develop best practice and specialist support skills, including between professionals from different organisations.
- Listening to employment advisers' ideas about what they think would work best for the people they support.
- Bringing together employment professionals into a joint workforce across all the different services in Islington, with shared aims and opportunities for people to learn from each other and share best practice.

Islington Working for Parents

Semhar, a mother of three, found work as a bus driver when her husband's employment contract came to an end and after previously having to give up training when she became pregnant. Maria from Islington Working for Parents helped her to find and complete the training and to find work.

Semhar said:

"I was referred to Maria at Islington Working for Parents when I was at Golden Lane Children's Centre. I told her I wanted a driving job but was worried because I had dyslexia. She really helped me, researching what support was available and giving me lots of useful information and ideas to help me get a job. This is perfect for me as it is local, matches my skills and interests as it's driving, but I also get to be a carer too, as I am working with children with disabilities. I get to spend time with my own children too. The hours are great and I have school holidays off."

Maria said:

"Semhar passed her practical bus driving test last May, but had to re-sit her theory test. She had not told anyone she had dyslexia as she was too embarrassed and thought she would not be allowed to take the test in the first place. We had a chat about this and she agreed she would discuss this with her trainers. They ensured she would get the extra support and time she needed in order to pass her theory test. She re-sat the test, and this time was successful!

Semhar started paid employment in April this year with Islington Council as a PA school bus driver gaining lots of valuable experience – she is very, very happy."

Mental Health Working – Hillside Clubhouse

Hillside Clubhouse is a resource for people with mental health problems that makes social inclusion and participation in everyday life a reality. Getting a paid job, having a social life and going to college are the norm for many members.

Tahrira, 19, started at Hillside in 2013 and, with the help of her Employment Support Worker Charmaine, now works in retail on Oxford Street.

"Before I went to Hillside, I was job hunting, but once I got rejected I felt really bad so I would leave it for a couple of months before I applied for anything else. Charmaine helped me to make sure I was applying for jobs consistently and not letting rejection put me off. I now have a job in Oxford Street and I really like it, but I know if I need any support I can call Charmaine and I can still rely on her. That support makes all the difference."

Charmaine told us,

"The difficulty Tahrira was facing was simply that it was extremely competitive in the labour market as there are thousands looking for paid employment, especially within retail. Tahrira attended the Work Skills course at Hillside, it took over a year for her to see the improvement but she started to get interviews and was ultimately offered a permanent position. Sometimes if we don't take the time at the beginning to get it right, we are just setting people up to fail, now Tahrira has a job, she is also more likely to be able to keep it."



Semhar, PA school bus driver

2. Employers creating change

We need to enable employers to recruit better locally by engaging with and supporting their local community. We need to create one place where employers can get the help they need to recruit locally. We need dynamic businesses who can get involved and make real change happen for the local area.

This means:

- 1 Creating a single place for employers to go to get information on local services to help them to support local people looking to get into employment or progress their careers.
- 2 Working with employers to recruit better locally and put something back into the communities in which they live and work.
- 3 Creating champions across public, private and voluntary sectors who lead by example in creating inclusive and flexible workforces.

What we heard

The economy and employment in Islington is both diverse and growing

The economy throughout London and Islington is steadily growing. Forecasts for 2020 by the UK Commission on Employment and Skills suggest London will continue to experience solid employment growth across this period, leaving Islington in an excellent position to take advantage of increased opportunities in new and diverse sectors. The borough is already home to key areas of job growth and innovation: the financial sector found on the City fringe, the Silicon Roundabout in Old Street that specialises in digital technology, the creative arts blossoming from Sadler's Wells and Almeida Theatre, the large scale redevelopment of King's Cross – and the many thousands of small retail businesses doing a brisk trade everywhere from Angel to Nag's Head and Archway. Although some industries expect to experience a decline, the growth of the area as a whole means that there will be a constant demand for new jobs as older workers retire or leave, with an estimated 2.23 million job openings across London between 2010-2020.

The number of managers and professionals in London is forecast to increase by 16% by 2020, bringing with it the risk that the employment market in Islington will see an ever

increasing gap between the top and bottom, not only in terms of pay but also in terms of job security and terms and conditions. This reinforces inequality, already present in Islington, but also potentially reduces the number of jobs in the middle of the market, making it more difficult for those on low incomes to progress from entry level jobs as they gain more experience.

Employers just want good people and are often really open to recruiting in different ways

The council, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary sector agencies already work with lots of employers who have been really open to working with them and considering less obvious candidates.

Those candidates may be parents who have been out of work whilst their children are young, but with lots of skills and enthusiasm to offer; or disabled people with lots of experience, but who just need some practical adjustments to help them succeed. Recruiting differently doesn't mean employing less skilled people, it just means advertising the role in different places, thinking about the skills and qualities you need in a candidate, not the qualifications; or perhaps letting someone have a trial at doing the job, rather than putting them through a nerve-racking interview.

There is a strong business case for employers recruiting locally

There are many employers in Islington passionate about recruiting local residents. Often they do this because they think it's the right thing to do, but they have told us that there is a strong business case for employing local people. We have heard from employers about the positive business case, with employees who live locally having lower rates of absence, and less time lost due to a long commute, especially when there is bad weather. The benefits are more than just financial however: many employers report the advantages to having a 'home-grown' workforce, from local knowledge and insight into the local area and community to increased loyalty and lower turnover. Local residents are more likely to be involved with and have contacts in the local community. The benefits to staff, especially parents, of living locally is also evident and recruiting locally is one way employers can show a commitment to the local area and its people.

There are different business intermediaries in Islington all offering something slightly different to employers, but employers would prefer one point of contact

We've heard that employers get frustrated by the numerous public and voluntary sector agencies that approach them about recruitment to entry level roles, working with schools, mentoring and other employability programmes. As well as annoying and confusing for employers, this is a duplication of effort by agencies. On the other hand we've heard that having different programmes to suit different employers is also good. We know the same programme won't suit everyone.

What's missing is some sense that these organisations are all working together, towards common goals and with a common vision, and something for schools and businesses which shows which agencies are good at what. We know that there is unhelpful competition between these agencies, an unwillingness to share contacts and a lack of leadership to link

up and co-ordinate all of the different offers in a coherent way.

Many businesses are committed to their local area and share our wish to create a fairer Islington

We have heard from lots of employers about the work that they are doing, but also their motivation to do the right thing by paying a Living Wage,

recruiting flexibly and helping local people to make Islington better and fairer.

"It's really expensive to live in Islington – you've got really high rents and everything – so, you need a job that's actually going to cover those"

Employers creating change

Lots of employers, of every size and in every sector, are committed to change and lead by example to make Islington fairer and promote local employment. Here are just a few who are already offering apprenticeships or mentoring to local young people or recruiting locally to help Islington people get into work:

- Bank of Tokyo
- Budgens Upper Street
- Business Design Centre
- Islington Community Theatre
- KM Decorators
- Linklaters
- Macquarie
- Mitsubishi UFJ Securities
- Selby's
- Slaughter and May

Our call to action:

Enable employers to recruit better locally and to engage with and support their local community through a single place where they can find support, advice and work together with other businesses

This means:

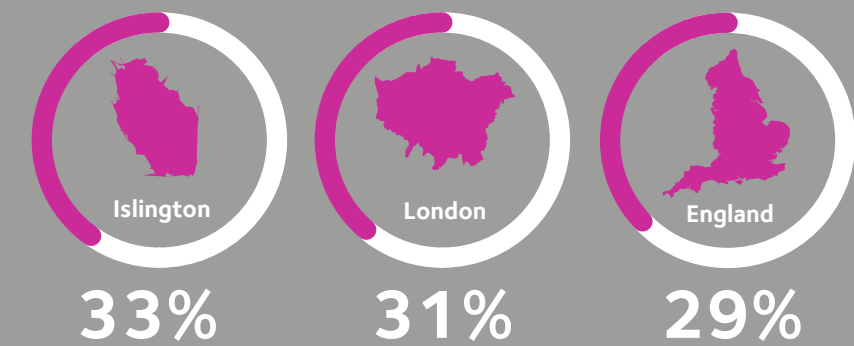
1. Create a single place for employers to go to get information on local services to help them to support local people looking to get into employment or progress their careers.

- A single place for employers to go to get information on employment and business engagement programmes delivered by public, voluntary, social enterprise and commercial agencies, with easy ways to find out more and get involved.
- Provide high quality personalised support that gives employers access to local candidates who want to work and are suitable for the role.

2. Work with employers to recruit better locally and put something back into the communities in which they live and work.

- Work with employers to understand their HR and recruitment needs and how they can be open to flexible employment, including job design and supported recruitment processes – giving local people a chance and creating flexible roles that work for people.
- Help for larger businesses to explore how to influence their supply chains to create flexible entry level roles for local people.

Islington has 155,000 working age residents, of which 105,000 (67%) are employed.



In Islington 33% of working age people are not working, compared with 31% in London and 29% in England

- Build on sector specific expertise to create excellent training and employability programmes to help employers to source staff with the right skills or to increase the skills of their existing workforce.
 - Help to link up employers with excellent voluntary sector groups to create the coaching, mentoring and employability programmes to support them to recruit, retain and progress local people with the skills that they need.
- #### 3. Creation of champions across public, private and voluntary sectors who lead by example in creating inclusive and flexible workforces.
- Prioritise procurement contracts to those firms offering jobs to local people and paying the London Living Wage.
 - Promote recruitment and job design which opens up more roles to parents and people with disabilities.
 - Encourage more higher level and professional training routes for school leavers aged 18 as an alternative to university.
 - Establish a network of Islington Human Resources (HR) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) professionals to share experiences and good practice.

Our message to employers

There is clearly more that local agencies can do to co-ordinate and communicate their offer and ensure the best value for employers. Employers also have a huge role to play in leading the way to real change which will help their business and support the local community.

Why this is good for employers

A business-facing service for Islington would offer a range of advisory services, support with recruitment and workforce development as well as corporate social responsibility activities. Including:

- Advice on designing roles and job brokerage to recruit from as wide a group of local people as possible.
- Signposting to the best CSR programmes, based on honest conversations about what employers want to get out of them and what is best for Islington.
- High quality and personalised support for people, giving them the extra help they need to become great employees so that businesses can benefit from the advantages of a local workforce.

The role of local employers

There are some areas where the support and active involvement of local employers is essential to achieving our goals. They are:

- Leading by example. There are some things public services can do to support local people, but we also need employers who can drive business involvement and act as champions for the benefits of getting involved in the communities where you live and work.
- Advertising your roles, and increasing access to them by more local people. Local agencies can work with you to do this, screening candidates suitable for entry and intermediate level jobs.
- Creating good jobs. To us, this means paying at least the London Living Wage, creating opportunities for progression, offering quality flexible and part time jobs that work for people and supporting people's health and wellbeing once in the workplace. This will help to ensure that as broad a pool of talent can apply as possible and no-one is locked out due to their caring responsibilities or other circumstances.
- Encouraging healthy workplaces by valuing and protecting workplace health and wellbeing across your organisation, including a positive attitude, policies and procedures towards mental health and wellbeing and supporting employees to live healthy lives through positive messages to stop smoking, towards alcohol and substance use, getting active and healthy eating.
- Being in it for the long term. Working with people who have challenges or barriers to employment can be difficult, but our evidence suggests it's more than worth it in the long term.
- Connecting with local schools and other partners to create opportunities for young people and people currently unemployed. This could be work related learning for school students, training programmes for school leavers, mentoring or employability skills programmes for people out of work.

Slaughter and May: from work experience into work

Tynan Calderazzo, a former student from Central Foundation Boys' School, completed work experience at Slaughter and May when he was 18 and is now a full time Accounts Assistant at the firm.

"I bought a new suit for my work experience and I was right to take it seriously because Slaughter and May did too. Everything was in place for it to feel like a real job, including proper training. I was treated as part of the team and expected to meet the same standards.

"I planned to go straight to university once I passed my BTEC course, but after my work experience I realised there is more than one route to success and that entering the world of work whilst studying part-time was definitely an option to consider.

"A year and a half later, after turning down numerous university offers, I have completed my first year at Slaughter and May and in January I will be starting to study for my accountancy qualifications (AAT), which are being funded by the firm."

Maurice Dunk, Accounts Manager, described his approach to work experience placements in finance.

"I recruit fairly regularly for entry level roles and I have found that offering work experience opportunities to Central Foundation Boys' School students is an effective way of doing this.

"Our approach serves the pupils well because it gives them a realistic experience. We have recruited several good people who have done a few weeks work experience with us and later joined the firm on a permanent basis."

Tynan, Accounts Assistant



3. Creating change for the next generation

All young people must get the support they need to get the careers they deserve; by the council, schools and local employers working together to create a culture of employment in our schools and colleges.

This means:

- 1 Creating a much stronger link between education and businesses.
- 2 Ensuring all Islington young people get the high quality careers education they are entitled to, with resources for teachers and parents as well as young people.
- 3 Supporting unemployed young people who opt out of, or are excluded from, the system entirely.

What we heard

There is no shortage of aspiration amongst young people

The Commission spoke to people with ambitions to work in a wide range of jobs – music, film, dance, banking, sports, construction, forensic science, fashion. Many were very determined to succeed, but also realistic about starting at the bottom and hopefully working their way up. However, we know there are real barriers that can stop young people from progressing. 71% of judges, 33% of MPs, 55% of permanent secretaries in the Civil Service and 43% of newspaper columnist went to independent or private schools, compared to only 7% of the population. The odds can feel stacked against young people and this limits the social mobility and the diversity we need to make sure we get the best people for the job, whatever their background.

Young people can also struggle from the same lack of confidence as we saw for people who are looking for a job and finding it difficult – not having the right skills, or knowing how to present themselves to get the opportunities that they merit. The same barriers and challenges we saw for people looking for work can be easier to tackle amongst young people, allowing us to break the mould and ensure change for the next generation.

Young people don't get enough opportunities to get a real understanding of the world of work

Young people told us that they feel that a lack of experience holds them back. We know it's more difficult for local young people to get paid work experience whilst still at school. Young people have told us they want more opportunities to get out and understand the world of work, and some employers have also suggested that if more young people had the opportunity to work and earn whilst still at school they would be more motivated and have better soft skills when entering the labour market.

In common with employment support services, we heard that a one size fits all approach does not work – too many traditional work experience placements end up with young people making the tea for two weeks and learning little about what a job involves. However, great employer led mentoring and employability programmes can make a real difference, especially when they open the door to real workplaces and careers that young people may not previously have thought were for them and give them the confidence and drive to pursue the career that they want.

In common with schools across the country, careers education and employability skills development in Islington schools is not consistently good enough

We've heard from young people about what they think is poor careers education in schools, particularly when they don't want to go on to A Levels and a university degree. They told us schools put too much emphasis on an academic route after school with little advice for people who are not getting good grades. They say they have little access to careers advisors and teachers don't know much about the different options. We've heard from employers that lots of young people don't have the 'soft skills' they look for when recruiting. We've also heard from schools that time for careers education and the skills needed to get the jobs that young people want, is squeezed in the academic curriculum.

Schools have a responsibility to give students impartial careers education, but are usually overly-reliant on one careers advisor. This ignores the value of the relationships which lots of teachers already have with students. However, we know teachers don't necessarily have the knowledge to advise students of all of their options.

Excellent careers advice can help young people to understand the wide range of options open to them and help them to find the right path for themselves, to meet their aspirations and get a good job and career. Parents also need to have the right information to be informed and able to guide young people through the different choices they have to make.

Good qualifications and high levels of attainment are vital to securing the careers and jobs that young people want

Young people at Islington's secondary schools are achieving better exam results than ever before and results have improved considerably over the last few years. This academic achievement is the foundation for success for young people, and quite rightly, is the focus for schools that are maintaining their high standards and improving year on year.

Head teachers told us that careers advice and work related learning must complement the curriculum, rather than taking students out of lessons, and cannot get in the way of young people reaching their maximum potential to get the qualifications that they need for the future.

Vocational education, including apprenticeships, is currently not good enough to be presented as a real alternative to many young people and their parents

Vocational education, including apprenticeships, can be a great alternative to higher education for many young people. Alongside more traditional apprenticeships in construction, hairdressing and print they can be a paid route into careers such as law and accountancy. However, too many apprenticeships are not good enough and are too low paid, meaning that they are not offering a decent alternative or real training opportunities for young people.

"So, it's like, when they, when they, when they do apprenticeships now, it's like, it's, they teach you what they need to teach you, let the government pay them their money for them to pay you or whatever and then after that they leave you. You've got the job—that's it; they leave you. They don't follow and give you the progress that you need to progress for you to climb as a person, for you to build the career on; it's just, boom, there: apprenticeship. Two years. That's it—done. Go away."

There is still much to be done in raising the profile of apprenticeships and other types of vocational education amongst parents, in schools and employment support services as a viable alternative that offers good opportunities. Careers education does not offer consistent advice on the value of vocational training or provide easy enough ways for young people to find out more or get experience of different types of work.

Business engagement with schools is patchy and uncoordinated

The timing of opportunities, especially apprenticeships, from businesses doesn't always work for schools – they start before the end of the school year, or don't allow enough time to recruit. Whilst there are apprenticeship programmes that have more than one opportunity across different employers, they aren't all co-ordinated together, making it difficult to create a 'buzz' in schools about apprenticeship opportunities and get more young people aware of them. Schools don't always get the most value from the opportunities that businesses offer, and businesses get frustrated when they don't think the young people they speak to are interested.

Some schools have built great partnerships and programmes with local businesses, as can be seen in the case studies in this report. Programmes such as Mentoring Works and Think Forward are providing additional resources for schools to provide the tailored support to help young people to decide what they want to do next. However, schools also told us that they get lots of different offers of support from businesses and can find it difficult to find the ones which will be of the most value to their students and prioritise them, especially when head teachers and their staff are busy dealing with the day to day demands of running a school.

Some young adults are completely disconnected from any support service

We know there are some young adults who are not engaged with any employment service. They are not claiming out-of-work benefits, and they are above the age range for the youth careers service. Analysis of local benefit sanctions data suggests young people are being disproportionately sanctioned and this puts them off claiming benefits they are entitled to. Intelligence from some youth services suggests they are dependent on a parent or carer or, sometimes, on crime.



Businesses employing fewer than 10 people account for 2/3 of Islington businesses

Pathways into employment

Mardoche, 23, is an apprentice at P&B Walsh, a decorating firm sub-contracting for the Mears Construction Group. Mardoche had struggled at school and wasn't sure what he wanted to do. Through Copenhagen Youth Project he found out about the Pathways scheme, where he got first-hand experience of construction work and became an apprentice.

"When I was offered the apprenticeship, I was keen because I knew I liked construction work. But a few people around me were saying negative things, asking why I would want to work for £3.50 an hour. In the end I decided to go for it because it was a good opportunity and I knew the money would get better if I proved myself.

The first day I thought "What have I got myself into?" But it got better. I've enjoyed going to college one day a week and working the rest of the time. I've learned so many different skills. It has opened my mind so much. P&B Walsh have been great to me, they've supported me from day one and they're still supporting me now. Now I'm earning £11.43 an hour."

Ricky Thompson at P&B Walsh, Mardoche's supervisor told us:

"This is my first experience with the apprenticeship programme, and I've been impressed. Mardoche is always helpful, he's reliable, and his work is of a very good standard."



Our call to action:

All young people must get the support they need to get into a good career with the council, schools and local employers working together to create a culture of employment in education

This means:

1. Create a much stronger link between education and businesses

- Strengthen the vocational offer in schools to make sure all Islington young people are given the opportunity to gain experience of the world of work and make informed decisions about what they want to do.
- Create a new partnership between education and business to put employers at the forefront of providing employability and work related learning opportunities for young people.
- Create strong links with businesses through excellent mentoring, work related learning and employability programmes to allow young people to achieve their potential.

2. Ensure all Islington young people get the high quality careers education they are entitled to, with resources for teachers and parents as well as young people

For us high quality careers education means that all schools and colleges should:

- have a lead member of their senior leadership team for employment and a governor from a local employer with a clear focus on making sure young people have the skills they need to get the job they want.
- have a programme that is well known throughout the school or college and by parents, pupils, teachers, governors and employers.
- have good information for young people and their parents about what the options are and clear links to real careers and opportunities in the local area – especially in sectors where we know there are jobs and good opportunities for progression.

- Be tailored to the needs of young people, providing individual advice and guidance, targeted to those who need the most help.
- Be linked into the curriculum – with teachers who know the young people they are working with feeling able to provide advice and support through training.
- Be linked to employers – all young people should have some experience of work, employers and the work place by the time they start looking for work.

3. Support unemployed young people who opt out of, or are excluded from, the system entirely

- Work with housing providers, youth organisations and voluntary groups to engage those who prefer not to claim benefits than to deal with the system as it is – to make sure that all young people are either leaning or earning.
- Provide a tailored offer to students in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and on Alternative Provision to ensure that they get the opportunities that will give them the same chance as everyone else and that our best offers of support and opportunities are targeted to those who struggle to get into employment.

Creative Employment – Islington Community Theatre

Since 2013 Islington Council has worked in partnership with local arts organisations, such as All Change, Almeida Theatre, Islington Community Theatre, Park Theatre and John Jones to create 26, new six to twelve month paid creative apprenticeships and internships as part of its Creative Employment Programme

Adam Coleman, Executive Director of the company, describes their experience of working apprentice Talitha, who was taken on in 2014:

“We are a small team, but having Talitha in the office gives us a different voice, and thought process. She reality checks our ideas for us. Young people often don’t know the range of jobs that are available for them, they aren’t exposed to a wide range of jobs and they don’t know what it means to work ,what they will enjoy and where they will thrive, until they try something.

Talitha told us she didn’t like admin – she had preconceptions about what an admin role was, and she thought she couldn’t do it, but she is great at it, and really enjoys it.”



Image: Islington Community Theatre

Our message to schools and colleges

Schools and colleges have a vital role in setting young people on the path to the career and job they want, but it is often difficult to find the space in a tightly packed curriculum and school day to give careers education and employment skills the time it deserves. Schools need the space and resources to get this right, so we can turn off the tap of unemployment for the next generation in Islington.

Our offer to schools and colleges

- Support to coordinate careers education better and prioritise offers of help from businesses to make sure that they meet the needs of young people first.
- Excellent employer led careers and employment skills and mentoring programmes that help students give students access to businesses and to help them decide where they want to go and how to get there.
- A new partnership between employers and schools to create a coherent choice of opportunities for young people.
- Support to train teachers and other staff to improve the quality of careers education available to young people.
- A new network for work related learning and careers leads in schools and colleges to make sure that information and best practice are shared.

The role of schools and colleges

- Making employment and careers everyone’s business in school and at college, so that students can make sure their exam results will lead them to the career they deserve.
- Partner and support schools with head teachers and careers education and work related learning leads working together to share best practice between schools and colleges.
- Commit to improving and raising the profile of the vocational offer for students and parents.
- Provide the right information for parents to help them to support young people to make the rights choices for them.

Olivia, student,
Holloway School

The BIG Alliance Mentoring Works Programme

Businesses help Islington pupils develop self confidence

The BIG (Businesses for Islington Giving) Alliance Schools' Mentoring Works programme matches students from Islington to volunteer business mentors.

Students travel to their mentors' workplace once a fortnight throughout the academic year. The sessions increase their self-confidence, give them experience of the working world, improve their academic performance and raise aspirations.

Adriana Hardwick, Learning and Development Manager, at Mitsubishi UFJ Securities, is matched with Olivia, a student from Holloway School:

I remember how difficult I found it to talk to adults when I was younger, so learning that my mentee wanted help building her confidence with this is really touching.

My pupil has very high career aspirations, but is torn between two different career choices, in very different fields. I have helped her understand the qualifications required for both. We have also worked on two different CVs to help her understand how to highlight different skills depending on the job being applied for.

Olivia:

At first I found it quite daunting having to speak to someone new. I was really conscious about what was going to happen and I was pretty shy but I found that we had a lot in common, which meant the talking became easier.



Our message to Government

There is a lot that we can do locally to tackle unemployment locally, but some of the things we found will only change if there is national action. If we could change three things to transform employment and help people to get, keep and enjoy their jobs, we would:

- **Devolve employment services to the local level**, so that different areas can target and tailor the support they provide to those who need it most. This would end the divisions between local partners, voluntary sector agencies, Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme – working together with genuine integration, rather than in competition.
- **Make youth careers a real priority**. Schools need to be given the time and space within the curriculum to provide good quality careers education linked to real opportunities to get experience of the world of work. Ofsted should take the provision of good quality careers education more into account when inspecting schools.
- **Take vocational education seriously** and present it as a real offer and alternative for schools, young people and parents. Finding out about vocational education needs to be at least as easy as applying to university via UCAS. Technical skills need to be valued more and the quality of vocational training, including apprenticeships, needs to be higher.

What happens next?

These are ambitious plans which will take time and commitment to put into practice. However, our experience as a Commission has been that there is energy and passion to change the system and help Islington people to get, keep and ultimately enjoy their jobs.

Leadership

No one organisation can deliver the change that we need.

Shared leadership and partnership will be vital to making sure the recommendations in this report happen. However, in addition, some agencies need to lead the way on the different areas highlighted in this report. Islington Council and Jobcentre Plus must take the lead on working together to transform the system, for the council to make sure that it is representative of all of its residents and supports its aim to move towards a fairer Islington and for Jobcentre plus to make sure that its resources are being used to the best of their potential and are tailored to the needs of the local area.

Employers need to take a lead on how they can create change for Islington, in partnership with the many brokerage services there to support them. Governing bodies and head teachers need to make careers education and work related learning everybody's business in schools to make sure that young people get the right advice and access to opportunities which means they can make the most of qualifications they have earned.

Making it happen

Working in partnership isn't new, what is new in the ambition of this reports and its' recommendations is the scale – we want change across the whole system. There are some key ingredients for success:

- A shared vision – that everyone involved in working with people looking for work now, or in the future, will make employment a top priority.
- Local leadership – to make this vision a reality.
- Communication – between organisations, but also within them to make sure that frontline employment advisors, employees and teachers all know what we are trying to achieve and how they can be a part of it.
- Shared measures of success – which incentivise making our vision a reality but don't set unhelpful targets.

What does success look like?

We are committed to change across the system and making this happen. There are some ways we can measure whether the changes we are proposing are making a difference by:

- Significantly increasing the employment rate in Islington from 70.5% of working age people (as of June 2014).
- Reducing the 12,600 people claiming sickness and disability benefits – which is currently the highest in London – by getting them into jobs that work for them.
- Reducing the 1,365 people who have been claiming Job Seekers' Allowance for more than a year, or 30% of the total number of claimants (as of September 2014).

These measurements give an overall snapshot of the employment picture in Islington. However, lots of things – including the general state of the economy can affect them. Therefore, we also need to think about what success means for our services.

Success for the Employment Commission and its aims will mean improving the measures above and:

- Increasing client satisfaction with each service that provides employment support – so that it is at a similar levels of customer satisfaction to other organisations and businesses.
- Creating an employment service with shared goals and a culture of innovation, with employment advisors who take a personalised, coaching approach to working with people which gets them into sustained employment.
- Support for employers which leads to more good flexible jobs which pay the London Living Wage and more employers offering coaching, mentoring and work experience.
- Better careers education in schools and colleges offering young people high quality advice and access to work related learning opportunities.

To make this happen we will:

- Use the Islington Employment Services Board to provide strong leadership to deliver the recommendations of the Employment Commission by significantly increasing the employment rate, reducing the number of out of work benefit claims in Islington by driving improvements in employment services so that Islington residents who really need help receive tailored support to get, keep and ultimately enjoy their job. This new partnership will work across the system – but will focus on those in receipt of Employment Support Allowance and Income Support, long term claimants of Job Seekers Allowance and those not claiming any benefits who haven't worked for some time.
- Use the Business Engagement Leadership Group to bring together all the agencies involved in engaging employers to improve our knowledge of what businesses want now and in the future, to increase the number of businesses offering support in terms of mentoring, coaching, volunteering and work experience and to increase the number of Islington residents accessing jobs in the King's Cross development.
- Bring together a network of Work Related Learning and Careers leads in Islington schools and colleges to make sure that employment and careers education is a priority for all Islington young people.

Islington has

155,000

working age residents

105,000

are employed

The Commissioners

Maggie Semple OBE FCGI (Co-Chair) – The Experience Corps

Cllr Robert Khan (Co-Chair) – Islington Council

Cllr Claudia Webbe (Vice Chair) – Islington Council

Brendan Sarsfield – Family Mosaic

Emma Stewart MBE – Timewise Foundation

Stephen Davis – City and Islington College

Graeme Cooke – Institute of Public Policy Research

Kevin McLoughlin MBE – K&M Decorators

Francess Alexander-Reynolds – Jobcentre Plus

Megan Dobney – Trades Union Congress

Cllr Richard Watts – Islington Council

Sorrel Brookes – Islington Clinical Commissioning Group

Amy Veitch – Macquarie Group

Tom Shropshire – Linklaters

Islington Mind

Islington Somali Community

Islington Working for Parents

Jobcentre Plus

Kings Cross Construction Skills Centre

Kings Cross Recruit

King's Head Theatre

King's Place

K&M Decorating

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's

Organisation

Linklaters

London Citizens

Making it Real Board

Muslim Welfare House

One True Voice

Pillion Trust

Premier Inn

REED Global

Rowan Arts

Savills

Selby's

Shelter from the Storm

Single Homeless Project

Solace Women's Aid

Southern Housing

Steadbury

St Lukes Trust

The Flooring Group

The Parent House

Tileyard Studios

Tower Hamlets Somali Integration Team

arning Centre

TUC

Unison Islington

Voluntary Action Islington

Whittington Health NHS Trust

Whittington Park Community Centre

Many council staff have contributed to the Commission both organising and supporting meetings and in producing the final report. The Commission would like to thank everyone involved in making the Commission happen.

A number of local people and organisations took the time to make written submissions of evidence to the Commission for which we are very grateful. The Commissioners would like to thank all residents who made submissions and who attended the public meeting of the Commission. All submissions are available to view on the Commission's website:

Voluntary Action Islington

Every Voice

St Luke's Community Centre

Making it Real Board

Islington Youth Council

Disability Action in Islington

www.islington.gov.uk/employmentcommission

Acknowledgements

The Commissioners would like to thank the following organisations for their contributions and time:

Adult and Community Learning Partnership

Age UK Islington

Arab Advice Bureau

Arsenal

BDP Architects

BIG Alliance (Businesses for Islington Giving)

Business Design Centre Group

Business and Employment Support Team

Casual Films

Caxton House Community Centre

City and Islington College

Conisbee

Creative Islington

Disability Action in Islington

East London Business Alliance

Employment Services Board

Eritrean Community in the UK

Every Voice

Family Mosaic

Federation of Small Businesses

Finsbury Park Community Hub

GMB Islington

Hanley Crouch Community Association

Help on your Doorstep

Hillside Clubhouse

Holloway School

IC6 (6th Form Consortium)

Imece

Islington Bangladesh Association

Islington Business Board

Islington Chamber of Commerce

Islington Clinical Commissioning Group

Islington Community Network

Islington Housing Group Executive Group

Islington Law Centre

Islington Link Up Project

Glossary

We have tried to make this report accessible and avoid jargon and acronyms as much as possible, but there are a few acronyms and technical terms common to this area of work - we have included a short glossary below.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – the projects or programmes undertaken by businesses, often large corporates, for a social purpose. This includes corporate volunteering programmes.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – the central government department responsible for welfare and employment, including Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA) – a benefit which has replaced incapacity benefit and which is claimed by undertaking a work capability assessment

Income Support – a benefit, administered by the job centre, for people, often parents, who have no or low income, work less than 16 hours a week, and are not registered as unemployed

Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) – a benefit to help people when they are looking for work. People must go to the job centre, usually every two weeks, to claim the benefit. This is known as 'signing on.'

London Living Wage (LLW) – The LLW is independently set annually by the Greater London Authority as the hourly rate needed to cover basic living needs. In London, as of November 2014, it is set at £9.15 per hour and £7.85 for the rest of the UK.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) – Charitable, not for profit organisations and social enterprises who make up what is sometimes called the Third Sector.

Work Programme – A national government programme introduced in 2011 which provides support to people on Job Seekers Allowance for over 3 months and those on Employment Support Allowance who are in the Work Related Activity Group

References

A job for everyone: What should full employment mean in 21st century Britain? (IPPR:2013)

Careers Guidance in schools is not good enough (Ofsted 2013)

Distant Neighbours: poverty and inequality in Islington (New Economics Foundation: 2013)

Elitist Britain? (Child poverty and Social Mobility Commission: 2014)

Good Career Guidance (Gatsby Foundation: 2013)

Marmot review of health inequalities (UCL Institute of Health Equity: 2010)

People Powered Public Services (Local Government Innovation Taskforce: 2014)

Appendices

A: Report Methodology

Our approach

The Employment Commission started with a series of key questions that it wanted to answer:

- Who are the key cohorts we want to target to tackle unemployment?
 - Workless parents
 - Those with a disability or long term health condition
 - Those who have been out of work for longer than six months
- What would enable/ encourage employers to employ more of these groups of people?
- What do these groups need from the system or employers to get into work?
- How could the system work better for these groups?
- What are inspiring new ideas to explore?
- What needs to be done to avoid long term unemployment for the next generation?

What we did

In order to answer these questions:

- We commissioned Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI) to speak to local job seekers and those out of work on the challenges they face
- Members of the Commission visited community venues and businesses and spoke with local residents and employers at:
 - Highgate Job Centre
 - 3Corners Learning Centre
 - Hillside Clubhouse
 - King's Cross Construction Skills Centre
 - Premier Inn
- We had an open call for evidence from local residents, employers, and organisations. All the submissions can be found on our website.

- The Commission held a series of meetings with key local partners to test out its interim findings:

- Job design workshop
- Voluntary Sector Workshop
- Housing workshop
- Apprenticeships workshop
- Health workshop
- School and youth workshop
- Childcare workshop
- Skills workshop
- Muslim Women's Event
- Council staff workshop

- We held a public meeting on 21st June 2014 where we presented our findings and got feedback from local residents

- We held regular meetings of the Commission to feedback our findings and compile the final report

B: Overview of Employment and Labour Market

Islington's working age population (Census 2011)

In 2011 there were 155,200 residents of working age (16-64) in Islington, 75% of the total population (206,100). In terms of economic status:

- 115,400 (74%) economically active. In work or unemployed and looking for work
- 39,800 (26%) economically inactive. Not working and not looking for work

■ 7% (10,700) residents economically active but unemployed

Those more likely to be unemployed are:

- **Black residents:** twice as likely to be unemployed (13%), Black African (15%)
- **Young people:** 11% of 16-24 year olds unemployed (lower than London 12%)
- **Social housing tenants:** 11% are unemployed

■ 5% (8,300) economically inactive - Long term sick or disabled

This is the highest rate in London. More likely to be long term sick and disabled are:

- **Those with mental health issues:** estimated 45% of residents diagnosed with a serious mental illness or chronic depression claiming sickness/disability benefits
- **Aged 50-59:** nearly four times as likely to be long term sick or disabled (18%)
- **Social housing tenants:** three times as likely to be long term sick or disabled (16%) and significantly higher than London (14%)

■ 4% (6,500) residents economically inactive: looking after home or family

Parents and carers may want or need to return to work but face challenges such as lack of relevant skills, experience or confidence. The proportion looking after home or family is higher for:

- **Parents:** 4,900 of the 6,500 in this group have dependent children
- **Lone parents:** 41% are in a lone parent family - significantly higher than London (25%). In 23% of single parent households the parent has never worked or is long term unemployed - significantly higher than London (18%)

- **Women:** 7% of women looking after home or family, compared to 1% of men
- **Aged 35-39:** nearly twice as likely (7%) as Islington average
- **Asian residents:** 6% looking after home or family, 17% for Asian Bangladeshi
- **Social housing tenants:** 7% compared to the Islington average

Islington's 'out of work' benefit claimants (DWP May 2013)

■ 14% (22,300) residents on key out of work benefits; 41% for five years or more

Key benefits are Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, and Income Support. Higher proportion for:

- **People with Mental Health issues:** Estimated 45% of those diagnosed with a serious mental health illness or chronic depression are claiming out of work sickness/disability benefits
- **Finsbury Park ward:** 19% on out of work benefits, Highbury East is lowest (11%)
- **Social housing tenants:** 56% of those who claim out of work benefits and council tax reduction / housing benefit live in social housing (44% in private housing)

■ 4% (6,300) residents on Jobseekers Allowance

JSA is the main benefit for those who are unemployed but actively seeking work. Those more likely to claim JSA and also Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction are:

- **Men:** 60% (3,800) men claiming JSA and HB / Ct support compared to 2,500 women
- **Aged 25-34:** 30% or 1,890 claimants (in comparison only 8% aged 55-64)

■ 8% (12,300) residents of working age are on Sickness Benefits

Key sickness benefits are Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, and Employment and Support Allowance. Higher proportion of:

- **Men:** 54% or 6,600 compared to women (5,700)
- **Aged 45-54:** 36% compared to only 4% of claimants are aged under 25

■ One third of children live in households claiming out of work benefits

- 33% (12,900) children (0-18) are in households where the parents are claiming out of work benefits, significantly higher than London (22%).
- 33% (4,100) of children aged under 5 are in claimant households, highest in London

■ 17% (26,900) Islington residents work in routine and manual jobs

Those in 'poor quality jobs' are more likely to have long term health and employment issues. The rate is higher for:

- **Disabled people:** 41% of those with a disability or long term condition which limits activity a lot are in these jobs, significantly higher than London (38%)
- **Social housing tenants:** twice as likely to be in a routine and manual job (35%)
- **Aged 50-64:** 28% of residents in this age group are in routine and manual job
- **Black residents:** 25% of black residents, higher rate for Black Caribbean (29%)
- **Finsbury Park:** 22% of residents in routine or manual jobs

Local Economy and Labour Market (Labour Force Survey 2011, DWP vacancies Nov 2011-12, BETA model 2010)

Businesses

- 11,600 businesses in Islington (334,000 across whole of London)
- Around 9 in 10 Islington businesses have less than 20 employees; Micro businesses (1-5 employees) account for almost two-thirds but provide only 9% of the jobs

Jobs and vacancies

- **Total employee jobs:** 197,000 employee jobs in Islington – 1.34 per working age resident (compared to 0.88 across London and 0.77 nationally)
- **DWP vacancies:** 15,000 Islington jobs advertised through jobcentres in 2011-12. Highest numbers of vacancies for:
 - Sales related (Retail, Sales reps)
 - Postal / Couriers
 - Customer care
 - Marketing & Sales
 - Carpenters
 - Security
 - Labourers

■ Key sectors

- Top sectors in terms of number of businesses, jobs and vacancies are:

SECTOR	No. of Businesses		No. of Jobs			No. of Vacancies through JCP	
	No. establishments London	No. establishments Islington	No. of Jobs London	Of which Entry Level	No. of jobs Islington	No of JCP Notified Vacancies London	Of which at Entry Level
Accommodation & Food	17,000	700	297,300	130,500	10,800	26,730	15,080
Administration & Support Services	25,300	800	431,000	183,200	16,900	106,540	62,860
Construction	30,400	600	126,400	25,300	3,500	53,770	18,820
Education	5,200	200	326,800	75,200	10,100	28,810	16,420
Finance & Insurance	10,700	400	325,100	26,000	16,600	26,140	14,380
Health & Social Work	13,400	500	397,100	143,000	19,900	58,040	42,370
Manufacturing	11,800	400	109,700	25,500	3,200	52,100	36,490
Media, Communications & Information Technology	41,000	1,900	283,500	25,500	27,600	22,240	9,120
Professional, Scientific & Technical	75,700	3,000	492,100	39,400	30,700	27,230	5,990
Transport & Storage	6,800	100	214,900	153,700	6,400	47,770	43,470
Wholesale & Retail Trade, Repair of Motor Vehicles	51,300	1,400	517,900	305,600	11,400	80,610	68,520

- **Other key sectors:** Real Estate & Renting, Arts & Creative, Knowledge driven sectors, Technology

Future trends: London and UK ('Working Futures 2010-20' UK Commission for Employment & Skills)

Growth and employment to increase

- Both growth and employment expected to rise slowly to 2020, London predicted to have one of the fastest rates of employment growth

But increased polarisation in skills and pay

- Hour glass shaped labour market with fewer occupations and earnings in the middle and more at extreme ends

■ Key growth sectors

- Private services, Business and other services will see most growth
- Continued growth in higher skilled, white collar occupations, including managers, professionals and associate professionals
- Lower skilled jobs will remain a significant part of the labour market – increase in jobs around caring, personal and other service occupations and in low skilled elementary jobs in service based areas

■ Declining sectors

- Shift away from public sector activities; continued decline in skilled and semi-skilled manual roles, including in skilled trade occupations and process, plant and machine operatives
- Administrative and secretarial occupations will also see a loss

■ Replacement demand will outweigh any areas of decline

- The need to replace people who leave or retire means there will be new jobs in all sectors, regardless of whether or not they are predicted to grow

C: Snapshot of Employment Support in Islington (May 2014)

Online Resources for jobseekers
 Universal Jobmatch
 National Careers Service
 Apprenticeships Service

Universal support through Jobcentre Plus



National provision through DWP



Regional contracts to deliver intensive targeted support

Jobcentre Plus

170 staff based in
 3 jobcentres (Barnsbury, Finsbury Park & Highgate)
 Plus co-location in Children's Centres, Learning Centres and IWork

Support for jobseekers

Jobs / apprenticeships
 Job search support
 Work experience

Flexible Support Fund

£400k across Islington & Haringey to meet local priorities

Developing skills

Commission local provision for:

- Work Clubs
- Sector Based Academies
- ESOL / Skills

Specialist advisers for

Community Engagement
 Disability Employment / ESA
 Young People: 16/17 and 18-24 Parents
 Income support

Engagement with business

Support with recruitment
 Wage incentives for engaging in Youth Contract
 Employer Advisers

DWP and Local support – grouped by target groups

One to One Support / Job Brokerage

Work Programme

- Ingeus
- Maximus
- Reed in Partnership

Flexible Support Fund

- Cardinal Hume (homeless)
- Fashion Enter

Support for Young People

Youth Contract (18-24)

- Prospects

Flexible Support Fund

- Arsenal in the Community
- LBI Business Works
- Mentoring

Support for Parents

Flexible Support Fund

- Mosada (lone parents – women refugees)
- Samafal (Somali lone parents)
- Supamums

DWP and Local support – grouped by target groups

Support for Mental Health needs

Mental Health Working

- Hillside Clubhouse
- Twining Enterprise

Flexible Support Fund

- Jobs in Mind 18-24

Support for Disabled / Learning Difficulties

Work Choice

- Leonard Cheshire
- Remploy

Access to Work grants

For practical support to help people with disabilities, health or mental health issues gain and stay in work

Support for social housing tenants

Wide range of local services

Commissioned and delivered through range of funding streams and agencies

Financial support for Islington residents:

- Residents Support Scheme
- Childcare Bursaries
- Young People's bursary
- Credit Union

Engagement with business – employment / volunteer opportunities & apprenticeships

- LBI Business & Employment Support Team (BEST)
- East London Business Alliance (ELBA): BIG Alliance
- City & Islington College
- Business in the Community
- Step Ahead recruitment agency

Employment support

- NEW: IWork (joint LBI / JCP) – referral for residents facing multiple barriers

- Peabody HA
- Help on Your Doorstep
- Intech Centre
- Caxton House Community Centre
- Hornsey Lane Centre
- Peel Centre
- St Luke's Community Centre
- Islington LinkUp (African Caribbean)

Mentoring / support to young people

- Arsenal in the Community
- City YMCA
- Culture Capital (16/17 mentoring)
- Futureversity (Tower Hamlets but pan London)
- Groundwork Youth Offer (LBI)

Care Leavers

- LBI Independent Futures

NEETS

- LBI Youth Careers Team
- LBI (ESF funded) Back to Business
- LBI (ESF) Fast Forward
- LBI Y Team
- Flex UK (13-25)

Young Offenders

- Only Connect (17+ male)
- LBI Community Safety 18-24 Gangs Transition Team
- LBI Community Safety IOM XLP (18-24 gangs / deprived)

- CENTA (FUSE self-employment)
- LBI Islington Working for Parents
- LBI Families First – tackling multiple barriers (LBI / VCS)
- LTEN LEAP into Work (women)
- Parent House
- Women Like Us

Qualifications and Skills

A wide range of providers offering 16-18 and adult courses – qualifications (Entry Level and above), vocational training and apprenticeships / pre-apprenticeships.

Key Islington providers in **bold**

Mental Health

- Rethink Mental Health (LBI)

Learning disability

- LBI Daylight Service Community Access Project

Vulnerable adults

- Peter Bedford HA

Substance misuse

- Single Homeless Project – substance misuse (LBI)

Arsenal in the Community (young people)

- Barnet & Southgate College
- Bikeworks
- Building Lives
- Capel Manor College
- CITE (courses & apprenticeships)
- **City & Islington**
- CONEL – railtrack engineering (Princes Trust)
- Construction Youth Trust
- DV8
- First Rung Step Up
- Harington Scheme (learning disabilities)

Kings Cross Construction Skills

- **K&M Decorating**
- Let Me Play – pre-apprenticeships
- **LBI Adult & Community Learning**
- **LBI Driver Training (disadvantaged young people)**
- Maze 8 Future (construction – u24)
- Newham College
- Princes Trust: Fairbridge Programme, Exploring Enterprise
- Redwood Training Aspire Study Programme
- Smart Training
- Springboard Community Learning

Social landlords offering employment support:

- Circle
- Family mosaic
- Hyde Housing
- Newlon Fusion
- Peabody
- Peter Bedford
- Southern Housing Group
- LBI (IT mentoring, DIY skills)
- Arsenal in the Community (YP on council estates)

NB: other than Peabody, services are targeted at own residents

Most services provide ongoing support – up to 12 months – once in work

Some also have websites with jobseeking resources and job vacancies

