

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **3rd November 2021**
Report Subject: **Kickstart Scheme**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member, Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
05.10.21	12.10.21	21.10.21			03.11.21	10.11.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update on the progress of the DWP Kickstart Scheme and Blaenau Gwent CBC role as a gateway organisation for local businesses seeking to access the programme.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Kickstart Scheme is a £2 billion Scheme funded by the UK government aiming to create hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised jobs for young people across the country. The Scheme provides funding to employers to create new 6-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Creditor or Jobseeker's Allowance, and at risk of long-term unemployment.
- 2.2 Funding covers the following for each job placement:
- 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week
 - the associated employer National Insurance contributions
 - employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions
- 2.3 Additional funding is also provided to businesses to support young people to build their experience and help them move into sustained employment after they have completed their Kickstart Scheme funded job.
- 2.4 DWP approached Blaenau Gwent CBC in Q3 2020 to act as a Gateway organisation to support applications from local businesses. As a Gateway the Employment and Skills team are required to liaise with partners within their networks to identify Kickstart job placements, submit bids directly online through the Kickstart portal and administer grant funding to companies.

- 2.5 A number of expressions of interest were received from a range of sectors including childcare, production/manufacturing, retail, hospitality and construction.
- 2.6 Following approval of Gateway status, the first application for funding was submitted in November 2020. This was approved and, although a delay with COVID restrictions lengthened the process, the first Kickstart trainee began in an external company in April 2021.
- 2.7 A further 8 applications have been submitted to date. The latest bid was submitted in September 2021 with 24 placements being approved for 7 businesses. A bid for October is planned with a number of expressions of interest received already.
- 2.8 To date the Blaenau Gwent Gateway has:
- supported 25 businesses
 - created 109 placements
 - 63 placements filled
 - 48 placements in recruitment stage
- 2.9 5 placements are for internal departments within Workforce Development and Policy and Performance, with further expressions of interest invited from across all service directorates. An officer has also attended a number of DMT meetings to promote the scheme.
- 2.10 Of the 63 placement starts 8 Kickstart trainees have left before the end of the 6-month placement. 2 left to complete higher education courses, 2 left to take up permanent job offers, 1 finished due to long term sickness and 3 were not a suitable match for the position.
- 2.11 The first Kickstart trainee will complete their placement at the end of October 2021. The company has reported that the trainee is progressing well through the placement and they would be keen to take employ at the end of the placement should finances and incoming work allow.
- 2.12 The scheme has administered £191,755.05 to date. The grant money provides a start-up cost and reimbursement for wages paid in arrears to the companies managed by the Blaenau Gwent CBC Gateway.
- 2.13 The Kickstart scheme has recently been extended and will be accepting new application from employers until 17th December 2021 and supporting new starters up until the end of March 2022. Candidates in post by 31st March 2022 will be supported through to the end of the scheme in September 2022.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 Option 1 – To note the contents of the report and outcomes to date

Option 2 - To note the contents of the report, outcomes to date; and make observations on BG Kickstart delivery.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

- Economic Development & Regeneration
 - To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- Forge new pathways to prosperity

4.3 **Employment and Skills Plan**

- Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability
 - Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.
 - Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no adverse financial impacts for BGCBC in undertaking the gateway function.

Funding is provided through DWP (UK Government)

Gateway organisations receive a sum per job placement starts to reflect their work as the Representative body.

Payments flow from DWP to the Representative body and then to the end employer.

DWP will check with HMRC before releasing funds to the Gateway body and onward to the end employer monthly in arrears.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The primary risks associated with the Kickstart scheme are;

- Future take up from local employers
- Staff resource to ensure co-ordinated approach and facilitate delivery of the scheme

Measures to mitigate the risks identified include;

- Continued engagement and discussions with partners and employers to ensure enough employers take up the funding offer
- Links with key partners including Jobcentre plus and Registered Social Landlords to ensure a collaborative approach
- Employment Officer to manage Kickstart Gateway as part of their wider remit

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Agreements in place with DWP

5.4 **Human Resources**

A single point of contact is required for the Employer Advisers at Jobcentre plus to signpost employers who wish to apply for Kickstart placement grants.

The Gateway organisation is required to carry out the following:

- Gather Kickstart expressions of interest.
- Submit a bid directly online through the main Kickstart portal.
- Once the bid is approved the Gateway body will sign a grant agreement.
- Organise Employer contracts and Job Vacancy templates for successful companies.
- Manage the grant funding and administer to employers.

The work is undertaken by the Employment Officer with the required finance team support.

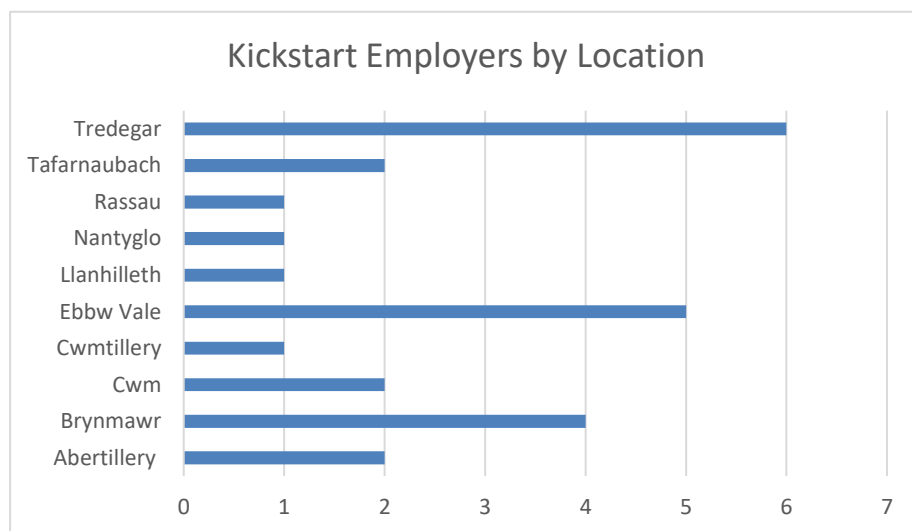
Kickstart job placements will be loaded onto the UC platform and will be visible to Jobcentre Work Coaches. Jobcentre plus Work coaches will identify suitable candidates and work with the end employer to agree interviews etc. Kickstart Gateway representative will liaise with DWP staff throughout.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Company Name	Number of placements approved	Placements Filled
360 Ventures	1	0
Andy King Estates	3	3
Atal Cyf	2	1
Basement Waterproofing Services UK	2	1
Beacon Finance IFA	2	2
BGCBC Policy and Performance	2	2
BGCBC Workforce Development	3	1
Car Call	1	0
Cash and Xchange	11	5
Central Cars	1	1

Fresh Active	20	9
Head 4 Arts/ Breaking Barriers	2	0
Hille Educational Supplies	15	15
JC Mouldings	2	1
Louvain Properties	1	0
Milo's	6	0
Outdoor Retreats	1	0
Pentref Tyleri	10	10
Poultney & Sons t/a JJ's	1	0
Quids Inn t/a King William iv	1	0
Silent Valley	3	0
TAFY	8	4
Taylor Lane	5	3
The Flower Cwtch	1	1
The Little Role Play Town	4	4
Tredegar Town Council	1	0



Report produced at the closure of the scheme will take account of any placements which have converted to employment, both within or external to the host company.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

There are a number of positive outcomes for the public;

- Increased local employment opportunities
- Increased opportunities for unemployed 16-24-year-olds to gain skills and knowledge in a work environment
- Increased local employment
- Sustained local businesses
- Increased skills
- Individuals closer to the labour market

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Blaenau Gwent Kickstart Gateway links extensively with businesses and partner agencies such as DWP. Opportunities are shared with working groups to make them aware of the opportunities available through the Kickstart Scheme.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Kickstart Scheme funding ends in June 2022. As part of the funding through Kickstart employers were able to provide training and support for young people to move them into full time employment following their 6 month Kickstart Scheme placement. The Gateway will work with DWP to ensure that participants have the opportunity to apply for roles following their placement and will also engage with businesses to understand whether they intend to employ their trainee following the work placement.

The learning may inform a future employment programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Kickstart Scheme focuses on 16-24 year olds who are unemployed. The scheme aims to equip young people with the skills to move into meaningful employment at the end of their work placement which they may not have had without the opportunities provided by Kickstart.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

As a Kickstart Gateway the team engage with an extensive range of employment and skills partners and local businesses. A strong working relationship with DWP and the Kickstart District Account Manager ensures that the placements are filled and shared with eligible candidates.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

All departments have the opportunity to employ a Kickstart trainee with a number of departments already taking up the offer and several others interested in submitting expressions of interest.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

There is a limited impact but the programme is facilitating local employment opportunities negating the need to travel to roles further afield. All Kickstart job adverts highlight the public transport options available for each role. All meetings related to the Kickstart Scheme are being carried out remotely with no travel to employers or job centres in the borough.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

The Kickstart Scheme is a targeted intervention at a specific demographic (unemployed 16-24 year olds) and is aimed at reducing socio economic disadvantage through employment work placement and supported training.

6.9b ***Equality Impact Assessment***

The Kickstart Scheme is a targeted intervention at a specific demographic (unemployed 16-24 year olds) and is aimed at reducing socio economic disadvantage through employment work placement and supported training.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Figures are automatically reported to DWP and updates are provided to the Kickstart District Account Manager at bi-weekly meetings. A programme closure report will be prepared and presented to Scrutiny (July 2022); an interim performance report can be presented in April if required.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *N/A*