

<b>Report of:</b>	Director Of Education, Prevention and Partnerships: Rob Brown Executive Member for Communities and Education: Councillor Mieka Smiles
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive - 29 September 2020
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<b>Subject:</b>	50 Futures Work Experience Programme
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**Summary**

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
The Executive to note the proposed restarting of the 50 futures.

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Key decision:</b>	<b>Confidential:</b>	<b>Is the report urgent?<sup>1</sup></b>
Information	No	No	No

<b>Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan</b>		
<b>People</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Business</b>
We will ensure that Middlesbrough has the very best schools, working with local providers to increase educational and vocational attainment for children and adults and creating a workforce that meets the need of current and future employers.		

<b>Ward(s) affected</b>
<i>All Wards</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Remove for non-Executive reports

## **What is the purpose of this report?**

The purpose of the report is to inform members of the progress of the 50 Futures Work Experience Programme within Middlesbrough Council, and the impact of covid-19 on the programme.

## **Why does this report require a Member decision?**

No - For information only.

## **Report Background**

1. In September 2018 the Executive was presented the Opportunity Middlesbrough Strategy which was a new focus on how we recruit and manage volunteers, work experience and apprenticeships.
2. 50 Futures was developed as part of the strategy to support residents across the town to experience high quality work placements across a range of departments within the Council. The programme began in April 2019 and had a target to engage 100 residents by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
3. The work placements were designed to help individuals to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required in the workplace, enhancing CV content, improving interview prospects and develop a new network of contacts and supportive colleagues.

## **Who was the programme for?**

4. The programme was specifically targeted at Middlesbrough Residents who found it most difficult to gain employment. 50 Futures focused on those:
  - Living in Middlesbrough
  - 16 or over
  - Not already accessing education, training or employment.
5. Target groups include unemployed people (long and short term), NEET and those with significant barriers to work, long term health issues, registered SEND, care leavers, ex-offenders, those recovering from substance misuse, mental or physical health issues or those for whom previous education hasn't worked

## **How does it work?**

6. Participants are supported throughout the process by our Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Routes to Work (RTW) teams, or alternatively for those who have Education, Health and Care plans, support is available from our Employment Pathways Coordinator.
7. Both YEI and RTW projects provide financial support for travel, clothes, and childcare. Routes to work can also supply a basic food voucher if needed. The support from these projects includes ongoing in-placement support for both the participant and manager.

8. Figure 1 summarises the 50 Futures management process:

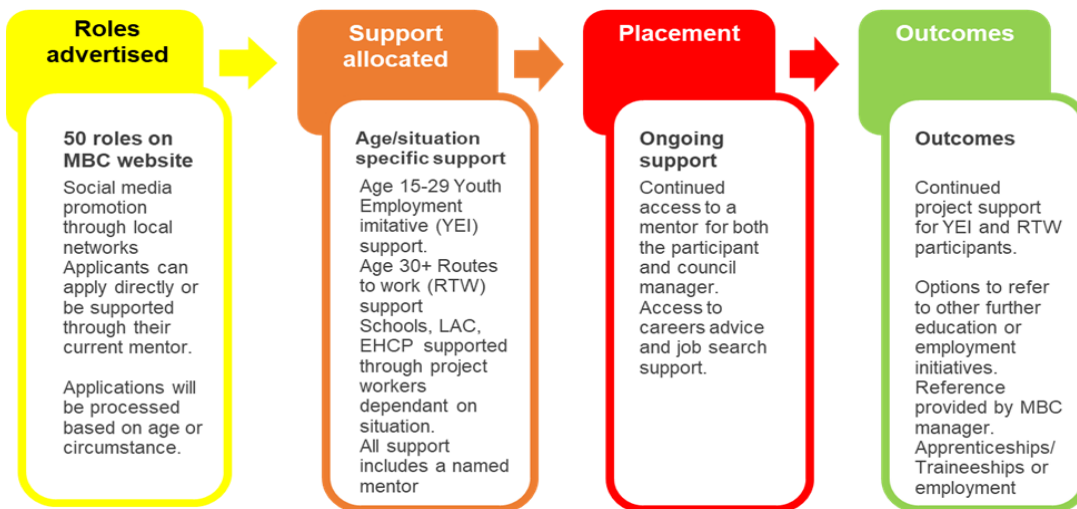


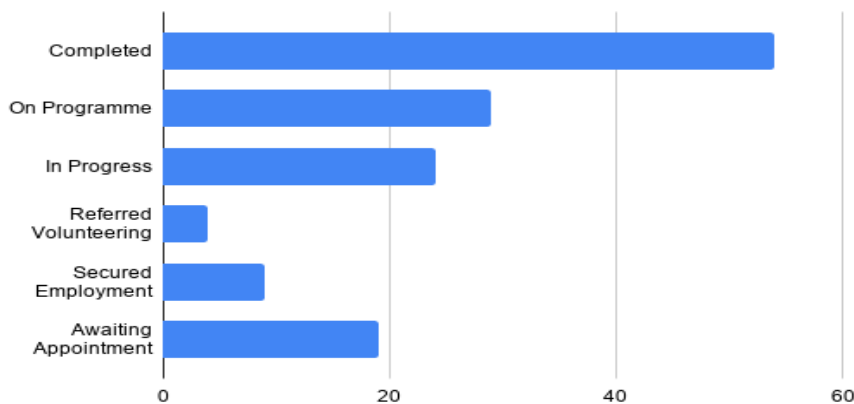
Figure 1: 50 Futures Process.

## Performance

9. The figures reported are for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 up to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, all placements were suspended with a view to restarting as soon as is safe to do so.

The figures to date show:

- 54** have completed the programme
- 29** were on the programme
- 24** were in progress to being assigned a place
- 4** had been referred to the volunteering team
- 9** had moved into apprenticeships or employment
- 19** new applicants were awaiting first initial contact



10. To date 54 candidates had completed a 50 futures work placement.

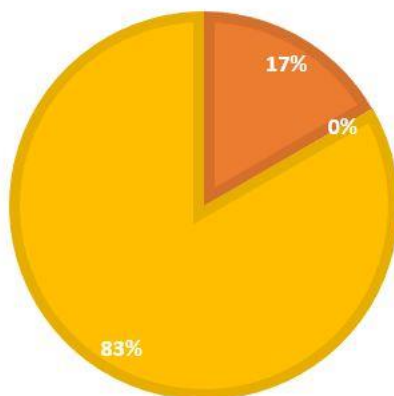
11. The table below shows the outcomes for candidates who completed their placement. Outcomes are categorised into:

- **Employment** – Candidates have gained full time Employment including Apprenticeships.
- **Positive Improvement** – where there has been a positive impact on a candidates personal development/employability skills but they are not work ready
- **Significant Improvement** – The candidate is now work ready. This category also includes those who have progressed to further education or training after they have completed their placement.

50 Futures Outcomes	Number of candidates
Employment	9
Positive Improvement	0
Significant Improvement	45

### 50 FUTURES OUTCOMES

■ Employment 17% ■ Positive Improvement 0% ■ Significant Improvement 83%



**Figure 2: 50 Futures Performance**

12. There are currently **57** roles across Middlesbrough Council which have been developed to support the 50 Futures Programme. These are advertised on Middlesbrough Council website.
13. Feedback from Participants has been very positive and in most cases resulted in life changing impact. (Case studies attached to report). In Middlesbrough Community Learning’s recent Ofsted Inspection the 50 futures programme was praised as good practice.

**“They make effective use of funding and innovative council projects to provide extensive support to learners and enhance learning beyond the classroom. For example, learners benefit from a focused work placement programme or extensive coaching to help them prepare for work”** (Ofsted 11-12 February 2020)

## 14. Impact

### Douglas

Middlesbrough  
Community Learning

Middlesbrough  
moving forward

Doug had not worked since he was made redundant from ICI in 1999 having worked there for 23 years.

Routes to Work put him through his SIA license and updated his CV While exploring 50 Futures options in Middlesbrough Council, Doug and his Key Worker discovered an opportunity for working as a Street Warden. He applied and was offered an interview. Supported by a Routes to Work Key worker, they were able to purchase a new suit and support him to prepare for his interview. His Key Worker walked him along to the Bus Station where the Street Wardens are based and attended his interview with him.

After 20 years of unemployment, Doug is qualified and has secured full time as a Street Warden earning a salary of £20,000 pa.

Doug is transformed and he has discussed how this will change his life - more money (perhaps he can even move to a better area, get himself a little car) and most especially, he will be out and about meeting new people and making friends.

Doug is very complimentary of his Key Worker and the 50 Futures opportunities available to residents. Routes to work and the support he received, he says has had a huge impact on his confidence.



### Mohammed

Middlesbrough  
Community Learning

Middlesbrough  
moving forward

Mohammed self-referred to Routes to Work at a networking event with Recovery Connections. Mohammad had been through a lot and had a lot of issues. His father wanted Mohammed to run the family business (they own two pizza shops) so that the father could retire - Mohammed had other ideas – he wanted to become a Teaching Assistant.

Mohammed continued working with Recovery Connections and was starting to overcome his barriers when his Key Worker Anita arranged for him to volunteer at the Multimedia Exchange, supporting the ESOL classes. Alongside this, Routes to Work put him through his Level 3 Teaching and Learning qualification. After this, Mohammed completed a 50 Futures Work Experience as an Admin Assistant in the ESOL team.

As the manager at MMX was so impressed by Mohammed's work, an opportunity of an Operational Delivery Officer apprenticeship became available and they offered it to Mohammed. Routes to Work purchased a bike to help with his travel to his new role. Mohammed said:

**“Routes to Work and the 50 Futures opportunity has given me the strength to move onward and upwards, I appreciate all the support that I have received over the past year.**



## Key Changes and Future actions

15. From April last year, the programme and our approach has evolved considerably.

- Initially some job roles were unrealistic and mirrored existing job roles, which in some cases were very high level. These didn't take into account an individual who wanted to gain experience and basic work skills. The team has worked hard over the last year, working with teams and managers to address these issues and the job roles have been simplified and are now more "user friendly"
- The introduction of breakfast meetings and Directorate briefings has given managers a greater understanding of the programme and has led to an increase in residents accessing opportunities. It has also led to more collaborative working with service areas, looking at creative and innovative ways to engage people onto the Programme. The team have delivered training and awareness sessions to the participants and were due to start their placements at the end of March. This is currently on hold, but will be revisited once the current situation changes. The feedback so far from participants has been very positive.
- Recruitment to the programme was originally via the council website, sessions were being developed and ready to be delivered in Community Hubs to engage those 'hardest to reach' residents, encouraging them to find out more about working for a local authority. These were planned for March and April and had 35 people interested in attending. These are currently on hold but will be revisited once the current situation changes.
- Case study examples of candidates with a disability who have completed a 50 Futures placement (and the support they have received during the process) have been included as good practice evidence in the Disability Confident leader self-evaluation.
- A communication plan covering internal promotion, social media, and a brief training package for all managers, highlighting the benefits of the programme will launch with the planned restart of the programme.
- A review of all current placements will take place to ensure placements can be still accessed in line with government guidance regarding Covid-19 and associated risk assessments. Completing this work may materially change the nature of the placements available.

16. Alongside this, in July 2020, the Government published the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs to help the UK's recovery. This includes increased monetary incentives for employers who take on trainees and apprentices, and the introduction of a new kick start programme for young people aged 16-24. Further details of how some of these schemes will run is yet to be announced, however, the role of 50 Futures will be woven into the scheme to ensure it continues to be relevant.

17. Due to rising unemployment and the effects of COVID on the community, support with employment across the town is vital. 50 Futures will continue to allow

residents to engage in meaningful work experience which will have a positive impact on their future.

18. To further support residents to gain experience, we will look to expand the 50 Futures work experience offer and work with external partners to provide further work experience placements across the town.

**What decision(s) are being asked for?**

19. None - For information only.

**Impact of continuation of the programme**

20. Meaningful work placements will continue to engage those most disadvantaged and support people to move into employment, further learning and training during this time of increased unemployment and high risk of young people becoming NEET.
21. Reviewing the 50 Futures programme in light of other initiatives may also increase progression opportunities for candidates, and provide additional routes into employment. There may also be an opportunity to re-align 50 Futures placements to other Government schemes providing additional funding and investment to further upskill candidates and support employment outcomes. This would add value to the 50 Futures programme and build on the success to date.

**Legal**

22. There are no legal issues to consider.

**Financial**

23. The financial costs of this project are being provided by the ESF funded youth employment Initiative and the TVCA/DWP funded Routes to work programme which will run until 2023.

**Policy Framework**

24. Decision will not impact negatively on the policy framework

**Equality and Diversity**

25. The programme positively benefits the hardest to help, most needy and minority groups across the town

**Risk**

26. The 50 Futures work experience programme will have a positive impact on the risk below:

O4-006	If young people leaving school in Middlesbrough do not have the qualifications or skills needed to progress to further education, employment or training, then they are less likely to reach their potential, achieve economic wellbeing and contribute to future economic vitality of the town.
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## Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Middlesbrough Council	Opportunity Strategy Middlesbrough	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2018

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