

Report of:	Director of Regeneration Executive Member of Culture and Communities
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	18 October 2022
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Title:	50 Futures Expansion and update
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Report for:	Information
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Vulnerability
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Key decision:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the progress of the 50 Futures Work experience programme and to inform of future developments to expand the programme and engage external partners to provide opportunities to Middlesbrough residents.

Purpose

1. To inform members of the progress of the 50 Futures Work Experience Project and provide an overview of the plans to expand the project externally with local employers.

Background and relevant information

2. 50 Futures was developed as part of the Opportunity Middlesbrough strategy to support residents across the town to experience high quality work placements across a range of departments internally within the Council. The programme began in April 2019, with a target to engage 100 residents by 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 to develop a new network of contacts.
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. (NEET)
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.
6. Since the start of the project, 316 Middlesbrough residents have engaged with the project, 23.4% of residents have moved into Employment/Apprenticeships and 76.6% of residents have made positive progress supporting them to move closer to the labour market.
7. Annual Breakdown since start of the programme in April 2019:

Year (April 1st - March 31st)	Engagement	No: residents making positive progress towards employment *	No: of residents Employed (Including Apprenticeships)	Employed with council	Employed Externally
**19/20	97	76	21	11	10
**20/21	36	21	15	12	3
21/22	121	94	27	9	18
22/23	62	51	11	5	6
Total	316	242	74	37	37

*Positive Progress is where a positive impact has been identified on personal development and employability skills but further development is needed to move into employment

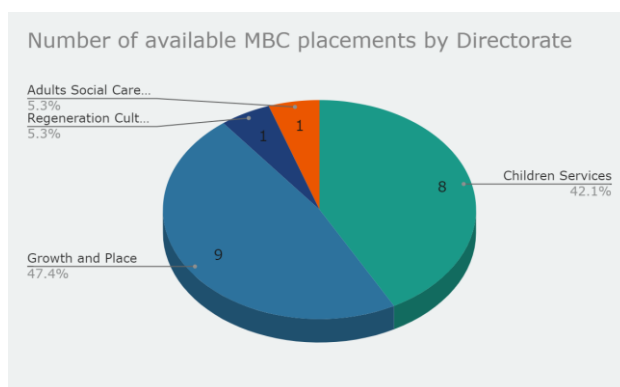
**Suspension of the programme from March 2020 due to COVID 19 Pandemic

8. In March 2020, the Project was paused due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, which led to reduced engagement and limited access to internal placements as the whole country was placed in Lockdown.

9. During this period, Middlesbrough Council's Community Learning service, worked closely with Property Services within the Council to support the recruitment of cleaning staff due to the increase in need linked to the pandemic.
10. 50 Futures Placement opportunities were set up within Property services, which gave residents the opportunity to gain work experience as a cleaner, develop skills and knowledge and an understanding of the role. Those who were successful within their placement were offered a guaranteed interview for the latest cleaning vacancies and 17 residents secured employment within the service and further 2 secured employment with external businesses.
11. Internal placements during 20/21 continued to be suspended due to staff not being in buildings and unable to provide a suitable work experience placement.
12. From April 2021, and the easing of some restrictions, internal placements were reviewed and findings showed that many Service areas were still unable to provide opportunities which would lead to a meaningful opportunity for residents.
13. During this period, in order for engagement with residents to continue, a pilot was carried out to engage a number of small Employers who could support 50 Futures Candidates and provide opportunities outside of the Council. The pilot engaged 10 small Employers and provided 24 placement opportunities. To date, 37 residents have moved into work with external companies.

Key changes to the programme and actions

14. From April 2021, the programme and our approach has evolved considerably. Since April 2018, 50 Futures was coordinated and managed by the Community Learning Services, Routes to Work Programme which was a project funded by TVCA and DWP. This ended in March 2022. Since the 1st April 2022, the Council has recruited a Development Officer to continue to drive the project. The successful candidate was previously a 50 Future Participant and recently featured in the Love Middlesbrough Magazine (Appendix 1) promoting the project and sharing his own story about his journey.
15. We have continued to work with Directorates to ensure opportunities were available and that they were fit for purpose. Currently internally we have **19** live vacancies within the Council, a large proportion of those are within Environment.



16. All roles internally within the Council have been fully reviewed and are advertised on Middlesbrough Council's website. A Marketing strategy was developed to engage internal and external partners and to engage with 50 Futures, this included new logo and branding, social media campaign and showcasing of success stories in the Love Middlesbrough Magazine. (Appendix 2)
17. Strong links have been made with Children's services to support young people to make informed choices about their next steps. A representative from MCL attends the monthly Task and Finish group to promote current 50 Futures opportunities, but also to understand the needs of the young people and source appropriate opportunities linked to the needs of the young person. A scoping exercise has taken place linked to our Looked after teams which has identified the career paths young people are wanting to engage with. We will use this information to create bespoke work experience placements both internally and externally to meet the needs of our young people.
18. The project was due to be externally launched in March 2022, however due to the poor uptake from external businesses, and engagement with larger organisations, a decision was made to postpone and explore further options to increase Employer involvement. It was suggested that the Middlesbrough Mayor launch the project, dates and venue, and forum still to be agreed.
19. We are currently working with 18 small local businesses which are providing work experience placements. The feedback from the businesses has been very positive and as a result of 50 Futures placements, 37 participants have been employed by external businesses. An employer section on the website is currently being developed which will allow Employers to express an interest in the programme and find out how to get involved. In addition a journey has been mapped out for candidates and providers that will be made available online and will simplify the on boarding process. (see Appendix 3)
20. Teesside University is currently working with the team to explore placement opportunities for current and past students who are struggling to find employment and/or work experience. We are hoping this will lead to more graduates finding employment and staying within the town. The University has a limited number of paid internships each year and the intention is to offer 50 Future placements to those applicants that do not start an internship.
21. 50 Futures is working in collaboration with Everyone Active to develop a unique program that incorporates work experience and training. At the end of which successful candidates will be provided the opportunity to interview for Leisure attendant roles. In addition they have agreed to promote the 50 Futures programme to companies that sublet premises in their various locations.
22. Joint working with Middlesbrough Council's procurement team is currently being explored to engage with businesses who are providing services on behalf of the council. We will encourage businesses as part of the procurement process to sign up to 50 Futures and provide work experience to local residents.

23. A steering group will be developed once the external launch has taken place to drive the expansion of the project and to monitor performance. The steering group will include Employer, Education and Voluntary section representation and chaired by Middlesbrough Council's Chief Executive Officer. A number of key organisations have already expressed an interest and would like to be involved, Teesside University, Everyone Active and Middlesbrough College.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

No decision, report is to inform members on progress and future actions.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

N/A

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

N/A

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

There are no legal issues to consider.

Strategic priorities and risks

24. Vul 01 – Deliver and expand the 50 Futures Work Experience Programme

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

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

Financial

26. No financial implication

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To agree a suitable launch date , time and venue which is aimed at engaging employers to support the programme	Claire Kemp/Douglas Hewitson	Dec 2022

Appendices

1	50 Futures Success Stories
2	50 Futures Marketing Campaign and Branding Sample
3	Participant and Partner Journey map

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Claire Kemp

Email: Claire_kemp@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Appendix 1 –Success stories

CAREERS

Life-changing - 50 Futures has opened doors for Doug Hewitson.

How the council's 50 Futures programme got Doug back on track

The future's bright

When Doug Hewitson tried to return to the workplace after four years caring for his mum Linda, it didn't go as straightforwardly as he'd hoped. Armed with degrees from Teesside University and a wealth of experience in his chosen field, Middlesbrough born-and-bred Doug felt confident his CV would attract an offer of work.

But after six months, nothing - only for an appointment at the Jobcentre to change his life.

He spotted a black and white flyer for Middlesbrough Council's 50 Futures programme - a scheme providing high quality work experience placements for people struggling to find employment.

Doug inquired and was given a placement with the council's Routes to Work programme. He completed and enjoyed it - to the extent that afterwards, he volunteered to help people on the 50 Futures scheme improve their IT skills.

But it also helped land him a job as a Route to Work key worker. And now he's been appointed development officer for 50 Futures - the very scheme which set him back on the road to work.

But Doug, 44, admits that had he not spotted that flyer for 50 Futures, things could have worked out a lot differently.

He told *Love Middlesbrough*: "When my mum became ill, I made the decision to step away from work because I'd accumulated some savings and had the flexibility to be able to do it.

"I figured that when I started looking for work again, it would be OK - unfortunately, I was wrong.

"I had my qualifications and a lot of experience in different areas, but as many other people discover, it wasn't that easy just to get back into a job.

"When I was at the Jobcentre, I saw a flyer about 50 Futures. I made the call and went along, all suited and booted, to the Grove Hill Community Hub for an interview

New role - Doug now works for 50 Futures.

even more employers on board.

He said: "A lot of the work placements are at a fairly basic level, although often that's just what is needed to get confidence back and get that experience of turning up for work.

"But as the council opens up more post-Covid, we can bring more skilled roles, and more employers, into the picture.

"I've seen the positive benefits 50 Futures can have, both from an employment and a mental health point of view, and I'd like to see more people take advantage of that."

The 50 Futures message is being publicised on posters in central Middlesbrough, via social media and at community venues around town.

But Doug - a former Kings Manor School, Kirby College and Middlesbrough College student - believes it's a message that needs to be spread as much as possible because, in short, it can change lives.

He said: "I've seen what 50 Futures can do. It's often just about getting your feet in the door, making a positive impression and getting in the back of an employers' mind. And I've seen it from both sides of the table.

"I've gone full circle but if I hadn't seen that 50 Futures flyer, it might not have happened.

"It's had a massive impact on my life and I want to ensure it helps other people too."

To view current 50 Futures placements visit middlesbrough.gov.uk/50futures

lovemiddlesbrough magazine 25

Care leaver eyes dream career after exam success

A dream career beckons for a Middlesbrough student celebrating her exam success.

Marnie Rauf achieved an A* and two A grades at A-Level last week, and has been offered a place at Durham University to study English Literature.

The 19-year-old hopes to embark on a career in writing after her studies, and has now started a placement with Middlesbrough Council's communications team, as part of the authority's 50 Futures programme.

Marnie said: "When I received my results I was elated, and completely shocked.

"And then to immediately receive an email from Durham University that had confirmed my place made the experience even more surreal.

"I'm incredibly excited for university life, and all the fantastic opportunities that I know will come with it.

"However, I must acknowledge the role that Middlesbrough Council, Children's Services, and Pathways have played in my recent academic success, as they have continued to actively support me."

The council's 50 Futures programme provides a variety of high quality work experience placements, with Middlesbrough Council and our trusted partners, for people who struggle to find employment.

"Over the summer holidays I've taken part in the 50 futures work experience programme provided by Middlesbrough Council," continued Marnie.

"This has given me the opportunity to write some pieces for Middlesbrough Council, meet people in the field I'm interested in, and build upon my CV, all while being supported by qualified staff."

Marnie has already been recognised by judges of the prestigious Orwell Youth Prize for her hard-hitting, honest story, *A New Direction: Starting Small*.

It was based on her own experiences of turning her life around, after straying down the wrong path when she left her family home at 16 following a difficult childhood.

Marnie moved into supported lodgings with the help of Middlesbrough Council's Children's Services team, allowing her to concentrate on her studies at Trinity Catholic College in Saltersgill, Middlesbrough.

Supported Lodgings provides a stepping stone to independence for young people leaving care.

Sue Butcher, Executive Director of Children's Services at Middlesbrough Council, said: "Congratulations to Marnie on her exceptional exam results, I'm sure she'll be fantastic at Durham and excel in whichever career she chooses.

"Middlesbrough children matter, and Marnie's success is a wonderful example that our young people can achieve their dreams."





“The 50 Futures placement was a great experience and all the staff were very supportive. The placement was a massive boost to my confidence and this helped me greatly when applying for my apprenticeship. I am pleased to say I was successful and I am due to start my apprenticeship in the near future.”

After completing a kickstart placement that allowed Katie to work in the community and help other people she knew this was the type of work she wanted to do. She started looking for an apprenticeship and this is when she first learned about 50 Futures.

Katie met with 50 Futures and discussed the type of work she would like to do and what she hoped for in the future. Katie also has a young daughter so this was taken into consideration when identifying a suitable placement. We found a work experience placement in a Community Hub that was local to where Katie lives. Katie was looking for a work experience placement because she was concerned that childcare and her dyslexia might prove to be a barrier too far and she wanted the opportunity to show that she was very capable and keen to move into employment.

While on the placement she found the staff to be very friendly and supportive and any concerns she had were soon put to rest. Over a period of 8 weeks her confidence continued to grow and she was developing skills she knew would be invaluable when it came time to start submitting apprenticeship applications.

While on the placement she became very familiar with many of the day-to-day tasks in the Community hub such as interacting with members of the public on reception, answering phones, organising books and much more.

Her manager while on placement said “Katie attended a 4 week 50 futures placement in Easterside hub. The placement gave Katie a chance to experience first-hand what a community hub and Library means to the local community and the diverse customers we serve. She gained knowledge and skills throughout her time on the 50 futures placement which gave her the confidence to apply for the apprentice post available. Katie is now looking forward to starting a full time customer service apprenticeship in September and a bright future with MBC.

Katie is in no doubt that the 50 Futures placement contributed to her success. She was able to submit an application that illustrated she had experience in all the areas identified in the Job Description. She also went into the interview confident as she was already aware what the job involved and had practical experience she could call upon.

The support didn't end there. Katie required her Level 2 in English and Maths and she has enrolled on the course through Middlesbrough Community Learning.

Appendix 2 Marketing Campaign samples



50 Futures

“Doug is an invaluable asset to Middlesbrough's local job clubs and continues to show commitment and passion to local people who are seeking employment.”
Barbara, Routes To Work, Programme Co-ordinator

“The 50 Futures work experience programme gave me the opportunity to bridge a gap in my CV and demonstrate my skill set.”
Doug, Job Club Support

→ Doug is now employed as a Key Worker within the Routes to Work team, helping other long term unemployed people on their journey into work.

Work experience that works for you.
If you have been out of work and training for a while and would like real workplace experience, the **50 Futures** team can help you.

To find out more visit middlesbrough.gov.uk/50-futures
email 50futures@maes.ac.uk or call 01642 811 400.

Middlesbrough
moving forward



50 Futures

“Jake has introduced some additional creativity into our team and has enabled us to work more collaboratively with different departments within the council.”
Tim, Digital Manager, Middlesbrough Council

“The 50 Futures placement has given me a sense of pride in my work, where I am learning something new every day.”
Jake, Digital Media Officer

→ Jake is now completing an Operational Delivery Apprenticeship in his role as a Digital Media Officer at Middlesbrough Council.

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Middlesbrough
moving forward



50 Futures

“My 50 Futures placement allowed me to help disadvantaged people in my local community using my existing retail skills.”
Tracy, Shop Assistant

“Tracy has become a valued member of our team within the store and her hard work has had a positive impact on the local community.”
Michelle, Manager - EMEC

→ Tracy now has a permanent retail position at EMEC, where the managers continue to be extremely impressed with her performance.

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Middlesbrough
moving forward



50 Futures

“The 50 Futures work experience placement allowed me to indulge in my passion of local history and interact with lots of new people.”
John, Museum Support

“John's knowledge of local history has enabled our delivery of interactive exhibitions to continue throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to truly enhance the visitor experience.”
Darren, Visitor Experience Team Leader at Middlesbrough Council

→ John is continuing to volunteer his services for the Dorman Museum delivering talks to visitors both in person and virtually.

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Appendix 3 Participant / Provider Journey

