

Executive

The Work and Health Programme in London

Item no: 8

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Summary This report provides an update on the Work and Health Programme and London government's role in the programme.

Recommendations That the Executive:

1. Notes the report and the progress made towards agreeing a London-led programme with DWP, operating at sub-regional level;
2. Comments on and agrees the proposed arrangements between London government and the DWP for the programme in London.

The Work and Health Programme in London

Introduction

1. Within the London Proposition, submitted to government in September 2015, London government proposed 'central and local government jointly designing and commissioning employment support for disadvantaged residents in London, on a sub-regional basis reflecting local priorities. This would use the framework of devolution to achieve extra investment and meaningful integration of support around an agreed cohort.'
2. The Spending Review announced the creation of a new Work and Health Programme that will launch from 2017 onwards. It contained a specific commitment that the 'The Mayor of London and the boroughs will jointly commission employment support (outside the Jobcentre Plus regime), to assist the very long-term unemployed and those with health conditions and disabilities to (re)-enter work. The government, the Mayor of London and the boroughs will commence detailed discussions on how they can jointly shape every element of the commissioning process: from strategy to service design, managing provider relationships and reviewing service provision'.

Proposals for a Work and Health Programme in London

3. The Work and Health Programme will provide employment support for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants unemployed for 2 years or more and for people with health conditions and disabilities. The core funding from central government for the programme will be at least £130 million per year by 2020/21. It will operate over a four year period. There are currently no figures available for the funding that is available to London or the number of people expected to benefit from the programme.
4. London Councils, borough, sub-regional partnership and GLA officials have been in discussion with DWP to develop an agreement about how the Work and Health Programme will be designed, commissioned and procured in London. The agreement is still in draft and has not been fully agreed with DWP ministers. It sets out the principles of DWP and London boroughs working together, as well as the different roles and responsibilities at each stage of programme development and implementation. Key points to note about the proposed agreement are:
 - London, via its sub-regions, will lead the design, development, commissioning and management of the Work and Health Programme, working with DWP;

- DWP will lead the development of the national Work and Health programme and there will be core minimum policy and commercial design elements of the programme in London that are consistent with the national programme;
 - Within this framework, sub-regions will design and procure the Work and Health programme, to reflect local priorities and to enable the alignment and integration of local services with the programme. This means there will be four separate programmes in London, operating within a national framework;
 - DWP and London are exploring how to set up joint governance arrangements for the programme and to work together to evaluate and share learning from the programme.
5. This means that London government has secured many of the features of the devolution proposal on employment support it submitted to government via the London Proposition. This is a good deal, giving London government much more control and influence over national employment support programmes compared to the Work Programme, for example.
 6. There are a number of outstanding issues around the programme that still need to be resolved, including around accountability, how best to attract European Social Fund (ESF) resources to the programme and the administrative costs of managing the programme. Detailed governance and performance management arrangements are still to be agreed with DWP, along with how to evaluate the programme.
 7. Officers will provide an oral update at the Executive Committee on any further progress with DWP on finalising the agreement.

Next steps

8. The agreement with DWP will be considered by Leaders at the sub-regional level, aiming for final consideration by Leaders' Committee on 7 June 2016. It will also need to be agreed by DWP ministers.
9. London will develop the programme according to DWP's national timetable. The indicative national timescale is challenging and will require swift mobilisation of resource and capacity within the sub-regions, with the procurement process starting in summer 2016 and the Invitation to Tender being issued in Autumn this year, with the provision starting in Autumn 2017.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that the Executive:

1. Notes the report and the progress made towards agreeing a London-led programme with DWP, operating at sub-regional level;
2. Comments on and agrees the proposed arrangements between London government and the DWP for the programme in London.

Financial implications for London Councils

None

Legal implications for London Councils

None

Equalities implications for London Councils

There are no direct equalities implications for London Councils as a result of this paper.

Attachments

None