

Real impact, real value: Securing a better future for young people



An economic impact assessment on successfully
creating employment opportunities for young people

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An introduction



Jo Bibby
Director of Health, The Health Foundation

these barriers. A central focus has also been on good quality jobs and apprenticeships so that employee health is protected and strengthened.

The research from the University of Portsmouth shows there are wider benefits from the Havant approach, extending well beyond the individual participants in the Link up Leigh Park project with a tangible return on investment to the local economy, public safety and the community.

The UK's health is fraying. Improvements in life expectancy have [stalled](#) and a growing number of people are [expected](#) to live in ill health. Deep [inequalities in health persist](#) between the poorest and wealthiest communities. This is placing a growing burden on individuals, the NHS and other public services, and on the UK economy.

Improving health in the UK will require long-term action for economic recovery in areas of long run industrial decline. A clear strategy for tackling health inequalities is needed that recognises the role of councils as a key driver in delivering change in communities.

This requires a reset the way we think about health so that all the building blocks of health are put in place. Havant have shown how these agenda can be stitched together to deliver value for communities.

Local government reform is currently on the agenda presenting an opportunity to make health creation an objective of all areas where the council operates. The initiative in Havant described in this report shows how this can be achieved in practice.

Almost every aspect of our lives influences our health and ultimately how long we will live. Whether it is our jobs, homes and social connections, local government has an important role in helping ensure these building blocks of health are securely in place.

Recognising the specific opportunities for economic development teams to have a positive impact on health, the Health Foundation supported [Havant Borough Council](#) among five other council-led partnerships through the [Economies for Healthier Lives](#) funding programme. We wanted to see what was possible through a shared purpose across economic development and public health teams.

In Havant, we've seen a renewed energy to tackle the economic inactivity faced by young people living in Leigh Park. Stronger partnership working across local schools, training colleges, employers and health service providers have focussed on the long-term causes behind increased ill health, and the barriers this poses to employment. Prompted by the council's leadership and support with job-matching, employers are now identifying opportunities for young people who are facing



Cllr Phil Munday
Leader of Havant Borough Council

One of our top priorities is to find ways in which to tackle health inequalities, enhance access to good jobs, and improve education outcomes for our residents, fully understanding the impact each has on one another. Working in partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions to deliver our Link Up Youth Hub service, Havant Borough Council is doing just that.

The Link Up Youth Hub provides a truly holistic approach for young people residing across our borough, particularly supporting those furthest from the labour market. There is a real commitment from the work coaches to help break down the barriers that these 16-24-year-olds experience with health, well-being, qualifications, and motivation. Once removed, we see a real shift in behaviour and our young people moving into employment.

We now have evidence that demonstrates the value of this employment service and the positive impact that it makes both locally and nationally which this report will speak to.

I could not be prouder of this service and know that it is a model that has the potential to be replicated across the country. I invite readers to take the time to consider how they might implement this provision in their own communities to see the real successes that we have had the pleasure of witnessing in the Borough of Havant.

Executive summary

Before the publication of, and aligning to, the 2024 Get Britain Working White Paper, Havant Borough Council had successfully secured funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to deliver a Youth Hub for residents aged 16-24 living across the borough of Havant.

Since opening in 2022, the service, known as Link Up Youth Hub, has been providing employment support with a wraparound approach to unlock the potential of young residents. Those accessing the service have primarily been Universal Credit claimants referred from both Havant and Cosham Jobcentre.

By the end of 2024, the employment service supported over 350 young people into both part-time and full-time employment, spanning across

a number of sectors. Tailored guidance was given to each individual, working closely with a Youth Hub and Job Centre Work Coach, using a holistic approach with a wide range of local partners to break down barriers to work. The challenges that the young people experience spread across economic, social and environmental factors.

In 2024, researchers from the School of Accounting, Economics and Finance at the University of Portsmouth, evaluated the socio-economic impact of the Link Up Youth Hub service. Highlights from the assessment demonstrate that an investment of £140k per year over a 5-year period has a return on investment of £26 million, broken down into three overarching impacts: Finance, Crime and Health. Further details explaining the monetary value of impact are discussed in this report.



Unemployment

The unemployment level of young people in Havant is 5% (545 young people), compared to 3% in Hampshire and 4.5% across the UK.



Educational attainment

22% of young people aged 16–24 in Havant have Level 1, entry level or no qualifications, compared to 17% of 16–24 year olds across Hampshire with Level 1, entry level or no qualifications.



Education / health / care plans

Data from 2022 shows there were 1,687 0–25 year olds living in Havant with an EHC plan, with a total of 8,869 plans across Hampshire. Havant made up just under 20% of cases.

The creation of a Youth Hub has provided clear benefits

Calculations suggest £140,000 of Youth Hub investment provided in a single year:



Background



Havant is a small urban borough on the South Coast nestled between a beautiful seafront and an area of outstanding natural beauty of the South Downs National Park.

Its population size is just over 124,000 residents. It is on the strategic road network with strong links to our capital city and international trade through seaports and airports, with significant sector strengths in Maritime, Defence, and Advanced Manufacturing.

Within the borough is Leigh Park which has been identified as one of six places in the South East of England described as 'Left Behind', with high poverty rates and significant health inequalities caused by various economic, social and environmental factors. Leigh Park wards consistently rank amongst the worst in Hampshire with the highest claimant counts, and even higher rates in young people. Specifically, 5.9% of working age residents living in Battins ward were claiming employment support in January 2024 compared to 3.5% across Havant and 2.2% in Hampshire. This rises to 9% of 18–24-year-olds living in Leigh Park wards. The rates in Leigh Park also compare much higher against national claimant counts (all working age: 3.7%, 18–24 working age: 5%).

Historically, the area has a low skills base and low employment rates with high levels of health

challenges. In relation to education and skills, 28% of the Leigh Park population have no qualifications, compared to 18% of the population of Havant and 15% in the Southeast region. Average life expectancy is 10 years lower for men and 8 years lower for women in this area than in more affluent parts of the borough such as Emsworth, an area less than 3 miles away, and Cowplain, a community just over 4 miles away. Health challenges are significant. In terms of high priorities, mental health has been measured and is within the worst 10% of the country. In terms of physical activity, Havant's areas of deprivation were on the list of areas of highest inactivity. The count for disabilities and special educational needs support is the highest it has ever been and only likely to increase. Lastly, in comparison to the country, Havant has a higher prevalence for diseases such as obesity, asthma, cancer, hypertension and diabetes.

Although it's been over three years since the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns and restrictions ended, the lingering effects have widened the gap of deprivation, particularly for young people across Havant.

What is Link Up Youth Hub?



Defining a Youth Hub

In response to disproportionately high levels of unemployment in young adults following the Covid-19 Pandemic, through the Plan for Jobs package in 2020, youth hubs were created and funded by the Department of Work and Pensions.

In Havant, the Link Up Youth Hub is an employment service for young people where a team of work coaches, including a job centre work coach, helps them find employment. The hub is delivered by Havant Borough Council. The service is embedded in the community, taking a holistic approach to help unlock potential in young people from the local area. It aims to improve life outcomes for residents, supporting them to gain qualifications and good work, whilst helping to address local skills gaps.

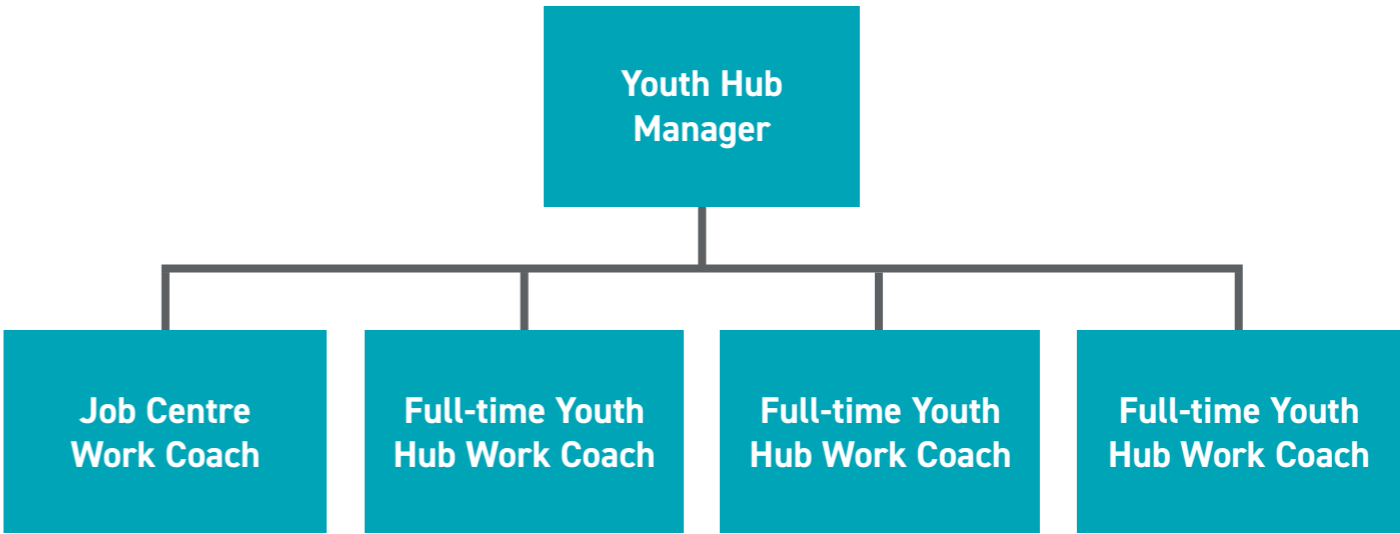
Who accesses the service?

The majority of young people accessing our employability service are claimants aged 16–24 years old, mostly aged 18+.

At Link Up Youth Hub, we are finding that there are disproportionately high numbers of young people with / experience as:

	Health issues		Criminal backgrounds
	Special Educational Needs		Carer responsibilities
	Housing challenges		Care leavers

How does the Link Up Youth Hub work?



Throughout a normal day, the Youth Hub work coaches deliver 1-2-1 30-minute appointments, supporting around 10 young people. Their individual caseloads are approximately 40 young people at any given time. Youth Hub work coaches also deliver a weekly Jobs Club to help with job applications, providing motivation and guidance on the process, including CVs and cover letters. The Job Centre work coach leads incoming referrals to the Youth Hub, delivering 10 to 20-minute appointments throughout the day to help with transition, managing their own caseload, and providing administrative support for the entire Link Up Youth Hub caseload.

The team of work coaches also plan and deliver internal programmes that guide young people through their journeys at the hub. These programmes are designed to integrate participants in group activities preparing them with vital communication skills needed to improve their employability prospects. These programmes are:

Steps to Work

The Steps to Work programme is designed to support those furthest from the labour market to increase their confidence and self-awareness in a group setting. This programme works through a range of topics including growth mindset, automatic negatives and health and wellbeing, whilst encouraging positive peer interactions over a period of 10-weeks. Outcomes from the course include volunteering, accessing health services and moving onto further training.



Empower You

Empower You is a 12 to 15-week programme designed to engage young people in a range of activities supporting personal development and wellbeing. The course includes 1-2-1 personal development sessions using iCan resources from The Windmill Foundation and a life skills strand including finance, physical activity and participation in community projects. Those attending Empower You engage up to four times per week, increasing engagement and participation. Outcomes from the programme include improved confidence (measured through self-assessment using Rosenberg score), lowered anxiety (measured through self-assessment using GAD-7), paid employment and further training courses. Participants also gain the Bronze Arts Award Level 1 in partnership with Arts Work.



Get Ready to Work

The Get Ready to Work programme is designed for young adults actively seeking employment or looking to explore career options whilst gaining self-awareness and employability skills. The programme runs for 10-weeks with the first 5 weeks focusing on self-reflection, understanding your communication and teamwork skills, as well as other strength areas. The final 5 weeks work through core employability skills such as CV writing, job applications and attending interviews. Outcomes from the course include gaining paid employment, work experience and volunteering.



Economies for Healthier Lives Programme: Link Up Leigh Park



Havant Borough Council was supported by the Health Foundation through the Economies for Healthier Lives programme seeking to develop new understanding of how economic development can improve health. Havant's Link up Leigh Park project sought to improve life outcomes for 16–24-year-olds living in one of the borough's most deprived areas, Leigh Park by strengthening relationships between health and economic partners, and introduce new approaches to reduce health-related barriers experienced by young people in order to help them gain employment and improve education levels.

Seeking to improve health through economic development has strengthened the Link Up Youth Hub service, taking learning from the University of Portsmouth's research, putting it into practice that enhanced collaborative working across a range of internal and external partners with examples of work shared to the right.



Unlocking partnerships

Link Up Youth Hub is embedded within a community space, working with a wide range of partners to provide holistic support across three key strands identified as barriers to employment:

Health & Wellbeing



Due to an increased number of young people reporting mental health conditions and experiences, NHS Talking Therapies attend the Youth Hub to offer guidance on managing mental health in the workplace and accessing mental health support services locally. The sessions are 1-2-1 and in our private office, enabling young people to feel safe and secure to discuss their health in private whilst getting high quality professional advice.

Qualifications & Experience



A number of young people come to the Youth Hub with a lack of formal qualifications and look for training opportunities to boost their employability. The Youth Hub works directly with Havant and South Downs College and Itchen College to provide adult education to participants. Both colleges offer a vast range of qualifications available for young people to study and add to their CV.

The Youth Hub also works with businesses in the local community seeking work placement opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. Percussion Play, a manufacturing business on Dunsbury Park, offer work placements to the Youth Hub giving a realistic experience of working in a warehouse setting to those looking at moving into the industry.

Motivation & Confidence



National Careers Service attend the Youth Hub every Thursday offering professional careers advice and guidance to all young people coming through the programme. They leave the sessions with a CV and plan for their work search which includes supporting them to find their future aspirations and what is available locally.

The Youth Hub also works closely with The Kings Trust referring to their Explore and Team programmes enabling young people to build confidence and become more active in their local community. Through the partnership working, the Youth Hub Work Coaches attend the awards evenings at completion of the course to see the progress the young person has made during their time on the course.

Impactful projects

The Youth Hub provides numerous opportunities to young people through a variety of projects they undertake. The following selection highlights just some of these projects and their achievements.

YES Havant

Initially piloted through Link Up Leigh Park and inspired by the Kickstart Scheme, YES Havant funded 6-month work placements for young people accessing Link Up Youth Hub.

Work is on-going, but achievements over the last 6 months include:

20 Employers Involved



39 Work Placements Set Up



62% Job Outcomes



Following 3 events...



... 13 candidates moved into employment



Reverse Recruitment Events

To meet the needs of businesses with the challenge of recruitment and widen the scope of opportunities for the candidates at Link Up Youth Hub, the concept of Reverse Recruitment Events developed. Reverse Recruitment Events are a refreshed method to the traditional experience, with 10–15 young people hosting the tables and employers approaching the young people.

Youth Hub staff are available to support with job matching during the event, so the experience can be tailored if necessary.

Key outcomes from 2022–2024



More than 400 young people have accessed personalised support



Over 350 young people transitioned into education or training, supporting them into employment



Over 300 young people moved into both full-time and part-time employment



What young people think

We listen and adapt our services to best fit the needs of local young people, and their feedback has been invaluable. When asked "What has been most helpful about attending the [Link Up] youth hub?", responses have included:

"Helping me face to face. Instead of just looking for jobs and sending them over, they would look with me for jobs. Showing me the best websites and how to send over my CV."

"They have been proactive in sorting problems I have had, to the point in which I have had a problem arise that I was not aware of and they have notified me to double check I was aware and did the legwork to get it sorted. Being positive, smiley, understanding, and jovial helped make me look forward to each meeting to see what next steps I could take."

"Having someone there who listens to your problems and hardships and actively tries to solve the problems with you instead of for you, always helping to find opportunities to improve skills whether they are social skills or technical skills. I've never felt judged or insecure with the youth hub. It's a great service for those who have need of it."

"My work coach listens, cares, laughs, doesn't focus on negative perspectives, she is honest with me and straightforward and has never made me feel judged, insecure or disrespected, she is very helpful with every aspect of life from work to home."

Evaluation: Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

To understand the impact that Link Up Youth Hub had on our local area, as well as wider society, we worked in partnership with the University of Portsmouth to evaluate the socio-economic costs of not providing a youth employment service. This evaluation was made possible thanks to the Economies for Healthier Lives Programme funded by The Health Foundation.

With evaluation undertaken by the university, the research analysed a pilot group of 222

participants accessing the Link Up Youth Hub's service. Every participant was initially claiming Universal Credit, successfully securing either full-time or part-time employment after accessing the employability service. The data analysed was over an 18-month period.

The results of the research presented the benefits and costs averted in the first year, with further work demonstrating the impact over a five-year period.

Overview of impact

1 year of investment

£140k

Return on investment in 1 year

£5.8m

Investment across 5 years

£700k

Return on investment in 5 years

£26m

Across three areas of impact



Finance



Crime



Health

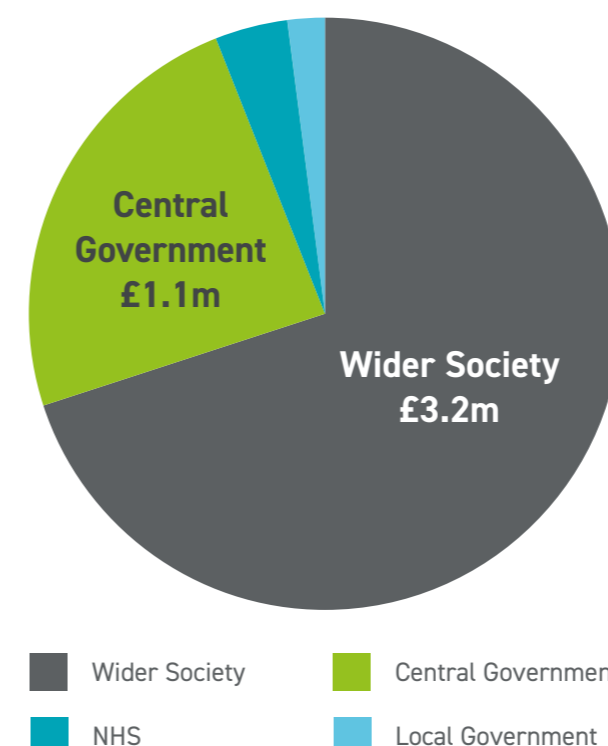
The impact on Havant's local economy

The investigation into the impact on the local economy through the employment of 222 individuals revealed that Retail, Hospitality, and Construction were the sectors where more than 50% of the young people found employment. Health & social care and self-employment were the next significant areas of job outcomes. These sectors were highlighted in the Solent Local Skills Improvement Plan as priority areas.

Whilst the impact of Link Up Youth Hub supporting local businesses to recruit has not been financially assessed, this clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the Youth Hub addressing local skills shortages by acting as a community recruitment service.

By employing a young person, in a single year, the boost to Havant's economy is a staggering £2.48 million for the whole cohort. This covers the additional income that gets re-spent locally, the possible budget savings of local services and the value of the property damaged or stolen.

This level of inward investment to the local economy through holistic employment support could be replicated across areas with similar levels of unemployment and skills deprivation, helping to boost the local economy and support businesses looking to recruit and recover from the multiple shocks of Brexit, Covid-19, and high levels of inflation.



The impact on crime

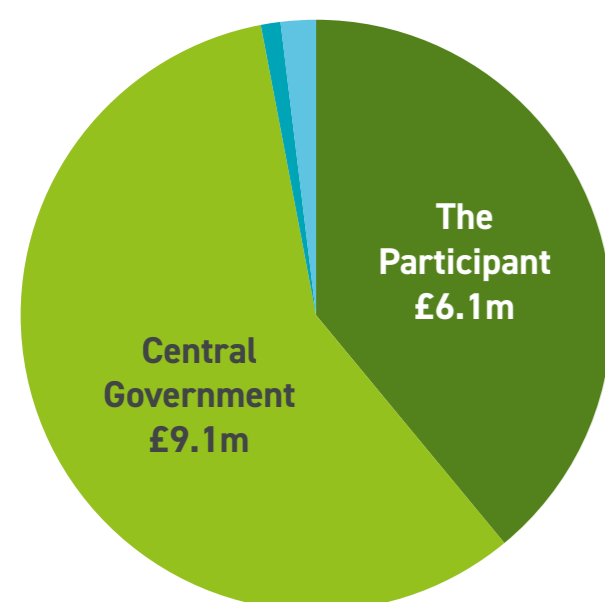
What does this mean?

The calculations are mostly associated to costs of the anticipation of crime, property stolen and damaged, as well as the physical and emotional hardship to the victims. In terms of type of crime committed, acquisitive crime, defined by theft, robbery and shoplifting. According to research, 28% of acquisitive crime is committed by those unemployed or looking for work. What we know is that when there is an increase in income, there is a reduction in crime.

This means that for our young people accessing the youth hub, for every 10% increase in income, the likelihood of that person committing a crime decreases by 6%.

The full Economic Impact Assessment report can be accessed via the QR code or visiting:

www.havant.gov.uk/economic-impact-assessment-report-youth-hub-service

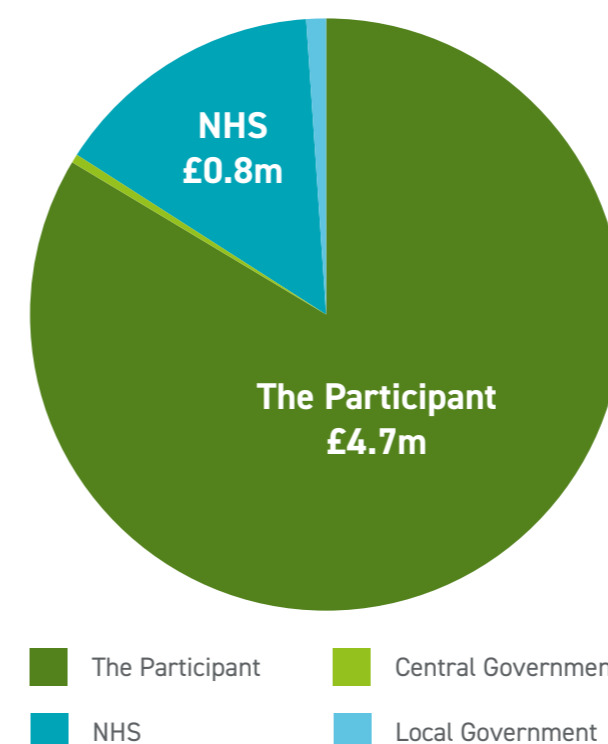


The financial impact

What does this mean?

The average salary across full-time and part-time roles was £15,422, meaning a net gain in income to the individual of £6,324 after changes to their Universal Credit, Council Tax, and NHS prescriptions reduction.

Every year, this is a saving of £7,895 to central government in benefits, and an addition of £1,202 via taxation per individual.



The impact on health

What does this mean?

Calculations were based on a tool developed by Public Health, focusing on how returning to work can impact on an individual's physical and mental health, calculating two health elements: Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) per person and the Reduction in Common Mental Health Disorders (CMDs [including depression, anxiety, phobias, panic disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder]).

The movement into employment means that the NHS has the benefit of saving on the frequency and level of treatment to improve an individual's health. With the assumed improvement to CMDs (as listed above) from accessing the employability service and gaining employment, there is reduced cost to being treated for such conditions.

This could equate to 19.5 people no longer requiring mental health treatment.

Recommendations

The significant positive impact of the Link Up Youth Hub on the local Havant economy, savings to national government, averted costs to the NHS and Police, plus the benefits to the individual total just under £26 million. The return from a modest investment of £700,000 over five years means that it is only right that recommendations be made to stakeholders at all levels on how this innovative approach can be replicated elsewhere.



1

Local Strategic areas, Mayoral Combined Authorities, and Politicians with towns and cities high in deprivation across education, skills and employment should adopt the Youth Hub model for their place to benefit from the potential impact set out in the Economic Impact Assessment report. The University of Portsmouth has provided Havant with a tool that calculates the characteristics of the 222 participants which has the potential to be utilised in similar socio-economic areas. The calculations provide the necessary evidence to harness resource and relationships with organisations such as DWP to create Public & Private Partnerships to deliver such a service.

2

Any employment service offering support to similar cohorts as outlined in this report should adopt the three pillars of Health & Wellbeing, Qualifications & Experience and Motivation & Confidence to offer a pathway for young people, regardless of how far away from the labour market they are.

3

Businesses of all sizes should work with Youth Hubs, as well as employment services for the unemployed and connect them to their recruitment practise to support the local economy and satisfy their corporate social responsibility.

4

Whilst this report has clearly outlined the financial case for adopting the Link Up Youth Hub model and delivering employment support to areas of deprivation and health inequalities, the human element of the work that the service engages in must not be overlooked. Treating Young People as individuals and supporting them to be the best that they can be is central to the success of the Link Up Youth Hub. When implementing a service such as this, the recruitment of the core team and selection of partners and stakeholders should take this consideration as fundamental.

Acknowledgements

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