

**ROCKET
SCIENCE**

Southwark Works

Final Report – Final Draft

September 2022

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1. Executive Summary



1.1 Overview

Rocket Science were commissioned in June 2022 to conduct a review into Southwark Works. This included a review of public and programme performance data, consultation with residents, employers, providers and stakeholders, a best practice review into employment services and into the Southwark Works model.

This review has identified that the service is valued by residents, employers and stakeholders and that it has a key role in supporting residents in Southwark who would otherwise not have access to employment support.

The service when compared to similar programmes appears to provide good value for money and has a bigger impact than similar programmes in supporting people into work and into sustaining work.

The reach of Southwark Works demonstrates that its engagement with key priority groups specifically those from ethnic minorities is strong. Although referrals have slowed the future economic outlook suggests that greater emphasis on outreach and referral is needed to support the economic wellbeing of residents who are not engaging in economic activity. This highlights a need to refocus the framework to invest more into this element of employment support.

Views on the network model are broadly positive and there is agreement on the value of collaboration and the need to align pathways and improve practice. This is about using a more dynamic performance management process, requirements on providers to provide data and contribute to the network's values and to build greater flexibility of provision to adapt to change as local labour markets shift.

The ability to work with employers and have a bespoke Southwark offer is limited in that providers hold the relationships with employers and engagement is often held in centralised teams. This could be an area of development for the creation of a Southwark branded offer to ensure that the opportunities through large employers, anchor institutions, supply chains and social value are

unlocked to provide a wider range of access to jobs and work experience to Southwark Works clients.




It is also important to consider:

- the role of greater engagement with employers on the design of programmes
- the role of a 'One Council' approach to supporting referrals and opportunities into Southwark Works i.e. referring in from key departments such as housing and adult social care
- a refined approach to understanding the impact of support in terms of distance travelled given that the focus of support is likely to be on supporting residents further from the labour market.

1.2 Southwark Works in numbers

Using Southwark Works internal information recorded on the Hanlon data system, we have assessed the performance of the programme:

- 6,617 people registered with Southwark Works between 2019 and 2022. Lot 10 (sectors) had the most registrations (2,788) accounting for over 40% of all of Southwark Works. Of the 6,617 people who registered, a total of 3,681 people (56%) have been supported into a job, apprenticeship, or training. Just over half (1,937) of the support provided was related to starting jobs, with the majority of the rest (1,675) accessing training
- Southwark Works has a high rate of people starting a job or apprenticeship – 30% compared to an average of 24% in six comparator programmes. When those who entered training is included, Southwark Works has the highest success rate of the comparator programmes at 56%.
- The six-month retention rates across all service users was 50% for jobs and 48% for apprenticeships. Women have a higher job retention rate than men, but lower apprenticeship retention. People under 25 tend to remain in apprenticeships for longer than over 25s, whereas the opposite is true for jobs – potentially due to younger people being more willing to accept the lower pay of apprenticeship roles.

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- The vast majority of people who registered are unemployed, although a sizable proportion (18%) were in employment when they registered. Of those who are unemployed, the majority are on some form of benefits, with Universal Credit being the most common.
 - Just over a quarter of people registered have a disability or health condition. A similar number of registrations are for people aged either under 25 or over 50. Together, these age groups make up half of registrations. The ethnic breakdown of registrations was: 49% black, 27% white, 10% other, 7% mixed, 5% Asian, and 2% not stated.
 - Participants on average received three interventions before achieving a job. The most common types of support were 1:1 meetings, action plan activities, and CV assistance.
 - By contrast, less than 5% of people received digital support, secured a work placement, accessed non-accredited training, or completed individual learning plan/action plan.
 - 35% of participants are recorded as receiving no support. Feedback from Southwark Works suggests that this is inaccurate, and the actual figure is closer to 5%-10%. This therefore reflects issues and inconsistencies in the reporting of data by different providers. Assuming that 90% of people who registered received some form of support (based on the estimate from Southwark Works) and given that 44% of participants did *not* achieve a job, apprenticeship or training, this implies that approximately 40% of people who registered received support without this resulting in a job outcome.


1.3 Key recommendations




Research question	Key findings	Key recommendations
1. What are the current and emerging employment support needs of Southwark residents?	Additional support to address longer term unemployment and to reach over 50's, people with health conditions and wider help around resilience, mental health, financial capability. Improve digital inclusion for people with disabilities.	There may need to be even greater focus on supporting those further from the labour market or with little work experience and consider using work experience opportunities, work-based interviews and volunteering to build better CVs. Services will need to flex to changing labour market needs over the next four years.
2. What has encouraged residents to register with Southwark Works, has helped them to succeed in the labour market? What do they think would help them further?	Residents value Southwark Works and are accessing a range of services, although referrals are at an all-time low. However some interventions are used more than others and may not be making as much impact. Trust and good relationships between work coaches and residents is critical to the success of the service.	Continue to recruit and invest in high quality work coaches and ensure consistency across the network. Deploy a more targeted local engagement strategy with greater investment in reaching and engaging residents. Improve data collection from providers so that better analysis of take up and performance can be used to



		inform the development of the programme and to pivot services where needed.
3. Has Southwark Works been successful in meeting the support needs of its key client groups?	Southwark Works is successful at engaging and meeting the needs of its different priority groups with significant impact on black residents, people with disabilities and those on benefits. Nearly 20% of registered residents are currently in work, suggesting in-work support is needed and likely to continue to be required as residents navigate the cost-of-living crisis. Providers are reporting the impact of the pandemic on residents' resilience.	There is a need to increase financial capability support as well as consider whether there is potential to bring this together into a wider strategy of support and action. Ensuring efforts are made to enable equal access of digital services via provision of broadband and equipment is crucial given the preference for online delivery and job readiness.
4. What is Southwark Works' impact on participants' wellbeing, skills, and employability?	Southwark Works is successful at achieving job outcomes and sustained retention out-performing similar programmes by some distance for all of its groups. Residents report positively on the impact Southwark Works has had on their skills, employment pathways, and mental wellbeing, demonstrating the broader impact of a holistic employment service.	The model and approach is effective and should be retained as it has greater success than national programmes at getting people into work. The elements of the holistic employment service needs to be maintained in future frameworks.



<p>5. Do local employers value the service they receive from Southwark Works? How could it be improved?</p>	<p>Employers who engage with Southwark Works report positive experiences particularly those that have greater strategic relationships and connections to borough-based opportunities. Although many report residents do not have sufficient work experience or confidence to succeed at interview. Only 5% of residents have accessed work experience.</p>	<p>Greater efforts need to be made to ensure that candidates are both interview and work ready and that this must be consistent across the provider network. This will rely on more work experience and support.</p>
<p>6. Does the network/ structure foster good working relations between providers and partners (including other council services) to deliver improved outcomes for residents?</p>	<p>Overall feedback on the network is positive and there are benefits to the network approach including access to vacancies; referrals; opportunity to share practice; identify other forms of provision across the network; share job outcomes; and having a shared system like Hanlon makes it easier to monitor progress. Activities targeted at specific priority groups have worked well although there could be greater engagement with other council services.</p>	<p>Consideration is given to ensure that providers are working to best practice, case workers have consistent approaches to support and learning and that providers are compelled to provide data, attend learning and be pro-active in the network.</p>
<p>7. What are the likely gaps in provision and what does the council need to commission in order to meet the employment</p>	<p>Southwark Works is reaching its target groups given its high reach into ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities/health conditions, young people and those with more complex needs.</p>	<p>There needs to be common and minimum standards so that the experience is universal.</p> <p>Bring in new providers that can reach into target groups and communities to encourage referrals into the service.</p>



<p>needs of residents over the next four years?</p>	<p>Further support is required for some priority groups particularly for the over 50s, those that are longer term unemployed and those that need financial advice.</p> <p>There needs to be an improved approach to employer engagement and potential to have this as a branded offer to encourage greater collaboration between employers and providers in the design of services and support.</p> <p>A greater emphasis on outreach and engagement including into the centre of the borough and consistent approaches to support residents.</p>	<p>There needs to be specific requirements on providers to produce data and information to support the performance management and monitoring of the framework.</p> <p>There needs to be a step change in employer engagement and focus on sector-led approaches.</p>
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2. Background to the evaluation

2.1 Evaluation aim

The aim of this evaluation is to provide clear recommendations and actions to inform the next commissioning round of the Southwark Works service from 2023-27.

This evaluation follows a service review in February 2021 and has also coincided with the development of Southwark's new economic strategy to 2030. We have considered the impact of the pandemic on the service as well as consider what a service would need to look to manage the developing challenges around the cost-of-living crisis and the likelihood of a recession.

2.2 Evaluation questions

The evaluation has been framed around seven research questions:

1. What is the current and emerging employment support needs of Southwark residents?
2. What has encouraged them to register with Southwark Works and has helped them to succeed in the labour market? What do they think would help them further?
3. Has Southwark Works been successful in meeting the support needs of its key client groups?
4. What is Southwark Works' impact on participants' wellbeing, skills, and employability?
5. Do local employers value the service they receive from Southwark Works? How could it be improved?
6. Does the network/ structure foster good working relations between providers and partners (including other council services) to deliver improved outcomes for residents?
7. What are the likely gaps in provision and what does the council need to commission in order to meet the employment needs of residents over the next four years?

As part of the evaluation we have analysed the performance of the programme over the last four years, including where possible in the context of other employment support programmes. We have conducted a labour market review, a review of best practice followed by consultation with service users, providers, and key partners including employers and stakeholders as set out below. The full methodology is set out in Appendix 6.

Number of individuals consulted across the four consultation groups

Group consulted	Number consulted
Service users	36
Providers	9
Employers	11
Stakeholders	6

2.3 Report structure

The findings and recommendations from the evaluation are set out against each of the research questions, supported by a series of appendices which contain further data and insight that has informed this report.

Appendix 1 – Review of best practice in council-led employment services

Appendix 2 – Review of the Southwark Works model

Appendix 3 – Consultation feedback

Appendix 4 - Analysis of Hanlon data

Appendix 5 – Labour market review

Appendix 6 – Methodology and consultees

We would like to extend our thanks to all of those who took part during consultation for giving up your time to contribute to this work. We hope that you will find this evaluation and the recommendations made useful in formulating the next steps for the Southwark Works programme.

3. Employment support needs



3.1 Introduction

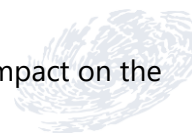
In this section we reflect on the current and emerging picture of the labour market in Southwark and wider economy, the views of residents, providers and employers on employment support needs and make recommendations on what would need to be commissioned and delivered over the next four years.

3.2 The wider context

We have conducted a review of current labour market data and made comparisons between pre and post pandemic. Although this paints one picture there are several factors that need to be considered.

- The first is we have signs about the impact of the pandemic on creating greater economic inactivity particularly for over 50s. This is a trend we are seeing nationally and in London. Although this is related in part to people making different choices about their lives, there is an underlying concern that this could be due to health reasons, mental health and long-covid. There is a need to continue to look at data as it becomes available to better understand the scale and impact of longer-term unemployment. However it is highly likely that there will be a greater need of support around health and wellbeing to help residents back into work.
- We know that certain groups were particularly disproportionately affected by the pandemic including those groups that are key targets for Southwark Works. For those that were already disadvantaged in the labour market, the pandemic has exacerbated this disadvantage meaning that the journey into work may take longer and that the effects of long-term unemployment on mental health, confidence, resilience and skills will need to be addressed. This too will require more personalised and wraparound support.
- There were existing skills and supply mismatches in the labour market pre pandemic and although there are lots of jobs, the extent to which residents have these skills or jobs exist that residents are willing to apply is unclear. It is clear that a sector-based approach to securing employment works but that there needs to be greater coherence between what employers need

and the skills offer. This is a wider structural issue, but one in which will have an impact on the scale and nature of skills provision with the Southwark Works model.



3.3 What is the data telling us

3.3.1 Unemployment

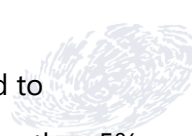
Unemployment is still well above the pre-Covid-19 level, and there are signs that the post-Covid-19 job recovery rate is slowing. The latest figures show that as of June 2022 there are still 3,510 more unemployed people than March 2020 (representing an increase of 41%). The rate at which unemployment is falling has slowed in the last six months, and if the same rate were to continue it will be mid-to-late 2023 before unemployment reaches the pre-Covid-19 level. However, given the current low economic growth and forecast recession, in reality it will likely be even longer.

As such, the importance of a service such as Southwark Works cannot be underestimated and particularly in light of the cost-of-living crisis where residents may be pushed into seeking work but also for those who are employed who need additional support to increase hours and pay.

Southwark has a higher percentage of 16/17 year-old NEETs than London as a whole, and the figure has risen from 4% in 2016 to 6% at end 2020 (albeit this is on a declining trend). White and mixed-race ethnic groups have the highest NEET rates, both of which are higher than in neighbouring Lewisham and Lambeth. Based on data from Southwark Works, nearly 1,400 registrations were aged between 16 and 25, representing just over a quarter of registrations suggesting a sizeable proportion of younger residents are needing support.

3.3.2 Needs

From public data available there is greater need for support in the centre of the borough. There is a high concentration of unemployed people in central areas of Southwark such as **Peckham, Walworth and Camberwell**. This will mean that commissioning will need to factor in providers that have the geographical reach into those communities. The central area also has higher levels of socioeconomic vulnerability – according to the Red Cross Vulnerability Index which also reflects on health and employment status – and a large youth employment gap – as found in the Southwark Economic Evidence Base report.



From analysing Southwark Works' data, the most common types of support provided to participants are 1:1 meetings, action plan activities, and CV assistance. By contrast, less than 5% received digital support, secured a work placement, accessed non-accredited training, or completed ILP/action plan. Of the participants who entered a job, 21% are recorded as having received no support at all (rising to 35% when those registered [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are included).¹ However, this number is likely overstated due to inaccurate data reporting – feedback from Southwark Works suggests it is closer to 5%-10%.

Just over a quarter of people registered with Southwark Works have a disability or health condition. In the UK as a whole, 21% of the working age population have a disability, meaning this group is slightly over-represented in Southwark Works users.² When analysing the data on residents who took up different available services that were disabled, unemployed for 12+ months, on Universal Credit, or not on any benefits:

- A high proportion of people who accessed accredited training, action plan activities, interview preparation, and work placements were disabled, although there was little digital support provided to this group.
- People on Universal Credit access different services from those on no benefits – the former group particularly targets accredited training, action plan activities and digital support

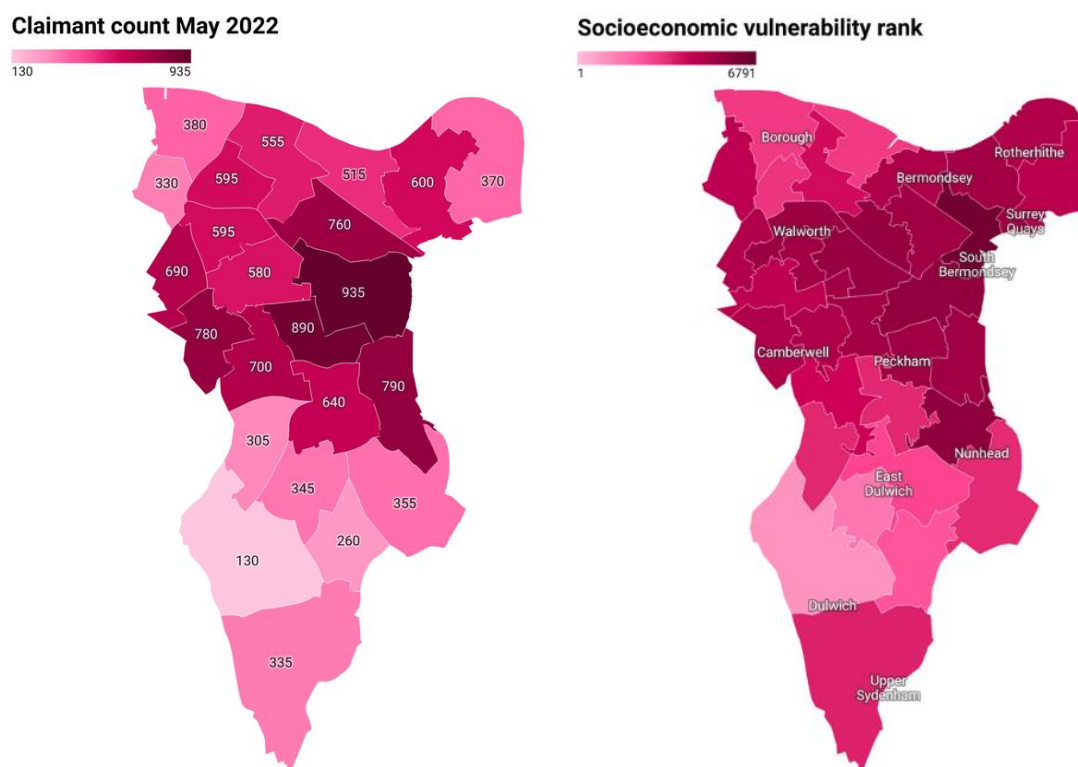
This data reflects the diversity of needs and support for residents.

¹ Throughout this report, where we have analysed the Hanlon data by the support provided, we have excluded data from [REDACTED] due to potential inaccuracies in the information recorded. [REDACTED] of all registrations at Southwark Works [REDACTED] who started a job / apprenticeship or accessed accredited training. Therefore, the figures excluding this provider represent the vast majority of Southwark Works participants, but may differ slightly from the true figures.

² <https://www.scope.org.uk/media/disability-facts-figures/>



Figure 1: Southwark claimant count and socioeconomic vulnerability



Source: Nomis Claimant Count. Red Cross Vulnerability Index

Covid-19 had a larger effect on unemployment in males and has increased the gap in gender unemployment. The unemployment created by the pandemic initially had the largest effect on the younger and mid-aged groups, with much less impact on over-50s. However, while unemployment in under-25s has fallen rapidly since the height of the pandemic, recovery has been slower for those aged 25-49, as shown in the table below. This indicates that:

- younger people were showing positive trends in employment, and although they were the worst hit by the pandemic from a jobs perspective, this group appears to be bouncing back strongly. However, we are seeing those that have low educational attainment and special educational needs struggle;
- people aged 25-49 have struggled to recover from the pandemic and may require particular attention for support; and



- although not as strongly affected by Covid-19, longer-term trends indicate that the over-50s is a group requiring attention.

Table 1: Change in unemployment by age group, 2020-2022

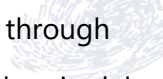
	16-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
Mar-20	1,085	1,090	1,120	960	915	900	875	895	655
Jun-22	1,370	1,685	1,700	1,455	1,315	1,230	1,135	1,115	880
Gap	+285	+595	+580	+495	+400	+330	+260	+220	+225

Source: Nomis Claimant Count

Notably, the latest Universal Credit data suggests there has been a particular increase in the number of long-term unemployed people. Compared to March 2020, the number of unemployed women who have been claiming Universal Credit for over 12 months is 84% higher, while for men it is more than double. By contrast, the numbers of people who have been on Universal Credit for up to 6 months and from 6-12 months is less than in March 2020 for all genders. This same pattern has occurred across all age groups and is particularly prominent among 35-39- and 40-44-year-olds, which have more than doubled the number of long-term unemployed people on Universal Credit than pre-pandemic. This is important given that it becomes more difficult to re-enter the job market the longer a person is unemployed. Therefore, the challenge faced by employment support services is likely to be particularly tough.

3.4 Providers' views

Given the diversity of providers and their specialist support it is unsurprising that they have seen a wide range of needs from residents. From those who have more complex challenges such as long-term homelessness, risk of homelessness, chaotic lives and long-term unemployment, to those who need support with finances and management or more general low-level support around confidence building and CV preparation.



Key drivers to seek support appear to be those who need to maximise income either through benefits or work. Although there are opportunities for work, people who find themselves in debt and are trying to live on London Living Wage are not managing well and need support to sustain their employment.

There is a lack of IT skills with people struggling with connectivity and the skills to manage online searches and applications. This is compounded by a lack of confidence and knowing what is on offer. For younger people not having the right qualifications and knowledge of opportunities is a real challenge, alongside their age and the perspectives of employers about their abilities. This lack of experience and gaps in work means that there is continued need for confidence building, job skills and work experience.

As highlighted earlier some services report a change in referrals. In particular the 50+ group have been mentioned regularly as having increased in number.

"This has implications for services requiring a change to reflect the needs of a more qualified and experienced client whose needs are very different from the way services are currently set up but having in common the needs to orientation to job search, and possible conversations around up-skilling or re-skilling often in the context of chronic physical, or intermittent mental health crisis."

3.5 Residents' views

For many residents, their biggest needs were knowing where to look for work and support with improving CV and application quality, and they believed Southwark Works could assist with this. The programme was described as a 'platform' akin to online tools such as Indeed.

Many also recognised the programme has the additional benefit of providing tailored support with the practicalities of the employment process: refining CVs, completing applications and cover letters, and preparing for interviews.

"[My friend] told me they will help you look for jobs and also assess you to understand your field and interests, and where they think you will function well."

A smaller number said they had needs relating to personal barriers such as mental health problems or disabilities, and again felt like Southwark Works could support them with these.

"They were helping people rehabilitate after an illness or having not been well and helping them to find work. That spoke to my own circumstances."



3.6 Employers' views

Although our engagement with employers was limited to larger businesses in the borough, they did have several perspectives on the support needs of residents,

Whilst there is an ambition to recruit Southwark residents and give them opportunities, there is often a mismatch of skills and therefore employers will recruit applicants that have the right skill levels regardless of where they live. There needs to be the right training and skills for residents to make themselves attractive to employers.

Employers feel that residents need support to be more job ready and able to conduct themselves well at interview as well as understand the requirements of being in a workplace. They feel that residents need more work experience and opportunities to find out what kinds of environments would be best suited to them.

The challenge is that this requires a collective ask and management of opportunities, although as currently structured, employer engagement is not coordinated centrally and limited to the networks and relationships providers already have.

3.7 Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the analysis above, the key implications for the Southwark Works commissioning model are as follows.

1. Southwark Works should be prepared for sustained high unemployment levels for at least the next year and consider how it can play a role in mitigating the impact of this in Southwark.
2. Neighbourhoods in the centre of the borough should be prioritised as they have the highest levels of unemployment and vulnerability.
3. The current provider offer appears to be able to provide support for the diverse needs of Southwark residents, however in light of the cost-of-living crisis and the need to encourage

people back into employment, further support is needed around income and benefit maximisation, financial capability support and access to mental health services.



4. For disabled residents and those with low level of IT literacy and poor access to the internet further support is needed to help navigate opportunities and online applications.
5. There may need to be greater focus on supporting those further from the labour market or with little work experience and consider using work experience opportunities, work-based interviews and volunteering to build better CVs.

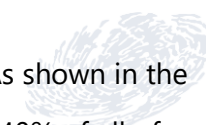
Further develop interview and job readiness skills so that residents have greater success at securing employment.

4. Motivations, success and further support

4.1 Introduction

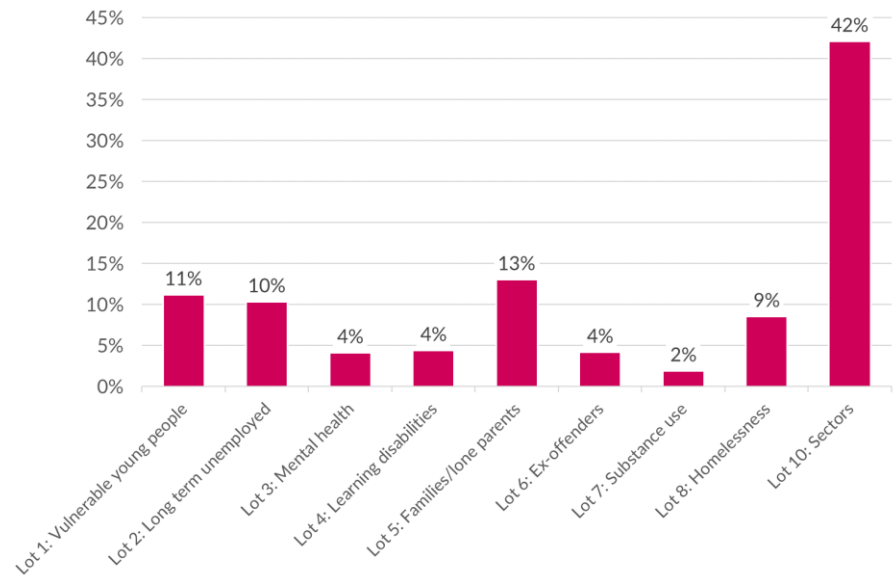
In this section we review the reach of Southwark Works, how residents discovered the programme, and what motivated them to register. We also reflect on the impact of the Southwark Works environment on residents' continued engagement with the programme.

4.2 What the data is telling us



Between 2019 and 2022 a total of 6,617 people registered with Southwark Works. As shown in the chart below, Lot 10 (sectors) had the most registrations (2,788) accounting for over 40% of all of Southwark Works. The next largest Lots by registrations were Lot 5 (families and lone parents), Lot 1 (vulnerable young people), and Lot 2 (long term unemployed). At the other end of the scale, Lot 7 (substance use) had only 127 people registered.

Figure 2: Percentage of registrations by Lot



Source: Southwark Works internal data

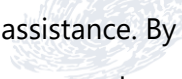
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Across all providers excluding [REDACTED] participants received an average of three interventions before achieving a job, and the majority (75%) received three or fewer interventions. Only a small number (5%) accessed support from their provider more than 10 times, but some individuals required a large amount of support – accessing the services more than 30 times. The most

³ As noted above, where we have analysed the Hanlon data by the support provided, we have excluded data from the [REDACTED] due to potential inaccuracies in the information recorded [REDACTED] accounts for 20% of all registrations at Southwark Works and 16% of people who started a job / apprenticeship or accessed accredited training. Therefore, the figures excluding this provider represent the vast majority of Southwark Works participants, but may differ slightly from the true figures.



common types of support were one-to-one meetings, action plan activities⁴, and CV assistance. By contrast, less than 5% of people received digital support, secured a work placement⁵, accessed non-accredited training, or completed individual learning plan/action plan.

21% of participants are recorded as receiving no support at all, and when [REDACTED] included this rises to 35%. This reflects issues and inconsistencies in the reporting of data by different providers, and we expect that the actual proportion who received no support is closer to 5%-10%. This means that over 25% of participants are not having their activities recorded, which significantly limits how well the journey of Southwark Works participants can be tracked. More consistent data recording across all providers would be beneficial for the accuracy and depth of any future research.

4.3 Residents' views

4.3.1 Outreach

The majority of those spoken to discovered Southwark Works through one of three methods: referrals from Job Centres, referrals from other third-sector organisations, or through word of mouth.

Of those three methods, referrals from other third-sector organisations are most common. Residents had been accessing other support services who then referred them directly into Southwark Works or one of their providers. Referrals from Job Centres were also common. In both cases referrals were often made after a discussion with a staff member or work coach highlighted a need or desire for additional support around employment.

"This all started with me telling my work coach [at the Job Centre] that I felt lost and didn't know what to do. I felt too old for the jobs I wanted to do. My agent told me about Southwark Works."

⁴ This relates to progress against personal goals and objectives.

⁵ Usually a trial or unpaid placement.

Many residents also heard about the programme through word of mouth, with family and friends either recommending the Southwark Works programme directly or one of the provider organisations.

A smaller number of residents discovered the programme online through Google or job search sites, or through referrals from a healthcare practitioner.

None of the residents spoken to said they heard about the programme through out-of-home advertising such as leaflets or flyers and many felt this could increase engagement. Residents felt dropping flyers into existing networks or systems, such as community groups, youth clubs, church groups, or youth offending services would be effective.

4.3.2 Experiences of support

This section focuses on how residents' experience impacted their motivations to continue with the programme.

Several residents said they felt listened to, understood by their coaches, and said this resulted in their continued motivation and encouragement to pursue work or upskilling as it gave them the belief that Southwark Works programme would be beneficial for them. Because of this understanding, residents built close relationships with their coaches, and felt they were able to open up about other aspects of their life or their job search. They felt doing so was important, as it helped them overcome issues that had potentially held them back from employment.

"I could talk to my coach and tell him about my anxiety around work and my depression. He said he could look into changing careers, and that's when it clicked in my head – I'd had enough of what I had been doing."

In a few cases individuals looking for specific roles in niche sectors felt they were not listened to or fully understood. They said their coaches sent them roles that did not relate to their goals, and in some cases felt they had to educate their coaches about the sectors they wanted to go into.

"A lot of what they were sending me were apprenticeships which I wasn't qualified for, or other roles that required a degree of skill I didn't have."



4.4 Providers' views

4.4.1 Outreach

All providers report a current shortage of footfall into services. There are a variety of reasons which may be contributing to this including a lack of referrals from JCP:

1. DWP priorities in targeting Restart priority group. Restart is a government programme set up as part of the recovery from the pandemic to support long-term unemployed on Universal Credit.
2. Claimants not being asked to come in and sign on
3. Relaxing of the requirements to be actively looking for work, and debt not being taken account of when considering job affordability.

However, a recurrent theme is that pay is insufficient and the opportunity cost of taking up work only to be marginally better off is not an incentive to work. This reflects the range of jobs on offer, the pay and conditions and what employers are able to offer in terms of progression. Focusing job outcomes that fit within a "Good Work" framework may make employment more appealing.

Providers also reported that the source of referrals were from a several routes: the Southwark Works website, JCP, the council, and via providers. However, referrals via local authority services were not highlighted by providers as being consistent and this could be an area of development for the next framework.

"Referrals are at an all-time low. Many are not engaging with services and the foot fall is low. There is usually a constant stream of referrals."

All providers report outreach and engagement as being an important and ongoing activity. Some report having stronger profile and legitimacy within target communities as a result of the pandemic through pivoting services to provide support around access to food banks, support around furlough, mental health first aid to those who have struggled during Covid-19. Our overall

assessment is that the next framework will need to have a greater focus on community engagement and outreach.



4.5 Conclusion and recommendations

1. Residents value Southwark Works and are accessing a range of services. However some interventions are used more than others. Given feedback from both residents and employers greater use of work experience and IT support would make a difference to the success of the programme.
2. The role of trust and relationships between work coaches and residents is critical to the success of the service and important that this level of support is continued and consistent across the provider network.
3. There needs to be a more targeted local engagement strategy and given the challenges around referrals and of reversing the impact of long-term unemployment on individuals greater investment is needed to reach and engage residents into the service. This would need to include a review of outreach and engagement practices, clarity on priority group referrals and unlocking referrals through other services.
4. Providers need to be recording information consistently on residents so that better analysis of take up and performance can be used to inform the development of the programme and to pivot services where needed.



5. Meeting the needs of key client groups

5.1 Introduction

This section examines Hanlon data on which demographic groups registered with Southwark Works and which services were accessed by these groups. It also includes residents' reflections on the accessibility of the service and views from providers on the need for holistic support.

5.2 What is the data telling us

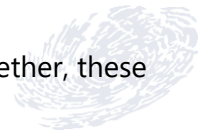
We have looked at the breakdowns of registrations and services accessed by key indicators and ethnicity.⁶ Breaking down the total registrations by some key indicators, we can see that:

- The vast majority of people who registered are unemployed, although a sizable proportion (18%) were in employment when they registered. Of those who are unemployed, the majority are on some form of benefits, with Universal Credit being the most common
- More men than women signed up for the services, reflecting the higher unemployment rates among men and although not shown in the data potentially easier for men to apply for a wider range of roles full time.
- Just over a quarter of people registered have a disability or health condition. In the UK as a whole, 21% of the working age population have a disability, meaning this group is slightly over-represented in Southwark Works users.⁷

⁶ As noted above, where we have analysed the Hanlon data by key indicators or ethnicity, we have excluded data from [REDACTED] due to potential inaccuracies in the information recorded. [REDACTED] accounts for 20% of all registrations at Southwark Works and 16% of people who started a job / apprenticeship or accessed accredited training. Therefore, the breakdowns by key indicators and ethnicity represent the vast majority of Southwark Works participants, but may differ slightly from the true figures.

⁷ <https://www.scope.org.uk/media/disability-facts-figures/>

- A similar number of registrations are people aged either under 25 or over 50. Together, these age groups make up half of registrations.



By ethnicity, the largest group to sign up to Southwark Works are those of black ethnicity (49%, or 2,603 people), followed by white (27%, or 1,415 people). This does not reflect the overall population of Southwark, which is 27% black and 54% white (as of the 2011 census).⁸ This imbalance may be due to a number of reasons, such as differing unemployment rates between ethnicities (black unemployment in the UK is six percentage points higher than white⁹), demographics in providers' target areas, or marketing strategies attracting certain ethnic groups more than others.

The table below shows the percentage of people who took up different available services that were disabled, unemployed for 12+ months, on Universal Credit, or not on any benefits. A high proportion of people who accessed accredited training, action plan activities, interview preparation, and work placements were disabled. However, there appears to be little digital support provided to this group. People on Universal Credit access different services from those on no benefits – the former group particularly targets accredited training, action plan activities and digital support.

	Accredited Training	Non accredited training	Action plan	1:1 Meeting	Digital Support	CV Created / Updated	Interview Prep.	Securing a Work Placement
Disabled / health condition	28%	12%	25%	22%	9%	20%	28%	29%

⁸ London Datastore Historical Census Tables. Available at: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historical-census-tables>

⁹ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06385/>



No Benefit	29%	64%	34%	33%	41%	44%	44%	42%
Receives Universal Credit	59%	30%	56%	57%	54%	46%	41%	42%
Unemployed 12+ months	29%	12%	26%	24%	21%	22%	22%	24%

Table 2: Percentage of people receiving support by disability / employment

Source: Southwark Works internal data

In most support services, the level of uptake by different ethnicities is broadly in line with the overall ethnic split – this is true of interview preparation, CV support, 1:1 meetings, action plan activities, and accredited training. On the other hand, we can see that the digital support services were predominantly provided to people in black ethnic groups. Meanwhile, there were proportionately higher numbers of people of mixed ethnicity who secured a work placement and accessed non-accredited training.

5.3 Residents' views

5.3.1 Accessibility of Southwark Works

Many residents praised Southwark Works' accessibility. The majority of residents accessed the programme remotely, either through phone calls or virtual meetings on programmes such as Teams. Residents said they opted for this due its convenience and flexibility, while those with physical or mental health difficulties said it saved them making journeys which could be difficult.

The smaller number of residents who opted for face-to-face interviews said they feel they can express and communicate more easily. Some of those who chose remote appointments said they also chose face-to-face interactions for some aspects of the programme, such as interview preparation, as they felt this primed them for real-life interactions.

Several residents also praised responsive and consistent communication from their coaches. They said their coaches had been proactive in finding and sending jobs through regularly or were quick to answer any queries or deal with any application issues they were having.

"Any issues were resolved very quickly. [My coach] was always texting me to see how I'm doing and when I was put in touch with a new coach I could email her anytime about anything and she would respond."

5.4 Providers' views

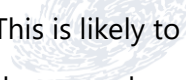
5.4.1 Holistic support

Providers believe that resilience amongst residents has been affected by the pandemic and motivation for getting employment is lower for many. They feel that helping people to manage the rising cost of living will create further challenges and that services will need to adapt by collaborating more and offer a wider range of support to avoid them falling into crisis situations.

"Although much is already being done, the cost of living makes the challenge much greater. New services on income maximisation, budgeting skills and financial awareness are in pockets available, but it is felt that there is no central strategy, or reference point for this work around which efforts can coalesce."

5.5 Summary and recommendations

1. Southwark Works is successful at engaging and meeting the needs of its different priority groups with significant impact on black residents, people with disabilities and those on benefits.
2. Nearly 20% of residents are those that are currently in work, suggesting that in-work support is needed and likely to continue to be required as residents navigate the cost-of-living crisis.
3. Different methods of engagement are available, and residents can choose their preferred route. Ensuring digital inclusion via provision of broadband and equipment is crucial given the preference for online delivery and job readiness.

- 
4. Providers are reporting the impact of the pandemic on residents' resilience. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and progress can be setback as people manage financial shock. There is a need to increase financial capability support as well as consider whether there is potential to bring this together into a wider strategy of support and action.

6. Impact on wellbeing, skills, and employability



6.1 Introduction

This section reviews the impact the Southwark Works programme had on the wellbeing, skills, and employability of residents based on Hanlon data and the views of residents.

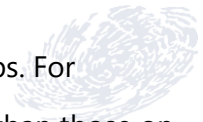
6.2 What the data is telling us

Of the 6,617 people who registered with Southwark Works since 2019, a total of 3,681 have been supported into an employment outcome of either a job, apprenticeship, or training – representing 56% of all who registered with Southwark Works between 2019 and 2022. Just over half (1,937) of these were job starts, with the majority of the rest (1,675) accessing training. By contrast, only 69 people who used Southwark Works started an apprenticeship.

Of those who achieved an employment outcome:

1. around a quarter had a disability or health condition;
2. 45% were female;
3. 26% were aged 16-25; and
4. around 85% were unemployed and approximately half were on Universal Credit, with a minority being on no benefits at all; and
5. roughly half were black, with slightly over a quarter being white. This compares to the entire population of Southwark being 27% black and 54% white (as of the 2011 census).¹⁰

¹⁰ London Datastore Historical Census Tables. Available at: <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/historical-census-tables>

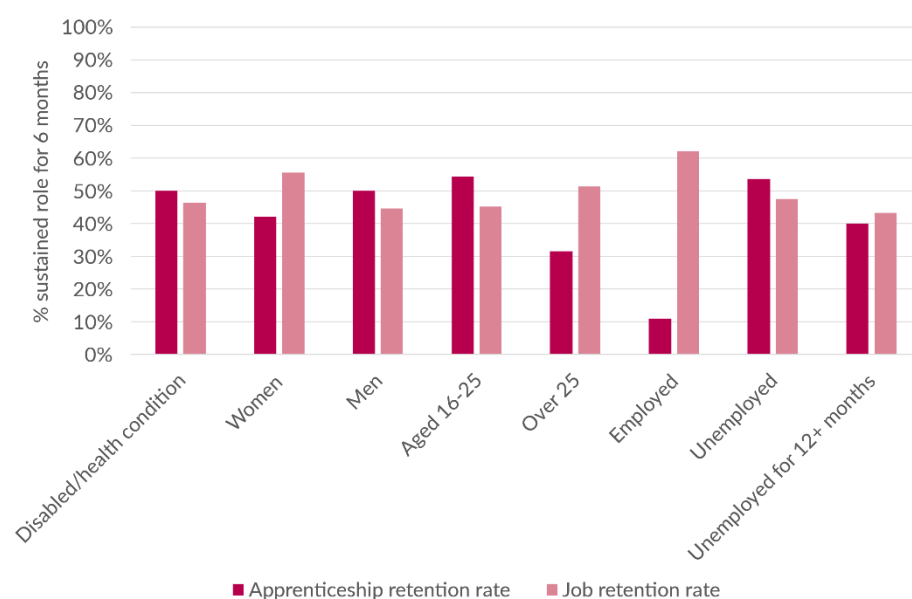


The rate of achieving an employment outcome varies slightly between distinct groups. For example, people who are not on benefits were 11 percentage points less successful than those on Universal Credit, and men did better at securing a job outcome than women. The lowest performing group was those with disabilities and health conditions, where 49% of people registered achieved an employment outcome. Individuals in black and 'other' ethnic groups had the highest success rates (59% and 62% respectively), whereas those of Asian ethnicity appear to have performed worst, with 48% reaching a job, apprenticeship or training.

Compared to six similar programmes for which we were able to obtain equivalent data, Southwark Works has an above-average rate of people starting a job or apprenticeship – 30% compared to an average of 24% in other programmes. When those who entered training is included, Southwark Works has the highest success rate at 56%.

Using Southwark Works' internal data, we have also analysed the proportion of people who start a job or apprenticeship and remain in the role for at least six months. The data shows that the six-month retention rates across all service users was 50% for jobs and 48% for apprenticeships. Looking at the retention rates within distinct groups, some groups appear to have sustained their role better than others, as illustrated in the chart below. Across ethnicities, there is little variation in retention rates, and all are close to the average of 50%.

Figure 3: Proportion of people who sustained a job or apprenticeship for six months, by key indicators



Source: Southwark Works internal data

Notes: Excludes data from [REDACTED]



Compared to other employment support programmes, people who started a job or apprenticeship through Southwark Works have a relatively high retention rate. Across four other similar programmes (the Work Programme, Solent Jobs Programme, Talent Match, and an anonymous comparator) there is an average six-month retention rate of 30%, with a maximum of 52%. The Work Programme and Talent Match both set target job retention rates at the start of the schemes – 26% and 20% respectively. The job retention rate of 50% at Southwark works far exceeds these benchmarks.

Some of these comparators are designed to target specific groups of people, and so using the total population of Southwark Works participants may not be the most appropriate comparison. In the Solent Jobs Programme – which focuses on disabled people – the job retention rate is 18%, whereas for people with disabilities or health conditions who used Southwark Works, the figure is 47%.

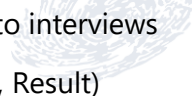
Talent Match is a scheme aimed at young people and has a job retention rate of 17%, compared to 46% for 16-25-year-olds at Southwark Works.

This shows that Southwark Works is more successful than other programmes targeting similar groups.

6.3 Residents' views

6.3.1 Southwark Works' impact on career skills

Residents frequently mentioned the impact that Southwark Works has had on their skills. This includes skills necessary to job applications (e.g. CV writing skills or interview skills), as well as career-specific skills. Residents said their coaches worked with them to refine their CVs or helped them think more analytically about their employment history so they could include relevant experience in applications. Many residents felt because of this they could now write higher quality CVs and applications without needing support from coaches.



Many residents also said coaches helped them with their interview skills. Those new to interviews said their coaches taught them techniques such as the STAR (Situation, Task, Activity, Result) technique while those with considerable interview experience said their coaches helped prepare for interviewing for new sectors or roles.

6.3.2 Southwark Works' impact on career pathways

Coaches supported their clients into a multitude of distinct roles, including voluntary, temporary, or permanent positions. Those who did not go into their 'ideal' roles still praised the service for getting them into work and recognised the roles they are in could act as stepping stones into other work.

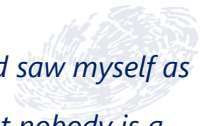
"With the support and encouragement of my coach, I had two good job offers and am now starting a new role in September. My main goal for my 8 sessions, which I shared with my coach at the start, was to receive at least one job offer, so to have had two is amazing."

Many residents said their coaches 'opened their eyes' to other possibilities. For example, one beneficiary who had worked as a driver for several years said they have realised they want to work in childcare, and their coach had arranged a course for them.

"They have helped me understand why it is I can't do certain do certain jobs because of my criminal record. No one else ever took the time to explain to me what I can and can't do because of the convictions."

6.3.3 Southwark Works' impact on mental health

Providers also positively impacted on residents' mental health. This largely came through giving them the motivation and encouragement to continue on their employment journey where they had previously become demotivated or inactive. For some residents, this newfound confidence had wider impacts.



"My biggest barrier to employment was my mindset. I was abused in my marriage and saw myself as good for nothing. They started talking to me, telling me to believe in myself and that nobody is a waste. I was scared about life, but they've woken me up and I'm not scared anymore."

6.4 Providers' views

6.4.1 Employment outcomes

Morley college offered some interesting ideas around developing learning highways from local estate-based provision in areas of deprivation towards more formal learning environments. They identified Southwark as having numerous large registered social landlords which needed to increase the level of joint working to reach into disadvantaged communities. This needed to include a strategy around ESOL and how to work in partnership with migrant communities who are invariably stuck in low paid or insecure employment.

Whilst local jobs for priority groups are a priority due to well documented benefits some providers felt there is a corollary to the 'local jobs for local people' ambition which is exploiting good travel links and proximity to London-wide Jobs, and that focussing on jobs in the local area can also limit people's horizons.

"It is good to encourage people to travel and experience the city, good for confidence. People generally don't work in the borough they live in and this doesn't need to be different for disabled people. Travelling to work can allow for greater engagement in life and city."



More opportunities for deepening engagement with employers would be universally welcomed. S106 and employment and skills plan commitments have placed negotiated requirements and targets on developers and tier 1 contractors, and these incentivised relationships have progressed to meet mutual needs through recruitment fairs and other co-produced solutions such as the Skills Centre.

Base at Battersea Power Station have successfully moved the academy approach into retail and hospitality, while other organisations such as OPDC and West London Health Partnership with Imperial NHS Trust are all predicated on exploiting an integrated employment and skills approach

around construction, healthcare and logistics. This places the focus of employment brokerages on a sector-based approach which can then be used to maximise the engagement of key employers and sectors within the local authority area.

6.5 Stakeholders' views

6.5.1 Employment outcomes

One stakeholder from Southwark HR saw an opportunity for Southwark Works to support the progression route from the internship programme and in developing work experience with employability support linked to LB Southwark vacancies. They are interested in co-designing and co-producing services to help deliver the new employment opportunities pathway.

The council are also in the process of getting their apprenticeship levy transfer approved where 25% could go to local supply chain and businesses. This is an opportunity to promote Southwark Works and to redefine its role in terms of apprenticeships.

6.5.2 Conclusions and recommendations

1. Southwark Works is successful at achieving job outcomes and sustained retention out-performing similar programmes by some distance for all of its groups. This suggests that the model and approach is effective and should be retained as it has greater success than national programmes at getting people into work.
2. Residents report positively on the impact Southwark Works has had on their skills, employment pathways, and mental wellbeing, demonstrating the broader impact of a holistic employment service. These elements need to be maintained in future frameworks.
3. Skilled and knowledgeable coaches play a big part in residents satisfaction, especially when it comes to recognising a resident's strengths and suggesting new roles or careers based on them. As highlighted in earlier sections the importance of a consistent and universal coaching approach is important in ensuring good outcomes for residents.

4. There is scope to create greater connection with and to council recruitment strategies, apprenticeship levy and work experience opportunities.



7. Do employers value Southwark Works?

7.1 Introduction

In this section we consider the views from employers who have used or know of Southwark Works.

Whilst we talked to a range of employers, we were not able to talk to a greater number of SMEs or micro businesses, so the following findings reflect discussions with BIDS, developers, construction tier one contractors and other large employers in the borough.

There is an issue about employer engagement more broadly in that providers hold on to their employer relationships tightly. Often these relationships are managed by dedicated teams within providers who also work outside geographical boundaries. This has meant that it has been difficult to contact other employers for their views.

This poses questions about 'ownership' of the employer relationship and the extent to which employers view whether they have been supported by Southwark Works or by the provider. We are also not aware of what data is collected by providers on employers such as their location, size and name. We have recommended some options around branding and engagement further on.

7.2 Data

In the previous section we have looked at the impact of Southwark Works on residents' outcomes. Based on the analysis of Hanlon data and that Southwark Works outperforms similar programmes on job outcomes, it can be assumed that employers are benefitting from Southwark Works through recruiting local residents. The locations of the employers that residents go to are not recorded on the Hanlon system, so the extent to which employers in Southwark specifically benefit cannot be confirmed. In order to understand which employers benefit from the programme, it may be beneficial to record the location of employers (or at least whether they are based in Southwark) in future.

It could also be important to track longer-term retention (post 6 months) as any further progression for a resident with a job outcome in terms of pay and responsibility would be useful to understand for measuring the longer-term impact of the service.



7.3 Employers' views

7.3.1 Overall positive engagement

Throughout our evaluation it is clear that employers need staff and that job vacancies are high. Most of the employers we have spoken to understand the service offer, and several said they used the network for recruitment. Employers reported mixed experiences with Southwark Works.

Those that did engage with Southwark Works on a regular basis praised the communication and relationships that developed, and said they were made to feel part of a team. These were characterised by

- an enabling approach using tried and tested approaches to screening candidates and
- preparing them for opportunities with a clear understanding of employers' expectations developed through dialogue and employer input.

7.3.2 Developing a sector-led approach

S106 employment and skills plans along with the need to tackle skill shortages have been successful in engaging employers to recruit local residents. This has also led to improved recruitment practice in some cases. The role of sector led approaches has also worked and this is a potential area for development within the model.

██████████ are a good example of the benefits of deepening engagement. They remarked that, "Southwark Works acted like a sounding board, and with their support they were able to collaborate and to put hiring examples in-front of managers to support meaningful change in recruitment practice." They recently ran an online seminar with job coaches on how to write a CV for health, and how to better advise the candidates on opportunities.

"For NHS hiring it is all about transferrable skills – people don't know how to talk to people – to articulate their experiences or their transferrable skills. – The job seeker may have been a carer for someone at home, so they need to think about their entire life and not just work."

██



7.3.3 Working closely with the council to fill jobs

The partnership [REDACTED] who has held the councils' contract on temporary and permanent jobs via agencies has shown remarkable results which demonstrate excellent partnership working and collaboration with Southwark HR, hiring managers and Southwark Works where key roles have been identified across administration and clerical, IT, manual labour, trades and operatives, financial, HB and planning, social and health care unqualified.

"From Autumn 2019 until now 520 job orders have been handled by Southwark Works, with 128 candidates put forward and 50 candidates having had a job as a direct outcome. This relationship has also supported 10 online webinars covering CV, interview skills, and how to present online with 328 invited, 268 attendees and 10/15% who have secured a job outcome."

[REDACTED]

The success has been much to developing those partnerships and selling Southwark Works within the council in particular to hiring managers.

7.3.4 Areas for development


However [REDACTED] noted anecdotal feedback from [REDACTED] which suggested that Southwark Works struggled with volume and quality of applications. They also felt that there was no business case for taking on local Southwark residents who had additional barriers. They also reported that residents were not being very well-prepared for interviews.

"Enhanced approaches were required to improve insights into the job, and to deliver a better quality of applicant. Many employers recognised participant confidence as being an issue."

[REDACTED]

One employer mentioned some candidates in recent interviews were just *"going through the motions and did not display the right behaviours or understand the opportunity available and needed greater industry awareness."* Individuals could also be quick to move on, which is not ideal for small, local employers who rely on modest staff teams. They reported more work experience would help in these situations.

"A retail / hospitality location in the north of the borough was suggested to help develop customer facing skills and could use work experience as a means of developing BID employer links and practice."




7.3.5 Greater visibility

Several employers felt Southwark Works needs to become more visible via more promotion through the Council or through greater collaboration with the BIDs. This will require greater access to the employers and a better understanding of the Southwark Works model:

- The business case for its existence and its relevance to inclusive employment and social value
- Its focus on key target groups in tackling long-term disadvantage for Southwark residents
- The support available to employers in working with this client group as part of a responsible business agenda.

Businesses are not tied to using local staff and transport accessibility brings people in from outer London to the commercial north of the borough and the Southbank. This demonstrates that to be successful Southwark Works needs to develop its products with employers through a process of co-creation and to enable employers and local residents to find a mutual understanding of the needs and benefits of doing so.

"Success perhaps needs to be measured by Reliability of candidates – regular flow of good quality candidates who understand and have work ethic. Actually, employers have quite a low bar and they will train themselves so right attitude and a level of aptitude are all important."



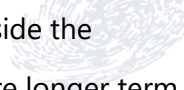
One employer representative involved with business, place and people saw Southwark and neighbouring Lambeth as a very similar geography both with strong areas of opportunity and areas which are dis-enfranchised.

Many residents are culturally priced out of opportunities in the north of the borough and increasingly don't see it as a place for them. Whilst there are few natural affinities for the target groups jobs here are often the well-worn stepping-stones to greater opportunity for those less affected by multiple deprivation."

There is a shared view from providers that the appetite for retail and hospitality jobs has waned significantly because of the pandemic and it being a less attractive sector because of pay and conditions. One provider suggested the importance to 'support residents to develop alternative skills' so that they can work in different sectors, although retail and hospitality is an important sector for the borough. Work needs to be done to make these sectors more attractive to residents.

7.4 Conclusions and recommendations

1. Employers who engage with Southwark Works report positive experiences particularly those that have greater strategic relationships and connections to borough-based opportunities such as Anchor Institutions, developers and the council. This provides a firm foundation from which to build stronger relationships between large employers, key developments and sector-led approaches across the borough.
2. Greater efforts need to be made to ensure that candidates are both interview and work ready and that this must be consistent across the provider network. This will rely on more work experience and support, work experience opportunities within the model are used significantly less than other interventions (only 3% of participants were supported into work trial/placement activities, see **Error! Reference source not found.**).
3. Better intelligence on employer experience is needed to inform and develop practice, greater awareness of Southwark Works as the funder/lead to employers who engage with the service is needed. This could lead to a single branded offer so there is absolute clarity that employers are benefiting from Southwark Works and the rationale and business case for getting involved.

- 
4. Better intelligence should be sought on outcomes that are based within and outside the borough and on tracking residents once they have found employment to measure longer term impact and retention.

8. Effectiveness of the network



8.1 Introduction

In this section we reflect on the effectiveness of the network model based on our consultation with providers and stakeholders and make recommendations for future commissioning.

The following sets out the current Southwark Works model and the role of [REDACTED]

Redacted

The way in which the service is structured and supports a diverse range of needs, provides a framework for collaboration and connects into some council services demonstrates that it is a fundamentally a sound model. Our review of best practice and the role of council employment services see Appendix 1 has highlighted some areas for development including the role of in-work support, consistency of quality and the need to consider greater community outreach to encourage referrals.

8.2 Views from providers and stakeholders

8.2.1 Benefits of the network

The general view from providers is that there are many benefits to the network approach not least access to vacancies; referrals and cross-referrals; opportunity to share practice; book provision across the network; share job outcomes within the 10% of caseload; and having a shared system like Hanlon makes it easier to do work as there are less issues around data sharing. Providers feel that these benefits have an impact on improving outcomes for residents.

Activities targeted at specific priority groups have also worked well, for example a Job Fair specifically targeted at disabled residents demonstrated a real need to engage with this group.

Many providers report a desire to develop better peer to peer understanding of pathways; to regularise engagement; share input to publicity through newsletters across the network and have

better networking into council services. There was a desire to see the report and new commissioning framework as an opportunity to re-invigorate Southwark Works.




"To do more joint working and sharing of good practice. Now we have job brokerage referrals and outcome sharing we can joint work with TWIN on young people. There's lots of partnership building for example other providers can make referrals to our Basic Skills project which supports Literacy, ESOL, and Digital skills."



8.2.2 Relationships with council services

A number of providers report an active and ongoing relationship with Southwark council internal departments. The leaving care team, youth offending services, community education, NEET education access, and young people's services appear to be the most engaged with the Southwark Works Service.

 describe the relationship with Southwark Works and its role on employment support– *"Its fluid, developing formative. To be more integrated we need to define the structures more."* Our priority is to make sure curriculum offer meets needs and aspirations of local people re-skilling, upskilling and contributing to the council vision of a future for Southwark residents. *The two have to come together. It's like a Double helix.*



A point of real strength in joint working is with Supported Families (previously Troubled Families) where cross-referrals are happening, co-location with the DWP staff secondees, and participation in the Supporting Families Employment group.

However there needs to be more effective working with housing and other statutory LB Southwark departments where Southwark Works services can provide work focused poverty reduction services and help tackle disadvantage.

"The Southwark Works is quite good. But not good at putting us into contact with key people. Unity Works have not had a chance to lobby key decision makers in Southwark council. Introduce Unity

Works to the decision makers. Who has the power to actually trickle down the message to hiring managers in the council?"



Providers are interested how the council and its supply chain can be made aware of Southwark Works, and the social value agenda through its procurement. It was felt by providers that these linked agendas need to be developed with a clearer strategy from the council.

8.2.3 Areas for development

Although overall there are benefits of the network, there remain some challenges around the engagement of all providers and the challenges that providers are currently experiencing around referrals. There is also little evidence of cross-referral with individuals and with employers so this maybe impacting on their experiences as they navigate the service.

Some providers do not engage in the network nor comply with their contractual requirements around data provision so this will need to be addressed through the new commissioning process.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst this model is based on collaboration and partnership, outside of their Southwark Works contracts, many providers will be competing with each other for other funding and contracts. This can negatively impact on relationships and make providers wary of working together.

This might make it difficult for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] although we have not seen evidence of this from our consultation.

It might be worth considering looking at potential to incentivise providers to bid collaboratively for the next commissioning round or provide enhanced payment when a collaborative approach has been used to achieve an employment outcome.

As the service will likely need to pivot to:

- providing more pre-employment support,
- greater encouragement and engagement with inactive residents and

- an offer which focuses on improving financial wellbeing.



this may be an opportunity to bring in providers that offer specialisms within an employment pathway and a distinct service, rather than a full end to end pathway.

It will be an important feature to build in time and resources to support outreach and engagement and encourage referrals into the service. This might include a more diverse group of community partners, a dedicated referral service and greater collaboration between providers to encourage referrals between and across services through incentivising.

8.3 Conclusions and recommendations

1. We recommend that the network model is continued with additional capacity and support given to the commissioning team and Southwark Works to manage the performance of the network. This could be through an external monitoring and evaluation resource (third party) or by having more dedicated officer time.
2. This role can provide ongoing performance information to support management and decision making about providers, offering a more adaptable model through more dynamic monitoring and evaluation of the service so that provision can shift, effectiveness measured and transparency of data to proactively manage performance and provide support where and when needed. This might also include flexibility to bring other providers in as labour market changes take place.
3. We recommend a review of whether the current management information is appropriate and sufficient to manage the performance of the network and the scope in which to better record interventions and activity, progress and distance travelled.
4. We recommend that investment into tools such as the Outcomes Star or some form of standard measure of distance travelled is used across the network, given the types of clients and their longer or more complex journey into work.
5. Consideration is given to ensure that providers are working to best practice, case workers have consistent approaches to support and learning and that providers are compelled to provide data, attend learning and be pro-active in the network.



9. Key findings for future commissioning

9.1 Introduction

The following section draws on the findings and recommendations from this report to provide a template for the future commissioning framework of Southwark Works. This is also based on the learning and review into best practice, the feedback from providers and stakeholders and our reflections on the opportunities for a more coordinated brand and offer to employers and partners.

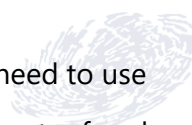
9.2 Gaps

The Southwark Works model provides a range of services and support to residents and in this regard is comprehensive in terms of the provider profile and focus on target groups. However based on our assessment we have identified the following.

9.2.1 Target groups

Southwark Works is reaching its target groups given its high reach into ethnic minority communities, people with disabilities/health conditions, young people and those with more complex needs. This needs to continue. However in considering the current and future climate that there will need to be a sustained focus on supporting:

- Those residents that are facing multiple disadvantage and more complex needs
- Longer-term unemployed (i.e. 12 months plus) with more wraparound support particularly supporting mental health, resilience and confidence
- Over 50's and those who are struggling to get back to work because of their age/health condition
- Residents who are struggling as a result of the cost-of living crisis who are either in work and need support to improve income or those on benefits who need income maximisation help to avoid debt, rent arrears and potential homelessness.



This might require a more nuanced approach to outreach and engagement and the need to use local community organisations to encourage referrals into the service, given that current referral routes are not working as well as they used to.

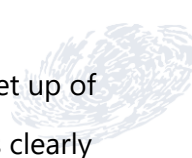
9.2.2 Services

Southwark Works has a broad offering and support for residents and provides a range of interventions to support people into work. However feedback from both employers and providers suggest that further work needs to be done to encourage greater interview and job readiness, particularly given the types of clients likely to need to use the service in the future:

- Additional and targeted support around financial capability, advice and inclusion needs to be in place to manage the scale and level of needs for those in and out of work as a result of the energy and cost of living crisis. This could either be as a dedicated service or with money advice being a core component of delivery
- Significant increase in the use of work experience, work placements and work-based interviews to improve readiness for work for those with more complex needs and further from the labour market to plug gaps in CVs and improve confidence at interviews
- Greater focus between what employers need and their engagement with residents through workshops and events to showcase their recruitment process and to build knowledge with coaches and residents on how to complete applications and conduct interviews
- Provision of mental health support and additional help around building resilience and capacity to manage difficult situations
- Particular support around IT and digital inclusion for people with disabilities and health conditions

9.2.3 Employer engagement

There is a challenge around the approach to employer engagement and the need to identify how and where residents are accessing work and the ability of providers to sustain a long-term relationship with the employer if they do not have the capacity to do so. Employers want better



relationships and more targeted approaches to working with residents, the current set up of employment engagement does not allow for a sustained relationship and one that is clearly branded as Southwark Works. There also appears to be no way of understanding who with and where job outcomes are being achieved.

9.3 The model

9.3.1 Structure

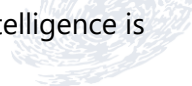
In general the model works and most providers report getting involved and benefitting from this wider collaboration. However there are some potential changes for consideration:

- There needs to be common and minimum standards on one-to-one support so that the experience is universal. Providers have various levels of capacity so it might mean that some providers may need more support than others particularly if needing to bring in smaller community organisations to encourage referrals.
- There is a clear need to bring in new providers that can reach into target groups and communities to encourage referrals into the service. We suspect that these will be smaller Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations and ones which may require support to onboard onto the framework. There also needs to be specific geographical presence in central areas of the borough, such as Peckham, Walworth and Camberwell.
- As highlighted in this report the nature of need is changing and the framework will need to be able to adapt as the picture changes. We recommend continuing with a two-year break clause with the option for you to bring in additional providers to support changing needs.

9.3.2 Compliance

There needs to be specific requirements on providers to produce data and information to support the performance management and monitoring of the framework. This includes:

- Submission of data for the Hanlon system – one [REDACTED] does not fully comply which will have skewed some of the findings

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- Data collected on employers and where jobs are based so that better employer intelligence is available
 - Job coaches recording activities systematically – again some data has been unavailable so findings may have been skewed i.e. 35% of clients with no activity recorded when in practice this is likely to be 10% of clients (according to feedback from Southwark Works)
 - There is no standard recording of progress for clients, and we recommend that a tool such as the Outcomes star¹¹ is used to provide greater evidence on the impact of interventions and support on clients through their journey into work
 - Minimum standards for coaches to ensure consistency of support across the network.

9.4 Monitoring and learning


There needs to be greater focus on performance management and reporting in a more regular and dynamic way. This will help to address wider issues more quickly i.e. responding to lack of referrals and to create a greater sense of the model being owned and supported by the providers.

There needs to be more active management and support for providers and initiatives to bring together insight and learning from others such as employers, managing caseloads, sector knowledge, etc to improve the offer to clients. This might be best done through a third party or through a dedicated role to support the network to encourage greater collaboration, cross referrals and responses to changing market conditions.

9.5 The brand to employers

Finally we think there needs to be a radical change to employer engagement and the branding of Southwark Works to employers. Sectoral approaches with individual employers have worked well and there is an ambition for employers to recruit locally. However the way in which employer engagement is managed by individual providers does not allow scope for cross-referral and joining up. There is competition for employers and relationships are held and guarded closely by

¹¹ Triangle Consulting – Work and Skills Outcomes Star [Work Star | Triangle \(outcomesstar.org.uk\)](https://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/)



individual providers. There is no sense that the services employers receive are as a result of Southwark Works, nor is data collected on what jobs are being filled in Southwark. This means that engagement is transactional rather than based on a developed relationship making the connection between what local employers want from local residents and services difficult to evolve.

We suggest that this might be better managed as a distinct element for the framework, a Southwark branded front door for employers to connect with service. As with referral management, a coordinated approach to working with employers will be effective as well as ensure that local opportunities are prioritised for local residents. Although job outcomes will come from across London, having a specific offer for Southwark employers will also help shape provision and have a greater connection between the local skills and training offer and what local employers need.

9.6 A one council approach

We have reflected on the numerous opportunities available to link Southwark Works to other council agendas. Although this happens for some departments such as social care and [REDACTED] and works well, there is potential to extend this to other departments and strategies and we suggest that a more deliberate effort is made to connect these agendas together.

Examples include:

- **Social Value** - any potential opportunities gathered through contractors and their supply chains are given 'first refusal' to Southwark Works where appropriate
- **Demand management** – particularly focusing on residents receiving housing benefits using Southwark Works more proactively as an intervention to help mitigate risk of homelessness
- **Service delivery** – using opportunities to develop sector-led training with Southwark Works for jobs critical to council service delivery where there are recruiting challenges i.e. care workers
- **Convening** – using the convening power of the council with other partners and anchor institutions in the borough to have a shared commitment to using Southwark Works for recruitment.

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