

**Adult Community and Housing Services Scrutiny Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Report of the Director of Adult Community and Housing Services**

**Development of Micro Services in Dudley**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members about the development of micro services in Dudley since 2010 and how small external providers of social care services have shaped the market in line with the personalisation agenda. Background information will be provided on the growth of micro service in the borough; the diverse range of micro services available; the support available for micro providers; the outcomes achieved for people who use services; and the links to the “*Making it Real-markers for progress*” and the local “*Making it Real*” Action plan. The report will also highlight how micro providers offer quality and value for money and create efficiency savings for the local authority.

**Background – What is a micro service?**

2. The Dudley micro services project was set up in March 2010 to support the growth of more local flexible and innovative social care related services in the borough. The Project aims to provide targeted and individualised support to new and existing providers. The project has supported people to create employment opportunities and regenerated local communities who have been able to utilise vacant and unused buildings.
3. Micro enterprises are small organisations that employ 5 or fewer full time equivalent workers. Some are set up by ex-front line workers, others by disabled or older people themselves, often with help from families or the local community. They rely on customers who use personal budgets, their own money or grants to pay for the services.
4. Since March 2010 there have been 222 enquiries from existing providers and people wishing to set up their own service. As of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014 there are approximately 68 micro providers known to the project.
5. National figures indicate that 50% of new start ups fail within 12 months, with 90% no longer trading after five years. The implementation of the Dudley micro services project in contrast has seen an average failure rate of 5-10% for new start ups within the first year, with at least 95% of services still trading after 3 years.

**Range of micro services**

6. The project has supported people to be more creative and provide real alternatives to traditional social care models. Some examples of the range of services include a local farm project for people with Learning disabilities, autism and mental health; a care contingency service providing cover for personal assistants and care workers if

they are sick or on leave; a therapeutic bread service - therapy through making bread; fitness services for older people; Healthy lifestyles services; Beauty/hairdressing services; Gardening services; traditional, flexible “home help” services – (from help with cleaning, shopping, meal preparation to companionship and befriending).

### **Supporting the growth of micro providers**

7. The Project coordinator works with various agencies to support the growth of micro providers and has a close working relationship with partner agencies including; Dudley Voluntary Sector Council, Black Country Partnership for Care, Skills for Care, Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Access to Business, as well as various User led organisations.
8. The Dudley Innovation Fund (DIF) was introduced in 2013 to further support the growth of innovative micro enterprises. The DIF consists of two elements; kick-start and progression funding. The kick start element offers grants of between £500 and £2000 and will enable applicants to access professional support from intermediaries such as solicitors and accountant's business support providers alongside support from Dudley Council for Voluntary Services and the Building Blocks programme to develop a full business plan. The progression element offers grants up to £10k and progression funding is intended to get a project up and running and providing services and support for local people. A further round of the DIF has re-launched early this year.
9. In September 2013 events over a 3 day period called “*Your Care, Your Support, Your Way*” were held at various locations across the borough to capture the views, thoughts and ideas from people who use services to establish what services they wanted to see delivered to enable them to have a better quality of life. As well as the engagement and consultation with people who used services, developing and existing micro providers were invited to showcase their range of services to potential customers. Graphic illustrators were appointed to capture the ideas of people in a more innovative way. The events proved successful and information gathered was used to shape the re-launch of this years DIF and will also be used to contribute to market position statements.

### **What Outcomes are delivered – Quality Mark Scheme**

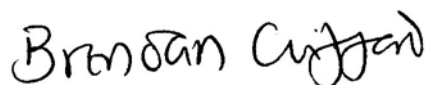
10. Outcomes for people who use micro services have been measured and monitored through the current Quality Mark scheme, a quality assurance scheme for micro providers. The outcomes are benchmarked against the “*Making it Real – Markers for progress*” and “*Quality of life outcomes*”. Feedback gained from people who use and access micro services has demonstrated some of the following outcomes:
  - a. Employment opportunities (mainly people with learning disabilities and mental health)
  - b. Weight loss – better health outcomes
  - c. Confidence building
  - d. Reduction in isolation
  - e. Prevented admissions to hospital and residential care
  - f. Inclusion and participation in the community
  - g. Choice and control on how service has been delivered – tailored to meet needs

## **Feedback from the people of Dudley**

11. Carers have highlighted the advantages have having small, local community based services available for their loved ones. It has enabled them to have a break from their caring roles, which has in turn given them a better quality of life and better health outcomes long term. Carers have also stated that micro providers keep them informed and many of them feel like they are part of an extended family.
12. People who use services have commended micro providers for their ability to be flexible and person centred. Micro providers that provide more traditional care (such as domiciliary care), have moved away from “15 minute” calls to a more flexible and holistic way of working to ensure that individual needs are met at all levels.
13. Both Carers and people who use service have also commented that micro service offer great value for money as they often have lower overheads and provide support in their local area.

## **Supporting Making it Real**

14. The Making it Real agenda is a significant part of the development of micro providers. The progress markers support the measurement of outcomes for the individuals that access the service. The micro provider project sits within the “Workforce Development” Work stream and is part of the local making it real action plan. The aim in Dudley is to build upon our existing development with micro enterprises, in parallel with market position statements, to continue to increase the number of micro providers in the borough. Moving to a default position on direct payments will support increased business and sustainability to such providers.



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## **List of Background Papers**

*This section should include a list of those documents, which disclose facts or matters on which the report is based and which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report. Published works or documents containing exempt or confidential information must not be included in this list.*