

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
DATE	30 August 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Six monthly update on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/251
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Jacqui McKenzie
REPORT AUTHOR	Paul Tytler
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on work agreed through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Department of Work and Pensions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 13th July 2022 Council agreed to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Work and Pensions.
- 3.2 On the same date Council agreed that update reports for the Memorandum of Understanding be submitted on a six-monthly basis to the relevant committee.
- 3.4 The table at Appendix 1 sets out progress against each aspect of the Memorandum of Understanding.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk		No significant risk identified		Yes
Compliance		No significant risk identified		Yes
Operational		No significant risk identified		Yes
Financial		No significant risk identified		Yes
Reputational		No significant risk identified		Yes
Environment / Climate		No significant risk identified		Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	Impact of Report
A PROSPEROUS CITY	The Memorandum of Understanding will help ensure the Council delivers on its stated vision.

<p>Develop our economy in a genuine partnership with the private sector, third sector and residents.</p> <p>A CARING CITY</p> <p>Work with partners to identify and agree specific integrated solutions for tackling the health and social problems caused by misuse of alcohol and drugs.</p>	
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[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)

<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026</p> <p>2 - 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026</p> <p>3 - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p> <p>10 - 25% fewer people receiving a first ever Court conviction and 2% fewer people reconvicted within one year by 2026</p> <p>11 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</p> <p>12 - Rate of harmful levels of alcohol consumption reduced by 4% and drug related deaths lower than Scotland by 2026</p>
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
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Integrated Impact Assessment	It is confirmed by Chief Officer Jacqui McKenzie that no IIA is required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress report on the Memorandum of Understanding.

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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MoU action tracker

	Action	Update 30 August 2023
1	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department of Work and Pensions will work together to support homeless citizens by:</p> <p>a - Working towards a data sharing agreement to allow the sharing and analysis of customer data so changes in benefit status for homeless households can be identified</p> <p>b - Share information within data protocols on new tenancies created through the homeless process to ensure support is provided when starting a new home</p>	<p>Work has been ongoing to ensure financial assessments are available for all housing presentations. Project charters demonstrate excellent progress in achieving increased income, with average monthly totals of around £50,000 since the summer.</p>

	<p>c - Co-locate where appropriate to enhance the support available to those experiencing homelessness</p> <p>d - Replicate the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 “Duty to Refer” arrangement, ensuring that where work coaches are aware of a homeless person, they refer to ACC</p> <p>e - Create a Single Point of Contact Model (SPOC) for homelessness and work together to support homeless applicants with no income, reducing the timescale for support where possible</p>	<p>Aberdeen in Recovery (AiR) attend JobCentre premises regularly. Outreach paused until AiR settled into permanent premises in Union St. DWP/AiR planning joint group employability sessions.</p> <p>This will be replicated by the Housing Bill which is due to be laid by the Scottish Government at the Scottish Parliament. We are expecting a further announcement on this in the Programme for Government when Parliament returns.</p> <p>These have been identified.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>
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	<p>f - Collaborate where possible to determine status of No Recourse to Public Funds groups as quickly as possible.</p>	
2	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will continue to work collaboratively, sharing intelligence as per current protocols and seek to further develop these, including supporting Move to Universal Credit when this is planned.</p>	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions and Aberdeen City Council currently work closely in a number of service areas, including revenues and Benefits, Housing and Support, and Homelessness.</p> <p>A date has not yet been confirmed for Move to Universal Credit. The Move to UC will begin in Scotland from August 2023 initially in West Scotland for Tax Credit only customers with a footprint in all Scottish districts by March 2024.</p> <p>This is a controlled approach, gradually increasing to include all Jobcentres so that we build a service that both meets the user needs and is sustainable for the future.</p> <p>Overall timeline is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2023 - March 2024 Working Tax Credit (WTC) only / Child Tax Credit (CTC) only / WTC & CTC • April 2024 - March 2025 all others except for ESA Only / ESA & Housing Benefit from 2028 <p>A wide range of comprehensive support will be available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a dedicated phone line, run by DWP, - included on the migration notice and letters

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further guidance on gov.uk which will signpost to independent support from Citizens Advice Help to Claim service • specially trained staff in Job Centre Plus's and service centres, including signposting to third parties and stakeholders • support through the Help to Claim service (from Citizens Advice)
3	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions will continue to be an active partner in Community Planning Aberdeen, continuing our work through the Aberdeen Prospers Group, and actively participating in the Anti-Poverty Group and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership. This will include:</p> <p>a) Department Of Work And Pensions advisors co-locating with Alcohol and Drugs Partnership services to support stabilisation and recovery</p> <p>b) Alcohol and Drugs Partnership support to Department Of Work</p>	<p>Aberdeen in Recovery attend JC premises regularly. Outreach paused until AiR settled into permanent premises in Union St. DWP/AiR planning joint group employability sessions</p>

	<p>And Pensions to identify alcohol/drug risks and pathways</p>	
4	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions will continue be an active partner in the Criminal Justice system, building on work already being provided at HMP Grampian through:</p> <p>a. Collaborating with ACC's Prison Liaison Officer to ensure planned support is in place prior to liberation</p> <p>b. Department Of Work And Pensions joining the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)</p>	<p>There is a lot of good partnership working going on between the Prison Liaison Officer and the Prison Coach, with any identified benefit queries referred to the DWP when needed.</p> <p>A number of national organisations are interviewing in HMP Grampian and are keen to take ex-offenders, with some requiring CSCS cards for employment hence the push to find an acceptable avenue for this to happen. We are working with the Construction Industry Training Board to arrange for Construction Skills Certification Scheme testing to be available. CSCS testing is being progressed, the mobile testing facility was withdrawn but other digital providers have been sourced</p> <p>The plan is to produce a coherent strategy between the five principal employability services to ensure efficient and effective partnering.</p> <p>A large national brewery chain now has the training kitchen operating, with training programmes in place and being followed by a number of prisoners, with the aim of employment on release with the national chain.</p>

	Strategic Oversight Group as required.	There has not yet been a requirement for this.
5	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will continue work together to support families in the current Home Office Afghan Resettlement Scheme, with Department Of Work And Pensions</p> <p>a. Actively engaging in Afghan Resettlement Scheme Tactical meetings</p> <p>b - Assigning a work coach to all families or individuals where eligible</p> <p>c - Participating in quarterly reviews of the resettlement scheme, identifying lessons learned and ensuring these are translated into practice</p> <p>d - Participating in any future resettlement schemes.</p>	Department Of Work And Pensions continue to provide active support to refugee work across the city.

6	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together and in collaboration with other National and Local partners to support employability across Aberdeen. This will include –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. supporting young people to overcome multiple barriers to employment, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. The establishment of a Youth Hub, as well as introducing Youth Employability Coaches, specifically to work with 18 to 24-year-old unemployed people, in order to increase both skills attainment and employment outcomesii. Continuing to develop the established Local Employability Partnershipiii. Sharing relevant and appropriate information, to enhance	Local Employability Partnership is in place covering these actions.
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young people's employability and ensure a positive destination is reached.

b - Supporting adults to overcome barriers to employment, including:

iv. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to link local employment opportunities with Community Benefit clauses included in procurement contracts

v. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work with key stakeholders to co-ordinate an effective offer for individuals and employers at risk of redundancy

vi. Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to maximise the employability of

	<p>people with long term health conditions</p> <p>vii. Reviewing these arrangements on an ongoing basis.</p>	
7	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together to strengthen the support available to lone parent families. This will include:</p> <p>a. An agreed contact point for escalation between both organisations where a lone parent family requires additional support</p> <p>b. Joint access to relevant systems and common data platforms allowing quantitative analysis and prediction. This will include Aberdeen City Council Housing and Council systems, and Stat Xplore.</p> <p>c. Agreement of referral pathways where there are mental health issues</p>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>These are in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>

	<p>being experienced by the lone parent</p> <p>d. Exploring the creation of a Parent Hub to provide wraparound support</p> <p>e. Department Of Work And Pensions as a stakeholder in the development of the Family Support Model in Aberdeen.</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>
8	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will collaborate to ensure the new Housing and Support delivery model provides support to tenants:</p> <p>a. At risk of becoming homeless to resolve any housing element issues timeously</p> <p>b. An agreed contact for escalation between both organisations</p> <p>c. Commitment to sharing feedback on the development of the landlord portal, influencing where possible.</p>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>

9	<p>Aberdeen City Council and Department Of Work And Pensions will work together to tackle safeguarding, suicide and drugs deaths. This will include:</p> <p>a - Enhancing and define existing escalation and referral routes where safeguarding concerns are identified, including through the Risk and Concern Hub</p> <p>b - Department Of Work And Pensions becoming an active partner in the City's Alcohol and Drugs Partnership in its attempts to reduce drugs deaths in the City task force</p> <p>c - Sharing of information regarding financial harm</p>	<p>This is in place.</p> <p>This is in place.</p>
10	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions will support Aberdeen City Council wherever possible in its vision to eradicate poverty in all its forms. This will be</p>	<p>Department Of Work And Pensions are an active partner in this work, with a key role in the development of responses to poverty, high profile work recently includes benefit checkers and income maximisation outreach work.</p>

based on whole and targeted population data, including at locality level, and include the sharing of data through a data sharing agreement on:

- a. Child poverty
- b. Fuel poverty
- c. Food poverty
- d. In work poverty
- e. Poverty and employment issues affecting minority ethnic communities
- f. Care experienced young people