Talent Match Birmingham & Solihull

Annual Report 2018
“Talent Match has been critical to our mission of building a fair and equitable Birmingham.”

In Birmingham and Solihull, we see a significant number of young people who experience economic and social disadvantage. Despite the upturn in the labour market over recent years, there remains a relatively large number of young adults who are not in employment, education or training. Talent Match has aimed to tackle this challenge head on: a service for young people, tested, customised and inspired by young people. I am proud to see so many of them work hard to reach their goals, often overcoming challenging and complex issues. Throughout the five-year journey of development and delivery we have worked closely with our participants, our partners and listened to the views from our local communities to revise and improve the Talent Match offer.

During 2018 we have striven to implement a range of activities which aimed to drive our engagement performance and our responsiveness with local employers. Credit goes to our team and my thanks to everyone who has been involved in pushing for success this year. Through our local evaluation we have highlighted the significant value return realised from our Talent Match model. As we reach the endpoint for the programme it is important to plan the legacy. Talent Match has been critical to our mission of building a fair and equitable Birmingham. By working with our partners and sharing our learning points, we will continue to strive to see every young person realise their potential and for our local employers to be matched with their talent.

Brian Carr
Chief Executive Officer
Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
The Birmingham and Solihull Talent Match Programme is a £4,600,000, 5-year investment in young adults not in education, employment and training (NEETs) aged 18-24 (with the option to include young people aged 25 at the first point of contact), to enable them to access opportunities to enhance their ability to secure sustainable employment. The programme aims to address worklessness issues amongst this diverse targeted cohort who are furthest away from the labour market, and who face a range of often complex barriers to fully participating in the labour market and society.

In this final year of delivery we have continued to adapt the Talent Match service and delivery model. Our development includes expanding our outreach and engagement with local communities and important partners across the Birmingham and Solihull area, which has led to a strong response from young people engaging with the programme. Furthermore, we developed a new Employment Team-offering expanded brokerage services with local employers and liaison and retention support, which has led to more young people finding and sustaining work across the area. Throughout 2018 we supported a local learning and evaluation exercise, which has helped us measure the value return overall for Talent Match and summarise a series of key learning points that will help us plan a proactive legacy moving forward.
Our Performance Summary 2014-18

Young People Engaged

833

102% of Overall Target

Participants Satisfied

85%

(on average "good" or higher)

Securing Employment

358

97% of Overall Target

Sustained Employment

125

104% of Overall Target
Amy joined the Talent Match programme in 2017, with low confidence and self-esteem from years of bullying at school. This led to anxiety, further compounded by an incident whilst she was travelling alone.

Working with Sport 4 Life, a key Talent Match partner, Amy started a female only course aimed at building confidence, self-esteem and self-empowerment. The Talent Match Coach worked with her to plan travel routes and liaise with her family to arrange personal accompaniment initially.

A career in the caring industry was the key goal and arrangements were made to obtain the necessary ID to allow safe volunteering, training and employment activity. This has led to her becoming job ready and securing further training towards her Health and Social Care qualifications. Meanwhile in 2018 Amy became one of our Talent Match Ambassadors - a powerful personal journey of overcoming fundamental barriers.

"The support I've had feels personalised, rather than forced or random. Talent Match has helped look at every little detail of 'you'."
"Quite simply without the support of Talent Match we couldn't have established our new social enterprise."

**Evolve at the Adam Eve**

The Evolve Trust is a new social enterprise cafe supported through a well established local charity. It aims to contribute to the regeneration of a key part of Birmingham and offer a channel of support for young people to secure employment, and financial independence. Through the Talent Match Company (TMCo), five participants have secured employment for at least six months, with one young person moving into permanent employment working within customer service and administration.

The employer values the core services offered through TMCo - the handing of recruitment, key HR functions and ongoing in-work retention - mediating between the participant and the employer.
The 2018 Delivery Model

Personalised Pathways

Our approach to support is person-centred and is highly flexible in response to individual needs following a pathway that typically runs for up to 18 months.

During 2018 we helped some young people into work in less than a week, whilst other participants have been engaged for six months or more and we were still focusing on addressing complex issues linked to their health and personal background, alongside addressing their employment aims. It is therefore important to highlight the balance between following a standard operating model and that of needing greater flexibility in response to complex needs.

We defined our approach across four key stages-

- Referral and initial planning
- Pre-employment support
- Work placement
- Ongoing sustainability support.

During 2018 we invested in more outreach related services, worked with our communities across Birmingham and Solihull to ensure more young people had the opportunity to refer to Talent Match.
The Talent Match offer is bespoke - it includes a range of support services ‘wrapped around’ the needs of each young person we have supported.

Delivery of wraparound support has changed significantly during the development of Talent Match in Birmingham and Solihull. During 2018 we moved towards a more flexible delivery model reviewing and consolidating active wraparound requirements, with systems introduced to track referral across data management systems.

A refined delivery list has been regularly maintained with overall wraparound support grouped thematically, including: health and wellbeing, job preparation, personal development and equipment/personal allowance purchasing in response to specific job requirements.
Refining Our Employer Offer

Helping young people find and sustain employment is a principal focus of Talent Match and throughout 2018 we have refined our support model and services for employers.

During 2018 our capacity to deliver employer services has been increased within the programme, with new roles created around employer liaison and retention, and an experienced member of staff providing overall HR support within our Talent Match Company (TMCo) function.

Feedback from the Talent Match coaches highlighted that the flow of available vacancies had significantly improved following these changes and that the employer engagement team worked seamlessly with the coaches to manage the progress into work placement.

Our employer offer can be grouped into three key areas:

**External liaison and brokerage activity:** Networking with businesses via existing and new events and activities, working through community outreach to secure work placements and direct engagement with key employers across the Birmingham and Solihull area.

**Internal liaison and participant work preparation:** The Team was significantly involved in supporting the participants with their employability skills and overall work readiness, overseeing their ‘registration’ into TMCo once work ready and actively seeking live vacancies.

**Coordination and retention activity:** Overseeing the placement of a young person into work, including the recruitment procedures, HR requirements and administrative/legal requirements from the employer. Once placed, an ongoing retention liaison role is performed, with a focus on forward destination planning once a job placement approached its end.
Refining Our Employer Offer

The Talent Match Company - TMCo

- Paid placements from 6-9 months, 16+ hours per week
- Scale of employer contribution pre-agreed between TMCo and employer
- Dedicated work liaison support: employee/employer
- Building towards a scalable and sustainable business model

Brokerage of jobs through dedicated employer engagement across Birmingham & Solihull

Core services facilitated via TMCo as an 'intermediary support hub' - HR, admin, payroll...

Coaches oversee wraparound focus on building employability, wellbeing and confidence

The TMCo model is a unique feature within the Birmingham and Solihull Talent Match programme. We have purposefully developed it as a stand alone employment service offering brokerage of vacancies, matching of jobs and recruitment support. In addition, it includes ongoing support for both employers and candidates to help with retention and ongoing HR needs.

Throughout 2018 we have had positive feedback from employers, participants, partners and operational staff around the benefits of the TMCo service. This includes us offering an initial subsidised work placement routeway, particularly to broker job opportunities for SMEs and its recruitment agency functions - handling vacancy administration, HR and payroll actions.
Measuring our Added Value

Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) aims to put a financial sum to the value created by a particular investment and is a form of cost / benefit analysis. Whilst there are many definitions associated with SROI, fundamentally it aims to address the question: “If I invest £X, to what extent this will translate into benefit to community or society, and consequently considers the value generated and expressed as £Y”.

As part of our 2018 Learning and Evaluation we commissioned a detailed SROI analysis of our Talent Match programme. Our approach to the SROI stems from a desire to better understand the value of the outcomes generated through our service delivery.

The six key stages of SROI

Establishing scope and identifying stakeholders
Mapping outcomes and developing an impact map
Evidencing outcomes and giving them value

Reporting, using and embedding
Calculating the SROI
Establishing impact
Measuring our Added Value

Through the analysis of existing data and supporting information, the evaluators were able to consider the journey of participants, their specific background and circumstances, and the extent to which their engagement resulted in positive outcomes e.g. entry into employment, volunteering, training or education etc. The three main PRIMARY outcomes that have been used to measure success are:

1. Young people engaged in the Talent Match programme
2. Young people securing employment
3. Young people into sustained employment

Given our key targets, these outcomes are considered to be the most tangible economically and socially, as the participants’ aim is to gain and sustain employment which is considered to be their primary goal. However, a key benefit of SROI is the ability to explore a wider set of outcomes of a programme or intervention that may have been considered, but also may have been generated inadvertently i.e. unintended consequences.

Our SROI evaluation considered and assessed:

- #1 Evidencing Positive Change
- #2 Identifying Key Stakeholders
- #3 Financial Values & Influences
- #4 Evaluating Outcomes
- #5 Consolidation of Assessment
- #6 Participant Satisfaction
- #7 Applying & Quantifying Value
- #8 Measuring Impact
Measuring our Added Value

Social Return on Investment

Participants’ engagement in the programme is for an 18-month period. Progress towards meeting an individual’s goals is formally tracked at 3, 6, 12 and 18 months using a tracking questionnaire. Within this approach, the process provides the ability to capture changes in circumstances, as well as a range of softer outcomes individuals experience.

Primary Outcomes

Participants benefit from a range of employment and training outcomes delivered by Talent Match through:

- Increased availability of and incentives for employment, and an improved perception of being better off in work than on benefits
- Improved skills and attitudes for employment, and more likely to find or enter employment as a result of improved functional and interpersonal skills, motivation, attitudes and behaviours
- Improved occupational-specific skills and work experience, and therefore more likely to gain employment as a result of increasing skill levels and attaining relevant work experience
- Increased entry to employment and sustained (quality) employment (wages, hours, contract type), and sustains work for a specified period.

Reduction in service demands and savings to the state.

£4.43 million
Measuring our Added Value

Many of those participating in Talent Match are disadvantaged by their educational attainment, disability or offending background, caring responsibilities, homelessness, mental and physical health and other factors.

**Wider Outcomes**

Our evaluation identified a wider array of outcomes that can be attributed (in part) to the programme relating to participants' personal and social wellbeing and inclusion in society, including:

- Improved feelings of self, including how they may feel about their confidence, emotional wellbeing, self-esteem and resilience
- Improved relationships with their families and friends, and the sense of connectedness or isolation
- Improved perceptions of and connectedness to the community, being part and feeling included in a meaningful community or communities, and the environment around them
- Improved overall life satisfaction compared to the best possible life.

These improvements contribute to a ‘reduction in the need’ to access a range of support services linked to the barriers faced by participants and therefore the ability to better manage their particular circumstances and lead a more fulfilling life. As part of the participants’ journey, the services and benefits individual participants accessed were analysed, identifying a host of stakeholders who also benefit from support e.g. those participants moving from benefits into employment resulting in savings to the state via the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs by receiving Tax and National Insurance contributions.

**A range of wider outcomes has created further value.**
Measuring our Added Value

Social Return on Investment

There are other stakeholder outcomes e.g. programme specific employment opportunities that increase the skill base of individuals and organisations involved in the delivery of the programme. Employers who have engaged in the programme benefit through reduced or zero staff recruitment and employee development costs, improved staff retention and reputation (enabling improved access to future public-sector contracts), and in some cases either free or subsidised placements.

£0.6 million Additional Value Generated.

*In total over £9.95 million social value created (£1:£3)

*Interim figures- 2014-2017

2014 2017

£3.23 million investment

Our final SROI value is due to be refreshed in 2019 once all our programme costs are known.
A key principle of Talent Match has been the focus on continuous improvement and proactively developing our services in response to changing economic and social factors. Our 'test and learn' approach has been informed through regularly commissioned independent evaluation, bringing in external expertise to assess and advise on a range of key elements of Talent Match and using ongoing learning points to impact positive changes to the model. Throughout the five years of delivery we have scrutinised how best to respond to a higher level of complex needs and review the demand of extra 'wraparound' support services, including how best to procure them.

Additional evaluation over the last 18 months has helped us pinpoint where to invest extra resource to increase our engagement rates with key communities across Birmingham and Solihull and provide a comprehensive employer offer. During 2018 we revised the Talent Match Ambassador role, offering opportunities for participants to help us develop the programme and work with us to advocate the support to their peers.

All of these key changes and decisions have been made following consultation with our Core Strategic Partnership, which throughout 2018 has been independently chaired by a private sector partner.
To help us summarise our overall delivery of Talent Match and finalise our learning points, we commissioned Blinkbright Ltd to provide a package of Learning and Evaluation support activity throughout 2018. This activity involved the following four projects:

1. SROI Analysis
2. Overall Evaluation
3. Annual Evaluation
4. Final 'Legacy' Evaluation

As well as helping us measure the overall return on investment for the programme, the SROI analysis outlined the key challenges of programme delivery, participant access and engagement, and importantly the process of data assembly and usage. It highlighted the process adopted in helping to break down the barriers for participant access to the Talent Match, which is a significant departure from many national governmental lead worklessness based systems.

In addition, the reporting requirements of the funder, and the subsequent reporting changes during programme delivery, has highlighted the importance of the need to broaden out the intelligence and evidence gathering process - this is key to fully capturing the evidence necessary in influencing future investment strategies and working practices.
A full local evaluation assessed the five year development of our Talent Match service and used feedback from our young people involved and our work coaches, to identify a series of key learning points. It is our intention to share these conclusions and build on our legacy of delivering Talent Match in partnership across Birmingham & Solihull.

Flexibility was identified as a key strength of the programme. The evaluation pointed out how effective the relationship of trust had been between our work coaches and participants, with our model demonstrating a flexible and person-centred approach. Our participants felt that Talent Match has listened to their issues and provided both personal development and work focused support.

Our employability services and overall offer to local employers were highlighted as being adaptable to individual needs and employer requirements. The evaluation found that our TMCo model offers great potential as a support mechanism in partnership with other organisations helping young people to find work.

Talent Match has developed over a five year timeline and there is a breadth of understanding and expertise as a result of the programme's impact and key achievements. The evaluation highlighted the importance of the Community and Voluntary sector in sharing expertise with other organisations and building effective future partnerships that can help more young people realise their potential.
Testing and Learning

Our Annual Reporting has helped summarise the main changes we made to the service in 2018 and provide a refresh of our performance outcomes and SROI. These key points are contained within this Annual Report summary.

Our final stage of testing and learning supported by our local evaluation, involves reaching an end 'legacy statement': a summary of the key messages we wish to share externally with our key partners and all of our participants. We see this legacy as a strong foundation for future youth employment and advocacy services. We also wish to build on our momentum with local employers, responding to their needs and brokering more youth employment outcomes.
Building on our Achievements

Talent Match has had a significant and positive impact on hundreds of local young people who, with our support, have been able to turn their lives around. We have seen young people become more self-confident, better equipped to deal with life’s challenges and better placed to compete in the labour market and find (and sustain) work.

The issues of youth unemployment can often be very challenging. Young people with multiple and complex needs may have had little experience of the world of work. They may have had poor experiences of the education system, with often little routine and focus. These are issues that will continue to affect young people across Birmingham and Solihull in the coming years. A 14 year old with a chaotic home life, poor attendance and / or achievement at school or with learning difficulties now is likely to become an unemployed 18 year old in 4 years’ time with no support infrastructure in place to help guide them in a positive direction and make changes to address what can become deep-rooted problems.

Talent Match has shown it can make a real difference through tailored, flexible, one to one mentoring and coaching, helping individuals changes their lives for the better and move towards and into employment. It is important that organisations across Birmingham and Solihull continue to work in partnership to help provide personalised services for young people who have some of the most pronounced barriers preventing them from succeeding in the world of work.
Zanyar was referred by his local Jobcentre after being on a range of support initiatives, which had not led to positive outcomes. Experiencing long term unemployment and the frustration of unsuccessfully applying for jobs, his confidence was very low initially.

Talent Match supported Zanyar by helping to identify his work ambitions and drawing out a series of goals to aim for, whilst developing his employability skills. This led to a 6-month paid placement, arranged by the Talent Match Company, with a local employer - focusing on marketing and design administration, which aligned with his ambitions.

In 2018, following his successful work placement Zanyar went on to become one of Talent Match's Ambassadors locally and he has supported ongoing national evaluation work on the Talent Match programme, led through Sheffield Hallam University.
With Special Thanks To...

BVSC and Blinkbright would like to thank everyone who took part in the preparation of this report for the instrumental contribution of their time and participation. Involvement from key partners, Talent Match Company host employers, and other strategic stakeholders in Talent Match has been vital in drawing out the learning from the final year of the programme; including the National Lottery Communities Fund whom without their funding and support none of this would be possible.

Particular thanks must go to the Participants and Ambassadors who contributed in focus groups and case study interviews; your sincerity and willingness to share your experiences have proved to be an invaluable resource. We would also like to thank all the members of our Core Group who have helped us steer and shape our Talent Match service.
From Our Young People

Previously I had been passed from one scheme to another and unable to build enough trust. On Talent Match I was able to build a relationship and open up.

I had completed college and was going to the Jobcentre for over a year. I was advised to try Talent Match- I met my coach and straight away he helped me put myself out there. I got a job.

Talent Match literally helped me find a job in 3 days. They recognised my capabilities and quickly matched me to a suitable job opening.

I don't see why any young person wouldn't use Talent Match. It has given me help to get me on the right path.