

JOINTLY ‘TURNING THE CURVE’ IN THE BRISTOL WORK ZONE



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However, ‘turning the curve’ is a real challenge. In this instance, providers and strategic partners alike recognise the difficulty in addressing the ‘turning the curve’ challenge. No single provider or strategic partner can solve this on their own.

Bristol is a city of contrasts, with a number of neighbourhoods experiencing far higher than average concentrations and persistence of unemployment, worklessness and low skills.

Evidence suggests that it might take up to two decades for some of the worst performing wards in Bristol to reach the average levels of employment experienced across the whole city.

Conversely, there is strong evidence to show that people in paid employment enjoy a higher quality of life through improved personal and family outcomes, including more secure housing and higher levels of self-esteem, health and well-being.

Therefore, it is widely recognised that there are huge economic benefits in supporting people to progress from a life on benefits to financial independence.

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Bristol Ways2Work Strategy 2016-2020

If no single provider or strategic partner, can solve the ‘turning the curve’ challenge on their own, how might they work together in new ways to ‘turn the curve’? This was the challenge set by the Bristol City Learning Partnership.

Bristol City Learning Partnership is overseen by a group of influential city leaders who aim to improve the local employment, skills and learning offer so that more local people can improve their employment prospects and outcomes.

In order to deliver this ambition, the Bristol Learning City Partnership developed the Bristol Ways2Work Strategy which provides the implementation plan for the Bristol City Learning Partnership vision, by focusing on six priority areas that collectively will help turn the curve.

Priority 6 states “we will develop localised ‘work zones’ with and for priority neighbourhoods”.

What is a work zone?

The concept of a ‘work zone’ is to bring employability and skills providers together in new ways, to deliver a more integrated and coordinated approach to local employment support and learning.

The objectives of creating localised work zones in priority areas were identified as follows:

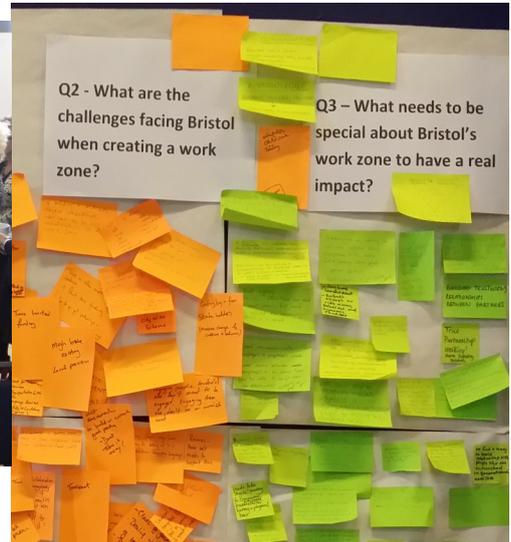
- improve the co-location, integration and co-ordination of local employment and skills services;
- improved resident access to local, high quality, co-ordinated employment and skills services;
- underpinned by a common operating framework to ensure consistency and quality.

Developing the work zone concept

Commissioned by the funders and developed by the providers, the co-designing of the Bristol Work Zone Model was done in a collaborative way, bringing together leaders and practitioners from different backgrounds.



Providers and strategic partners working together at the January 2016 event



The concept of a work zone was agreed in principle and commitment pledged by the strategic funders at the provider event held by Bristol City Learning Partnership in January 2016.

Therefore, a series of enquiry and engagement events were held by Bristol City Learning Partnership culminating in a provider event in January 2016. During the event, the concept of a work zone was agreed in principle and commitment pledged by the strategic funders, to pull together their existing employability and skills strands and future dovetail funding streams to support its development.

Following this event, a team of provider volunteers were selected and tasked with developing an **'operating framework'** for the Bristol work zone model.

Over a ten-week period, the provider team, facilitated by Shared Service Architects have addressed the key objectives set by the Bristol City Learning Partnership of phase I of this initiative, namely the:

- development of a single, consistent customer pathway which will guide participants through their work zone journey
- development of a single diagnostic which will capture and share high level customer information with delivery partners.
- development of protocols and procedures for participating work zone providers around information sharing, referring customers to providers and minimum service levels.

Therefore, they have considered and developed the following elements that would make up a work zone operating framework:

- a shared and consistent customer journey for workless adults, including new shared diagnostic tools, a common approach to client segmentation and referral as well as a clearly defined core offer

- a common set of protocols across into work service providers for cross referrals and core data collection
- a coordinated marketing approach through an enhanced and updated Ways2Work website
- Charter Mark to underpin a "one team approach" for participating employment and skills providers

To ensure a sense of connectivity and flow for the operating model, the team developed the zone operating framework using Prezi Presentation Software.

Next steps

Assuming the operating framework is backed by the strategic partners, the next steps are:

- to develop a new specification for the Ways2Work website,
- to pilot and test the work zone operating framework in a specific locality,
- to ensure that strategic partners funding streams and programmes are aligned with the work zone model and
- to roll-out of the work zone model through the creation of up to three integrated employments, skills and learning support hubs within the north, central, east and south of the city.

In this collaborative way, the providers and strategic partners are working together to solve the 'turning the curve' challenge.