

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)		
Cllr Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	January 2024

**The Purpose of this report is to provide Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of activity within the Regeneration and Skills Portfolio**

## **INVEST SEFTON SERVICE**

### **External funded programmes**

#### **Growth Hub**

InvestSefton is one of the Liverpool City Region Growth Hubs working alongside the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA), Growth Platform, other local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and The Women's Organisation. The total value for delivery in each of the LA areas is £20,000 compared to the £50,000 of previous years. **Government has announced that Growth Hub funding has been extended for a further year. InvestSefton will continue the delivery of the Sefton growth hub.**

#### **UKSPF Shared Prosperity Funding**

**Place Based Business Support-** Sefton's allocation is £782,414, which includes c.£23k top-sliced monies for central co-ordination and website development via Growth Platform. The project has been given a new delivery brand name - **Business Support Service** and a steering group chaired by Sefton has been established.

**Business Start-up support-**This will now be delivered via the aforementioned Place Based Business Support programme. InvestSefton commissioned support for start-ups via competitive tender for a £80,000 contract. Following evaluation this was awarded to **Merseyside Expanding Horizons (MEH) & Safe Regeneration** - This is a Bootle based partnership led by MEH who manage the Big Onion in Bootle Strand shopping centre and Southport Town Hall. The Big Onion facility is equipped with co-working spaces, meeting rooms, presentation facilities, and high-speed internet connectivity, and offers an incubator hub to up to 20 new start businesses. Within Southport, they use a prime location in the Town Hall. Safe Regeneration run incubator units in Bootle from the St Marys Complex, this is their main delivery location.

**Town Centres business support-** Similarly, the team also went to open market for a business support sustainability commission worth £60,000. Following evaluation this was awarded to: **Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside-**

Groundwork is a Merseyside based national organisation with a team of professional in-house consultants and associates with a variety of technical expertise including energy auditing, carbon management and environmental training.

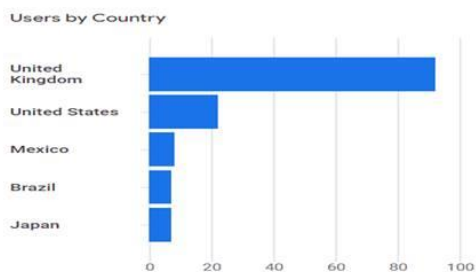
UKSPF business support activities are all underway in Sefton and performance will be reported in future updates.

## Business engagement

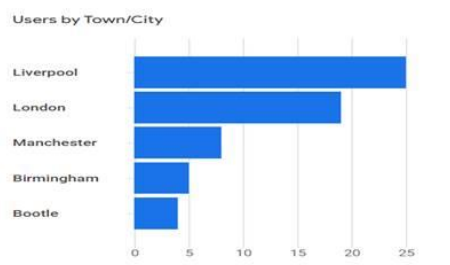
### Business engagement-InvestSefton.com

- From Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the website had 247 unique sessions
- The most visits were on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the site has had a total of **71,461** unique sessions.
- Posts on the website and twitter this week have included UK Export Finance, Acas advice on employment contracts as well as pushing out our Economic Forum.
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1608 followers
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 25 members.

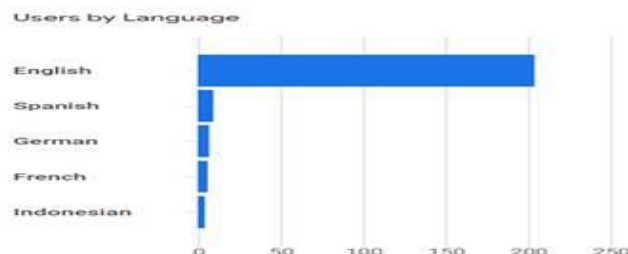
### Country of origin of users



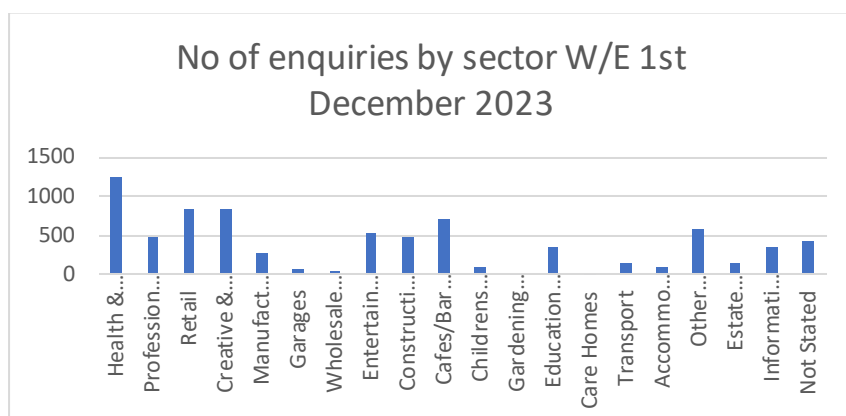
### City of origin users



### Users by language:



## Business Enquiries



Year	Total Enquiries
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2020- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 21	3740
1 <sup>st</sup> April 21- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 22	1325
1 <sup>st</sup> April 22- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 23	1413
1 <sup>st</sup> April 23 – to date	864
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,342</b>

## Business consultation & engagement

The team has recently produced a fully accessible factsheet for council staff and partners on how best to engage with businesses for consultation purposes. The purpose is to provide guidance for staff who require input from businesses when undertaking consultation with Sefton businesses. A copy of the PDF is embedded below:



Consulting and  
Engaging with Busi

## Case studies

The team continues to engage with businesses as part of its 1:1 delivery support. Recent anonymised case studies below:

Crosby based football club - The club has a full 3G pitch at its site with training facilities, stands, a shop, restaurant bar and a function room. The business has a fan base of over 40,000 in the UK and worldwide. The club also has Marine in the Community, a not-for-profit enterprise that works with young people and community groups on initiatives to support sports, social inclusion and career paths in sport both on and off the pitch. The Business wants to develop their presence and access sponsorship opportunities. **InvestSefton supported the Business by assisting them to develop their marketing materials to engage local small businesses in relation to sponsorship opportunities as well as providing them with free access to workshops and networking opportunities.**

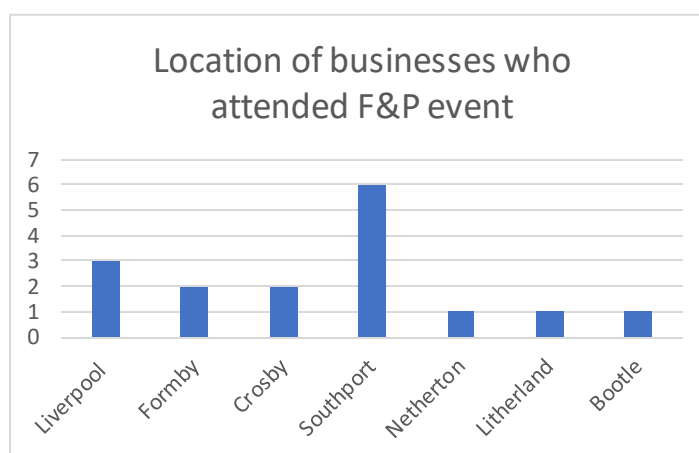
A Bootle business provide a core service of community garden design and management. The Service is reliant on securing funding and bidding for and winning public tenders across the city region. The business has been looking at ways of generating revenue through bespoke garden installations for Private customers but needs support with the process of getting the new services to an operational level. **InvestSefton supported the business in its planning to understand its position following expansion through review of services offered and pricing of services as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for their new planned services.**

A sole trader marketing specialist based in Litherland. Her Primary service is marketing consultancy, and she focuses on Charity Comms as her specialism. The Business fills the gap within charities who have a lack of marketing infrastructure. Following a successful integration and training period the business will step back leaving the charity to become self-sufficient. The Business is looking to grow and develop a more sustainable income and look to employ staff but needs more contacts to grow its Business Base. **InvestSefton supported the business by providing free access to a range of workshops and events to enable them to develop their network and gain new business.**

## Webinars/Events

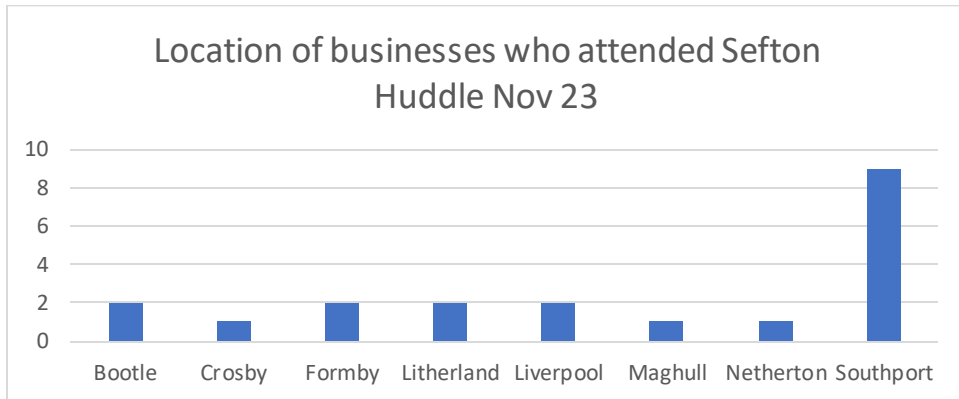
### Financial & Professional Networking Group-19 October 2023

Ken Clark of the NW Bank of England provided the group with latest economic forecasts and how it will affect businesses. InvestSefton Business Growth Adviser Colin Hickey chaired the event which was attended by 18 business delegates of which 6 were women business owners.



Sefton Huddle- 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at The Park Hotel, Netherton

The team arranged the third Sefton Huddle for Sefton’s digital and technology-based businesses attended by 21 business delegates of which 6 were women business owners. Andy Kent MD of Angeal Solutions was the main speaker with the title ‘Stand out from the crowd – Marketing and developing your brand as a creative business’. The presentation was extremely well received to the extent it ran over time; such was the interest from businesses. Julie Swarbrick, InvestSefton’s Business Growth Adviser chaired the event.



## Sefton Economic Forum 7 December Lakehouse, Crosby

Over 130 people including 72 businesses attended the winter Economic Forum. The forum offered a diverse range of speakers covering the latest economic trends, growth at LJL Airport and insights into how businesses can use professional athlete coaching and mentoring techniques in their workplace.



## LCR Fair Employment Charter

Members may be aware of the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter which celebrates fair employment practices where they were in place and drive-up standards elsewhere. The intention is to recognise good quality and effective practice in fair employment and build the broader case amongst other employers for them to consider changing their practices.

The CA currently have 99 Aspiring Level Organisations who are members of the Fair Employment Charter and of those 13 Organisations employing 6,400 employees are based in Sefton. The link below shows all of LCR Aspiring Level Organisations

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/fair-employment-charter-aspiring-level/>

Current Sefton based employers who have achieved Aspiring Level accreditation are listed below. Each application goes through a robust evaluation process and is approved by a dedicated independent panel before final endorsement and comment from the council co-ordinated by InvestSefton.

- Access Point, Southport
- Amber Family
- Sefton CVS, Crosby
- Elevate Education Business Partnership, Aintree
- Kindfulness Coffee Club, Bootle
- NLP Liverpool, Blundellsands
- Specialist Sewing, Bootle
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Bootle
- Sefton MBC
- Parkhaven Trust, Southport
- The Sovini Group, Bootle
- Southport & Ormskirk Hospital
- Office of Nuclear Regulation, Bootle

## EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING SERVICE

### Young Persons Guarantee

This 3 year scheme offers employers grants and wage incentives for the recruitment of eligible individuals. It will now be largely operated through the LA employment services for job creation. In effect, the Ways to Work service will be undertaking the scheme via the structure to be funded by SIF/UKSPF as there is insufficient finance to operate this as a stand-alone scheme. Sefton will be distributing to employers in the form of employer grants and wage incentives for recruitment of eligible young people who will need to have been workless and claiming benefits for a period of six months to qualify.

### Sefton@work General Performance Data for October 2023


Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service for ESF support	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	5,296
Clients accessing service post ESF	From 1 October 2023	89
New clients registering by age	October 2023	16-24 24 25-49 37 50+ 18 Unknown 10
SIF W2W contracts Male	Since 01/10/2023	66.7%
SIF W2W contracts Female	Since 01/10/2023	33.3%
SIF W2W contracts Other	Since 01/10/2023	0.0%
SIF W2W clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/10/2020	54.2%
SIF W2W clients without basic skills	Since 01/10/2023	39.6%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	30
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	ESF, LCR SIF + 200 from other programmes <b>Total 2,355</b>

### Sefton@work Relocation

The shopfitting work programme has now been completed and the next phase has been embarked upon. This includes the renovation of the external areas and windows and the installation of new signage. A furniture package is also under order, including a bespoke enquires and registration desk which will be custom-made for the Service to accommodate needs of disabled clients.



The relocation project plan reflects arrangements for communications with service users, stakeholders and referral agencies and there will be a period of transfer of operations and final snagging etc. we are expecting the full transfer of services across to the new Unit will take place early in the New Year.

The team has been meeting with corporate communications colleagues to formulate a plan for the entire relocation project to include signage around the Strand, opening events in early February 2024, videos for existing clients and referral partners. We are pushing out posts and articles via our website and social media pages and the response has been very positive. See attached link for latest video. [We're moving to a new office!](#) 

## **Voluntary Routeway**

The Voluntary Routeway Programme offers placements to those who need experience to enhance their employment history and gain references. Placements were recently offered within SMBC School Meals, Sandway Homes, Sefton Libraries, Green Sefton, Sefton CAB, Sefton Adult Community Learning, Sefton@work, Citizens Advice Bootle and Citizens Advice Southport. This programme responds to the needs of our client groups who are struggling to enter the labour market through mainstream recruitment processes. 18 clients in total started their 10-week part-time placement at the end of September and also benefitted from an accredited 2-day pre-placement course delivered by SACL. Clients have been provided with any uniforms required and all travel expenses will be reimbursed. Placements will run until the beginning of December.

## **Support for Care Leavers**

In partnership with JobCentrePlus, Sefton@Work organised a Care Leavers recruitment event held at the Cambridge Road centre. Local employers that have signed up to the Caring Business Charter attended. 15 organisations attended and provided opportunities for care leavers with jobs, jobs with training or apprenticeships advertised that they had ringfenced for leaving care or looked after children. There were 22 different vacancies available on the day and 16 care leavers attended. The event was hosted at SACL and we took a holistic approach as we included a range of specialist support services such as Housing Options and Princes Trust. We utilised the immersive room in Cambridge Road and its technology to engage in fun informal learning activities and we invited wellbeing practitioners to offer complimentary therapies.

## **Mental Health for Christmas**

A course ran in December for a 2 day mental health/wellness course to cover confidence and self-esteem techniques to help clients stay positive over the Christmas period. Clients have been issued with a fortnightly bus pass to coincide with the time S@W is closed over Christmas to avoid social isolation and enable them to attend JobCentrePlus if required. A booklet has also been provided of all free events/activities happening over Christmas to help people with positive mood. This aims to encourage clients to be more active and build confidence during a time which many report feeling overwhelmed and stressful, especially in combination with managing a low income.



## **Digital Inclusion**

Following the success of the recent wave of the Digital Inclusion Initiative in partnership with LCR & Lloyds, we will be hosting another 4 sessions with over 40 residents booked in to attend to complete a short digital intervention and receive a tablet device with 6 months data.

## **New Employment opportunities**

A growth sector employer has approached us to manage ongoing recruitment for vacancies in civil engineering and fibre-optics work. They have contracts across the North West and are struggling to staff them due to skills shortages. We are looking at developing a routeway into this sector which will include training for Street-Works Operative, Safe Working in Civils and Underground Safety and keen for us to promote this to the females.

## **New Agreement with Citizens Advice**

Due to a rise in issues with the debt and housing we have been working with CAB to arrange for them to deliver advice and casework on site in the new premises, allowing priority access to our clients but also to the wider community as a co-located offer. Once concluded, we will capture these new working arrangements in an agreement in line with our draft protocol for co-location and outreach which we intend to have in place as a cornerstone of our operational plan for the new premises.

## **Client Feedback**

We have recently published results of client feedback for September and October in line with our commitment to customer service excellence. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from clients. We have published the results via our website and socials and also have the presentation playing on the screen in the reception of our Bootle office.

## **Social Value – Sainsbury's Southport recruitment**

The recruitment effort has begun for a new Sainsbury's store due to open in Meols Cop early 2024 with around 150 additional, new jobs being created. Working with Southport JCP, Sefton@Work and SACL, we will deliver relevant sector-based training for clients applying for the opportunities with guaranteed interviews. To date, 11 Sefton@Work clients have attended the training at SACL. Sefton@Work has also organised a recruitment open-day for Sainsbury's held in November to encourage other applications to its positions, particularly those from our vulnerable groups. We used Southport Town Hall to host this event and received a big response from the level of initial interest received. This work resulted from an employment and training plan secured with Sainsbury's connected to their conditions for planning permission to open the new site which was put in place some years ago.

## Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

The table below indicates the year-to-date figures. It is notable that while the number of learners needs to increase, there is a pattern of a majority of learners, progressing through more than one learning aim, showing confidence in service and progression from one to onto another. 23/24 shows a slight reduction in the number of learners on this time last year but continues to show that of the learners engaged they are positively progressing into 1 or more learning aims on this time last year.



### Performance update

*Year to Date Comparison*

*August to Mid November*

	Target	18/19*	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total number of learners	2000	831	863	284	437	660	614
Total number of unique learning aims	2940	1098	1127	404	527	783	796

*\* 18/19 was the last full year before covid*

The Progression survey is now complete and this indicates that 97% of learners successfully completed a course with Sefton Community Learning Service and 85% of learners progressed into employment, on to further education or voluntary work.

## Communication and Events

The 2024 Spring prospectus is finalised and 3,000 ordered for distribution. Throughout December, 16,000 planned to be delivered door-to-door focusing on the Bootle area. Digital copies have gone live and has been circulated to all partners.

The Service is looking to increase the number of learners to its core qualification courses, namely English, Maths, Digital Skills, Employability, and ESOL. Therefore, we are looking to place greater emphasis on digital channels to achieve the service's aims, having utilised other parts of the marketing mix previously, such as advertising in local newspapers (no longer available) and door to door delivery, this is proving difficult and isn't a sustainable approach for the service.

The focus on digital will see a very deliberate approach to reach audiences that have otherwise been difficult to reach, e.g., 19-45yrs+ and be underpinned by the introduction of a new Community Learning Service section of the Sefton Council website, which will in turn incorporate a new booking system via the MeLearning system currently used by the Corporate Learning Centre.

The new approach to promoting the service, is also effectively a launch for its new look site and streamlined booking process. It is also timed to provide an improvement in sign-ups to core subjects for the 2024 Spring term, while also delivering sign-ups and registrations of interest in the meantime.

Our Aim therefore is to

- Launch new look site with online booking system
- Manage the Culture shift to this digital -first approach in the promotion of service and its courses.

## Our measured Objectives

- Increase number of tutors and learners in the autumn term
- Increase number of learners for core qualification subjects for Spring 2024 term
- Create a baseline for digital campaigns to compared against for future campaigns
- Social media advertising Christmas Fair on 2nd December, enrolment days 2 & 4th December and 4 & 5 January for courses starting 9th January 2024.

## Our expected Outcomes

- Greater awareness levels of the service among Sefton communities
- Increased take up of courses, especially for core subjects
- Increase tutor recruitment / appointment

## Events in November

To further increase the visibility and profile of the service, the following events were attended over recent weeks:

- 16th November Volunteer Coordinator's Forum SCVS – promoting service and courses including Southport Town Deal Building Better Customer Experience.
- 17th & 24th November Menopause Café
- 21st November Older workers week DWP Crosby
- 22nd November Local offer jobs fair The Life Rooms, Southport
- 23rd Light Switch on in Waterloo South Road
- Light Switch on at The Strand, Bootle 25th

## Events in December

- 3rd December Christmas Market Lock & Quay – Family Learning Christmas Crafts
- 2nd December hosting the Christmas Fair at the Centre
- 3rd and 10th December attendance at Southport Marketplace – Family Learning Christmas Craft linking to their 'Frozen' theme
- 6th December Winter Health Hub DWP - promoting healthy eating on a budget course
- 8th & 10th December Christmas Market and Soft Launch Salt & Tar
- 9th December Christmas Well-being Event Maghull Town Hall – Family Learning crafts and wellbeing activities.
- 17th December Christmas Fair at Hallie's Hub – Family Learning Christmas Crafts

## Pathways to Teaching Project

Following the success of 2022/2023 Pathways to Teaching Pilot Liverpool City Region have agreed to fund year 2. To-date we have 5 learners on programme, and all have successfully completed and achieved the community learning element and are progressing onto the Level 3 Education and Training course. Early indications

show it is a strong group of learners so we are confident all 5 will complete the course and potentially become eligible for employment with the service to widen our supply of new tutors.

### Ofsted Inspection

The Service is expecting an Ofsted inspection at some point in the new term. The last inspection was undertaken in June 2017. The Service remains in Ofsted readiness mode. Other LA Services and other AEB funded providers have been inspected in the last few weeks. Once notified, the inspection will be immediate, and this will be the service and wider service priority to respond to, the process will also involve Governors which comprise senior Council officers and Cabinet Members.

### NEET REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

#### September 2023 Performance

Performance nationally for September contains high levels of Not Known destinations as it's the time of the year when young people are in transition to either Post 16 provision or moving into year 2 of learning. As such, the DfE do not usually count September as valid data as it is deemed as a turbulent month for reporting.

The data for our monthly performance for NEET and Not Known is facilitated by Career Connect and verified with government sources using the NCCIS database which each LA is required to update monthly. This forms part of the tracking element of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. The purpose of this tracking is to identify, target and support NEET.

**Table 1 – Liverpool City Region Comparisons – Academic Age 16-17 NEET/NK**

Area	NEET	NK	Combined	Current NEET Rank	Current NK Rank	Current Combined Rank
Sefton	3.00%	8.50%	11.50%	2	2	1
Halton	3.20%	8.30%	11.50%	3	1	1
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>2.40%</b>	<b>22.60%</b>	<b>25.00%</b>			
St. Helens	3.70%	29.80%	33.50%	4	3	2
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>32.60%</b>	<b>34.60%</b>			
Knowsley	4.50%	30.90%	35.40%	5	4	3
Liverpool	5.60%	66.60%	72.20%	6	5	4
Wirral	2.20%	86.20%	88.40%	1	6	5

The table above shows:

- Sefton and Halton have the lowest combined NEET/NotKnown % across the LCR area, North West and England.
- Although we are ranked 1st with Halton, their cohort of young people is considerably smaller than Sefton (Sefton is 5819, Halton is 3255).
- Sefton 16-17 NEET/NotKnown is -13.5% below North West and – 23.1% below England.
- Our statistical neighbour comparison for 16-17 NEET and NotKnown % ranked Sefton 2nd lowest in September
- 10.46% of the 16-17 NEET and NotKnown cohort are within one or more of our vulnerable groups (70 out of 669), this low figure within our cohort demonstrates that working with our young people earlier through our innovative early intervention offer through Career Connect helps us to identify and support those who are NEET or at risk of NEET earlier.
- Although our NotKnown has increased by 1.8% year on year, we remain 14.1% below NW and 24.1% below England national averages for the same period.

### Care Experienced Young People ( Resident In Sefton)

As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect support 55% (95 young people) of the care experienced young people cohort, these are those living in the borough. The Virtual school support those living outside of the borough (76 young people)

The table below shows those young people supported by our contract.

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	3	11.5%	23	88.5%	26
17	4	13%	27	87%	31
18	20	53%	18	47%	38
	27	28%	68	72%	95

- There are currently 7 young people 16-17 NEET, 12% of the total cohort (57)
- 72% of the overall cohort (95) are EET and 28% are NEET.
- To support in and out of borough NEET and at risk of NEET care experienced young people, a working group has been set up with Youth Justice and Virtual School to identify how we can work together to improve attendance and engagement, provide careers advice and guidance and plan for post 16 transition.

## The September Guarantee

This is the Statutory Duty on all local authorities to ensure that all young people in school Year 11 and Year 12 have an appropriate offer of education, employment, or training by the end of September each year. Appropriate offers must include working towards an accredited qualification.

Last month, Career Connect completed 1,200 home visits and contacted 887 by phone as part of the tracking of 8000 young people from September.

### Year 11 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 3,160

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	3124	98.8%
No Offers Made	36	1.2%

Of the 36 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 10 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 4 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 5 have made applications and are awaiting outcomes.
- 7 did not apply.
- 10 are currently uncontactable – due to change of address or other causes and Career Connect will continue to attempt contact if possible.

### Year 12 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 2,920

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	2774	95%
No Offers Made	146	5%

Of the 146 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 23 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 10 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 6 with an offer proven inappropriate at this time.
- 10 have made applications made and are awaiting outcome.
- 17 have not applied.
- 80 are currently uncontactable, due to change of address or other.

## Other Updates

- Career Connect have now recruited an apprentice to join the Sefton Team, the young person will be based in Cambridge Road and started their apprentice on Monday 13th November 2023. This was a ring-fenced opportunity and offered to a young person who had been referred to the Caring Business Charter.

- Sefton Career Connect team are participating in the Team Around the School Pilot looking at multi-agency approaches to work with RONI (Risk of Neet Indicator) data and improved engagement in learning.
- The annual Activity Survey will be sent out to Schools in the first week of January. The Activity Survey will help us to begin to monitor next year's September Guarantee offers and prepare our 'at risk of NEET' register to ensure that we target support on learners less likely to have a smooth transition and progression route in place to post 16 learning. It also allows us to identify those young people in years 9 and 10 who may be at risk of NEET so that we can ensure that relevant measures are in place to support them.
- A review of the Caring Business Charter has been prepared, extracts of which are copied below:

### **The Intention**

We recognise that many young people who have experience of being looked after may have additional barriers to address when they are looking to starting their lives as adults. Some may have had experiences that many young people will never need to face. But in Sefton we strongly believe that young people who have had experience of the care system have a vast array of talents, capabilities, and strengths they should be able to optimise as they move forward into adulthood, future careers, and the wider world. The Council aims to provide our young people with some of the practical means to reach their full potential through exposure to the world of work and high-quality careers.

The Caring Business Charter is one method we have chosen in Sefton to work with all our partners to secure good quality opportunities to expand horizons and grow aspirations in our young people and those who work with them. We want our young people to be happy, healthy, skilled, and productive adults who can help grow our economy and make prosperous lives that will contribute to Sefton and their own families in the future.

The Charter will make the most of our involvement in shaping and influencing our economy and represent a truly "One Council" approach. It is a pledge from employers to offer a range of high quality interventions to support care experienced young people in accessing opportunities to gain experience and confidence, make contacts, better understand what is needed to enter and retain sustainable and well paid employment and make informed choices as they go through the education system about who and what they wish to become.

### **Our Implementation choices**

We have chosen to roll out the Charter project using a number of implementation methods:

- A Launch event in Summer 2022 to acknowledge the Charter signatories
- Ongoing Recruitment of Companies and Stakeholder partners to the Charter via Sefton@work, Invest Sefton, Procurement, the Growth Programme and the Southport Town Deal
- Industry standard account management principles adopted for the Charter secure regular updates to Employers and regulate the currency of opportunities



- The appointment of a Co-ordinator post seconded into Sefton@work, with the post holder having lived experience of care.
- Establishment of a cross-sectoral Case Conferencing Group for Matching Referrals into opportunities
- Regular production of a Charter news bulletin called the Beacon with a circulation to all schools, training providers and colleges and all departments in the Council- please see link
- Introduction of an annual Careers Market-Place event – with ringfenced jobs for post 16 young people

### **The Impact of the Charter**

The Charter Co-ordinator is currently working with **41** Active Employers. To date, there have been **58** referrals from partners and the following positive outcomes have been achieved for our young people:

- **9** have been supported into full time employment, **3** of whom are in apprenticeships.
- **1** has a pending interview with Childrens Social Services for an apprenticeship.
- **2** have moved back into full time education to improve their qualifications.
- **1** is currently on a personal development programme with the Princes Trust.
- **6** are being supported by Sefton@Work through the DWP Restart Programme
- **1** young person is undertaking a “Find your Purpose” intervention with Sefton@work

### **Summary of Current Live Charter Opportunities by type of Offer**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No of Employer offers</b>
<b>Taster Days</b>	Spending 1 – 2 days in an employer setting learning different aspects of the business being shadowed by a member of staff. Potential to move on to an offer of a structured work experience.	20
<b>Structured Work Experience</b>	Opportunity for young people to gain a better understanding of what the business is and what they do. Each opportunity will vary in content and duration. They can start with a taster day, which could lead onto structured work experience.	19
<b>Site Visits</b>	Groups or accompanied individuals are invited to visit the site to see what the working environment is like before committing to a taster/placement or choosing this career direction. Visits may be short (1hr) or may take place over several hours depending on the company and the group size.	14
<b>Presentations</b>	Companies willing to offer interactive presentations about their business sector and their own experiences of working in the sector. They can offer careers advice about ways into a specific career. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	15

<b>Work Placements</b>	Structured work placements will help young people gain even more experience in the career that they are interested in. They can choose to do a work placement after you have either done a taster day or some work experience.	11
<b>Mentoring Support</b>	Business owners have agreed to offer mentoring support face to face or remotely via teams, to support small groups of people with motivation, confidence, and aspiration. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	14

- The Jobs Fair/ Career Marketplace was hosted at Sefton Adult and Community Learning Centre in Cambridge Road on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A range of 21 ring-fenced jobs, apprenticeships and structured work placements were available on the day. In addition, young people had access to our partner services including financial advice, work benefit calculations, budgeting, debt management and mental health support. There was also support from our Sefton@work, our NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. **15** partners attended and **16** young people attended the event. **1** young person was offered an apprenticeship and **2** have been offered guaranteed interviews and future taster days with an employer.
- As part of the Careers Marketplace, we ring-fenced 21 vacancies for our care experienced young people, with a range of employers including Sefton Council Apprenticeship Team, Sefton Carers, New Directions, Michail Hotel & Leisure, Autism Initiatives, Chapel House Motors, Fun4Kidz, Heron Foods, Millmead Optical Group, McDonalds, KFC, Ranstad Education and Wyndsor's World of Shoes. These vacancies are still live or on extended application period and have been circulated to key partners for them to promote to their young people, who will each be offered a guaranteed interview if they chose to make an application. Support to complete applications is available through both Sefton@work and Career Connect.
- The Council has entered into a 1-year Employment and Enterprise pilot project with Merseyside Expanding Horizons Big Onion project, based in the Strand Shopping Centre. This pilot project aims to support up to 10 care experienced young people by providing an effective employment pathway to enable them to access and sustain employment or self-employment opportunities. The package of support will include a person-centred approach to enable participants to safely explore entrepreneurialism and business start-up. The pilot includes a range of key skills such as confidence building, team-working and workplace communications as well as specific skills including business planning, customer service and managing finance.
- The Charter has featured as a social value ask in a number of Procurement exercises such as the recent NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service contracting, and the MLEC regeneration programme for Southport Town Deal. This has required all tenderers to sign up to the Charter.

- Improved partnership working between the key partners, and contribution from the Charter project to the Council's wider Improving Education Training and Employment Outcomes Task group co-ordinated by John Short.
- Corporate parenting staff have secured significant contributions from Charter employers for Christmas celebrations for the young people in the form of gifts and entertainment.

### **Lessons Learned from the Charter**

Over the summer of 2023, the Charter steering group considered our progress across the Council and reflected on some lessons learned to inform future priorities. The key lessons we need to address can be captured as follows:

- Work Readiness needs to be the single biggest issue for all partners as it has been the most common barrier to progress for young people referred into the Charter process. This is exacerbated by gaps in their careers educational guidance and knowledge and is linked to young people's low confidence about their abilities and their frequently constrained ambition for future achievement in the world of work.
- We need to continue to listen to our young people about what they need from the Charter and use our partnership to deliver these needs ( eg the Home repairs sessions)
- We need to ensure our Charter opportunities represent a broad and diverse range of opportunities in line with the interests and requirements of our young people.
- We have some hugely committed employers, willing to work with us in a flexible, responsive and supportive manner to help the progression of our young people.
- We should assess whether there is more the Council can do as an employer to match the commitment seen by some of our stakeholder partners in providing quality opportunities.
- Remuneration for our young people seeking employment needs to align with their financial situation to help them sustain themselves.
- We need to find new ways to target Charter opportunities so that our young people with care experience benefit from them without feeling singled out from their peer group

### **Moving Forward with the Charter**

We have identified a number of key pieces of work we intend to take forward in the next period. These are:

- Working closely with Sefton's Childrens Social Care services to promote their aims to increase the number of our young people in staying-put arrangements after 18 or other more stable placements with foster carers. Making use of Sefton@work to promote fostering as an option for our service users.
- Creating more opportunities for the Voice of Care Experienced People to be heard.

- Offer interventions which could be taken up from an earlier age to build confidence, grow aspirations and increase knowledge about our local labour market.
- Continue to offer Charter events including the following which are in the pipeline and will be delivered in the coming months. These include:

Hugh Baird College and Kier Construction will deliver a Home Repairs workshop for care experienced young people who are living or about to live independently. This has been designed in direct response to needs articulated by our young people. The sessions will focus on domestic repairs & maintenance skills such as fixing kitchen and bathroom sinks, taps, toilets, washing machines etc. All participants will also receive lunch, support with travel and a free goody bag and voucher.

United Utilities will offer care experienced young people aged 15 – 17, the opportunity to participate in a Personal Development Day and a tour of their Lingley Mere Site. Transport and lunch will be provided and there will be an opportunity to meet the staff, gain support with CV production, Interview Preparation and Mock Interviews.

K2 Architects have also offered young people an opportunity to meet with them to understand how a busy architecture practice in Liverpool operates, as well as learning about the different roles available within their company and the wider construction/design sector. After lunch, young people will meet the Company Director and attend a workshop on CVs and interview skills.

## **TOURISM & EVENTS SERVICE**

### **Events**

#### **Southport Food & Drink Festival – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

- Booking forms for traders are being updated and will be sent out at the beginning of January.
- The different categories at the festival are Street Food, Producers, Exhibitors, Bars, Tea & Coffee.
- Infrastructure is being secured and any contracts that have finished are being re tendered via The Chest NW

#### **Southport Air Show – 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> July**

- Trader booking forms are being updated and will be sent out in January.
- The Flying Display Management is currently out to tender. Once this have been finalised the successful company will start to obtain prices and availability of aircraft.
- The beach will not be used for parking in 2024 – alternative arrangements are being looked in to.
- The crowd line will be moved in from 150m to 50m to utilise the parts of the beach that are in the best condition.
- Infrastructure is being secured with new contracts out to tender via The Chest NW.

- Liaison with the Armed Forces regarding ground attractions will take place in the New Year.

### **British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September**

- Applications have been received from 10 companies wishing to participate in the event in 2024.
- The draw has taken place and 6 companies have been selected to compete over the 2 nights.
- The selected companies will attend an onsite briefing early in the New Year. This will include a site visit and the competition rules will be talked over with the Competition Clerk.
- Infrastructure is being secured.

### **Destination Marketing**

- Destination Campaign – The Christmas campaign includes Digital audio (radio), OOH (48 sheet digital sites) social media, website updates and e-newsletter to our database (circa 50,000 contacts). We are working on Christmas in conjunction with Southport BID.
- PR – We have retained our PR agency (Social Communications) after going out for quotes for the 2024 calendar year. Their Christmas release has secured coverage in a number of publications including The Echo, Lancs Live and The Guide
- Visitor Guide – Work is nearing completion on the 2024 guide. This will go to print in January (print costs lower in January than December) Distribution will commence at the end of January.
- Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2024 guide is complete and delivered. It will be distributed alongside the visitor Guide at the end of January. There has also been a small local radio / digital campaign running through October and into November.
- E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 52,000 with the addition of 2022/2023 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience (the latest being as part of the Christmas campaign).
- Travel Trade – Our stand at British Tourism & Travel Show (March 2024) has been booked. We attended The Group Leisure & Travel Show in Milton Keynes on 5 October, this was on a stand-share basis with Liverpool. It was reasonably successful, and contacts made will be assessed before committing to 2024.
- Advertising continues to be placed in key travel trade publications. Three pieces of editorial have been written and free additional space for this has been secured with all ads booked to date.
- We have renewed our membership with AGTO (Association of Group Travel Organisers) for 2024.
- Golf – We continue to work with England's Golf Coast and Southport Golf Tours to ensure better co-ordination between the three partners and a draft golf activity plan has been produced.
- Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 102 (104 this time last year).

## **MLEC**

- The MLEC project continues to make good progress, RIBA Stage 3 completed March 2023 and Stage 4 completed October 2023.
- ASM Global are the preferred operator, the biggest events venue operator in the world. We are now in the final stages of agreeing Agreement of Lease and Lease.
- The procurement of the build contractor is complete with all submissions scored and checked.
- Procurement of the demolition & enabling works and main contract works progressing.
- Planning approval was received in April 2023, we are now in the process of discharging all pre-commencement conditions
- PCSA and Enabling works package to follow on from Utility Diversions by the Statutory Authorities.
- Hoarding and site set up commenced August 2023
- Utility diversions progressing. Main United Utilities drain diversion technical approvals received, associated Legals and other works are currently in progress and will continue until the end of 2023.

## **MLEC Social Value**

- On the 16<sup>th</sup> November 100 year 5 & 6 students from Southport Learning Trust gathered together at Waterfront Hotel, Southport to design the first phase of images for the MLEC safety hoardings. The location of the event was important to enable the students to visually connect with the project and therefore the task in hand rather than images on a screen.
- The event was hugely successful, and all students were engaged and excited by the project.

The students' designs were based around three themes:

- All the things I love about Southport.
- When I think of a construction project, this is what I see.
- When I visit Southport, I like to see the following nature / animals.

The designs will be applied to the hoardings in due course.

- In partnership with The Uniform Hub at Compassion Acts Southport, we have worked with the MLEC professional team and Southport Accommodation partners to donate 'Christmas Eve' boxes. In just a few weeks a total of 55 boxes were donated and given to families on 15<sup>th</sup> December when collecting uniform items for the new school term for 2024. This is the first time this initiative has been implemented and the hope is to build on its initial success for Christmas 2024.
- Following on from the introductory visit to Hugh Baird two masterclasses have taken place.
- 30<sup>th</sup> November members of Sefton Council and the MLEC professional team presented a session focussed on 'Women in Construction'. The session received positive feedback and there are plans to replicate the session at Southport College.

- The Convention Bureau has supported several local accommodation businesses with support towards sustainability as part of site visits in preparation of judging from Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards.

## **REGENERATION SERVICE**

### **Southport Town Deal**

A range of projects are being supported through Southport Town Deal and form part of the Southport Town Deal programme for generating economic growth.

### **Marine Lake Events Centre and Water & Light Show**

The Regeneration Service continues to provide significant resource and invaluable support to the progress of the many workstreams and activities associated with the delivery of the MLEC, and to manage the financial and audit reporting, deep dive reviews and grant returns to both DLUHC and the Combined Authority.

### **Southport Market**

Southport Market continues to operate successfully and contribute to the vitality of the town centre with the range of food and drink on offer at the market and flexible events space. One of the first Town Deal projects to be completed, the market has attracted thousands of customers to date and continues to attract visitors from Southport and beyond.

### **Enterprise Arcade**

The Enterprise Arcade has just moved forward with its next key milestone with the appointment of the contractor Skyline who will start work in Jan 2024. Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project and will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport. Design work is finished for the construction contract and the contractor is due to start in the new year.

### **Les Transformation de Southport**

The first phase of transportation improvements, focusing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, Eastbank Street. Market Street and Eastbank Street is progressing with further detailed design work. Further consultation is proposed with local businesses to share the details and minimise disruption. Work is anticipated to commence in spring 2024. This exciting project should help transform this area of the town centre by updating and improving the quality of the public realm and improving directional signage.



## **Building a Better Customer Experience**

This key training programme has been operation for a year now and is progressing well.

The pilot of the Building Better Customer Experience Training with Southport College has now been completed, in total 68 learners participated in the pilot including existing learners currently enrolled at the college and employees of a local business. The feedback received during and after the pilot programme was exceptionally positive and Southport College are now proposing to roll the course out to larger cohorts to meet demand. Training for volunteers and workless people through Sefton's Adult & Community Learning service is also proposed as part of this pilot programme. Southport College have collaborated with 27 businesses north of the borough, they have also delivered focus groups with a range of learners and feedback was very positive, learners felt that the modules covered a range of topics which have enhanced their skills and increased confidence levels.

## **Southport Cove – The Esplanade**

An Exclusivity Agreement is now in place with GSL the team behind the Cove Resort proposals for the Esplanade site in Southport. The agreement gives GSL 18 months to work on the details of the scheme and prior to agreement from the Council on any future lease arrangement for development of the site. During the 18-month period GSL will be expected to progress planning and all matters relating to delivery of the project on this site.

## **BOOTLE**

### **Bootle Strand Repurposing**

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Cabinet agreed the 5 year Business Plan for Bootle Strand Shopping Centre and transformation project including agreement to progress to the next stage with the £20m levelling up funding approved in March 2023. A key catalyst project for Bootle's wider regeneration, this decision marks a major milestone in progressing this complex project whilst also keeping the Strand open to support the community that rely on its shops and services.

A shop unit has been opened up in the Strand (Former Durham beds unit) by one of the main entrances to share the emerging plans for the Strand, secure feedback from the public and share the proposed first stage of demolition work which has been granted planning approval December 2023. More details can be found here [Plans approved for next stage of Bootle Strand redevelopment \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/plans-approved-for-next-stage-of-bootle-strand-redevelopment)

The £20m DLUHC funding will assist with the first phase of delivery work which will include and build on the Salt and Tar events space. Following the announcement of Tom Jones playing in August 2024, the construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period. An operational manager has been appointed to manage the site and organised the

marketing, trader recruitment and site logistics for the Festive Food and Drink Market event and fair held on 8-10 December 2023 and supporting The Strand Centre with their Christmas event on the 25<sup>th</sup> November.

## **Crosby Lakeside**

The new Bunk Barn at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre has now been completed and initial information about the accommodation venue is being shared with local schools, clubs and other organisations who might be interested in hiring it for activities.



## **AINSDALE ON SEA**

### **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works**

Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council announced in 2023 that it would be looking to develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to the feedback received.

The Council have appointed a specialist planning and development consultancy to undertake a feasibility study for the coastal gateway. The consultant, Turley, will look at all assets at the site, including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operational bases, and options for their development.

Further details can be found here - [Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/council-shares-next-steps-for-ainsdale-on-sea)

### **Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets**

In addition to the above the contract for the refurbishment of Ainsdale toilets including the provision of a changing places toilet started on site in October. This forms part of a wider programme of work for the installation of four Changing Places toilets (Ainsdale, Victoria Park, Dunes and Litherland Sports Centre.) Work is anticipated to complete in Spring/Summer 2024 to comply with funding requirements.

### **Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.**

Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.

Sefton is considering and assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest, as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site will continue (Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#) and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#) )

### **Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way**

In February 2023 Cabinet considered the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Since then further additional properties have now been acquired and a renewed effort to bring in the remaining ownerships is progressing in earnest. Parallel to this process, agents have been appointed to continue to market the site, in order to support the Council's ambitions for change and redevelopment of the site. Expressions of interest are continuing to come forward from the market and members are being updated on progress.