

Appendix B

Job Centre main developments

1. Latest figures show unemployment in Merton(7.3%) lower than London average (8.2%)but higher than GB average(6.3%) for all age groups
2. Increase in last year are 154% increase to around 10K claims. 18-24 are 180% increase to 1550 claims.

But.the biggest increases are to be found in the more affluent Wimbledon constituency where all claims up 200% and 18-24 up by 267%
3. Traditionally the east of the borough containing Pollards Hill and other areas of social housing have been the focus of DWP activity but recent figures show the increases in our non traditional areas. Does align to our place based approach
4. We have recruited over 70 new work coaches in Merton-doubling the staffing resource. We have also established a dedicated New Claims team meaning work coaches are able to continue talking to and helping claimants rather than being reallocated to that role (important though it is)
5. To accommodate these staff and in line with current social distancing guidelines we have secured a new temporary Jobcentre site-The Grange, Central Road. This is expected to go live in June/July 2021. Until then the new staff will undertake learning and consolidation in a serviced office site in Wimbledon (digital interactions only) Face to face interaction will only recommence when Government guidelines allow and work coaches will have on going discretion to deliver their interventions in the most appropriate format for the claimant-whether face to face, digital or a combination of both
6. We have excellent working relationships with many LA departments and sit on a number of strategic groups including Merton Partnership Executive , Safer and Stronger Merton and the Merton IOM and GMap
7. We meet regularly with the Economic Development team as well as Leaving Care Teams, Welfare and Benefits, Housing and TFEA as well as close links to Towards Employment the council led employment programme and external partners such as Clarion and Moat housing and Pollards Hill Community Centre
8. Merton Chamber of Commerce are the Kickstart Gateway provider and we have several Kickstart successes with a Merton candidate starting with Diamond Riding School (for disabled riders) Merton Council looking to become a Kickstart Employer following the recent rule change regarding the number of placements.

9. We have 2 Youth Hub bids moving towards sign off. One is LA led bid based out of Sound Lounge premises near Morden tube and one led by South Thames College Group at their Mitcham/Merton campus
10. We have an innovative on line monthly DWP session led by me delivered in partnership with Merton Libraries-in its second month delivering on benefit/Jobcentre topics. (What do DWP offer? How to navigate your way around your UC account)
11. Specialist provision for the borough include programmes for: Lone Parents; Graduates; 18-24 year olds; First and Second Line IT; Ex offenders as well as national programmes Job Finding Support (JFS), Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS), Work and Health Programme (WHP) and we share vacancies and opportunities with LA, external partners and Towards Employment
12. New national programmes for the longer term unemployed and for the self-employed are due to start April and 'Autumn' respectively