

Black Country City Deal

Working Together Project Evaluation:

Findings from the first phase of qualitative research, observations & data analysis

April 2016

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Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to all those who supported the work involved in conducting this research and evaluation. Particular mention goes to the Black Country Working Together Project Team at the Accord Group, the Community Connectors and provider staff for giving their time to help support site visits, arranging interviews with participants, and participating in the qualitative research.

We would also like to thank all the project participants who took part in the qualitative research.

Executive Summary

This is the first published report from the evaluation of the Black Country City Deal Working Together Project. It was completed by an independent research team from Future Excel, who are experts in the field of community and employment support services. The first wave of research carried out between September 2015 and March 2016 comprised of desk based research, analysis of project data and qualitative research (in-depth interviews and observations) with project stakeholders, providers, staff and participants.

The project forms part of the wider Black Country City Deal proposal between government and the Local Enterprise Council and Local Authorities. It is a five year demonstration project aimed to reduce welfare dependency and increase employment in areas of high unemployment. The original delivery model has three key pillars; employment support services, community support and financial incentives. The funding from government is £2.8m, with an additional £2.8m provided locally through match funding. With a focus on social housing tenants, it aims to increase the employability of 2,800 unemployed and economically inactive residents, with the aim of helping 900 into sustained work. The project modelling estimated delivery of a £1.1m reduction in the welfare bill and £19.7m in earnings gains. The project is monitoring a range of other outcomes and measures including increased confidence, digital inclusion, skills and qualifications. The accountable body for the project is Walsall MBC, and the day to day management is undertaken by the project lead, Accord Group. The project is overseen, guided and supported by a steering group of local stakeholders.

The project commenced in April 2014, with the first year focused on implementing project infrastructure, recruiting the project team and working with key stakeholders to agree operational requirements to deliver the project strands. This included undertaking a mapping and gapping exercise of local services and an assessment of needs in the areas with the highest levels of worklessness across the Black Country. The identified areas for the project are Darlaston South, Walsall; Kates Hill/St Thomas' ward, Dudley; Bilston East, Wolverhampton; and Princes End, Sandwell. The delivery of direct services and support commenced in April 2015 through a network of 8 contracted providers/supply chains from the not-for-profit, charitable and public sector. One of the contracted providers lost a key supply chain partner when they closed down during 2015, and one contracted provider and its supply chain exited the project on a voluntary basis at the end of 2015.

The providers deliver a range of support to participants from community based venues. Support includes advice and guidance, job-search skills and coaching, skills based training, employer led/vocational skills, self-employment, work experience, volunteering, mentoring, confidence building, therapeutic activities, job-brokerage and matching. Some provision is targeted at particular needs e.g. supporting people with health conditions or older people and some target a wide range of needs through the delivery of a partnership/consortia approach. The project recruited four community connectors, employed by the project lead and hosted by the largest social housing provider in each area to facilitate targeted recruitment. The community connectors role is to develop relationships and trust with the local community and facilitate project delivery through support and signposting. There are two community connectors in post at the end of March 2016.

The project has developed a range of management and monitoring systems to capture project data and comply with accountable body and funders audit requirements. The project uses Work Stars™ which measures and supports progress for adults out of work or returning to the workplace.

Between April 2015 and March 2016, 711 unemployed and economically inactive residents have engaged with the project on a voluntary basis. Nearly half of those participants started the project 6 or less months ago. Over a third of participants are from the Darlaston South area, with the lowest participant cohort from Kates Hill/St Thomas' ward. Overall, female participants and those aged over 25 years are the largest participants groups, with BME participation rates broadly in line with area rates. Around a tenth (69) of project participants moved into employment during the year, with the job sustainment points for this cohort occurring between September 2015 and September 2016. Nearly half of those who found jobs had been out of work for two years or more, and 7% having never worked. Proportionally, more residents from the Kate's Hill and Bilston East area found work, with men and younger people also more likely to move into work.

Challenges in implementing successful and targeted engagement strategies early in 2015/16 led to a data review by the research team in September 2015. This sought to specifically establish the available 'pool' of social housing residents, as opposed to the generic number of workless residents across all housing tenures in the area. It was concluded that in some areas nearly 80% of the total social housing cohort would need to be engaged to deliver project targets. As a result, from the end of March 2016 all unemployed and economically inactive residents who are in or require social housing in the identified area can access the project.

This research is based on early experiences of the project and should not be used to draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness of the project. This will require longer term analysis, including examining in more detail sustainment and progress data as it becomes available. However, a number of emerging themes start to help us identify what has worked well in helping unemployed and economically inactive people back to work. The findings suggest that key factors include having:

- A physical presence in the heart of the community where the target group lives, that can act as a hub, focal point and 'go-to' place.
- Co-located and joined up multi-agency and provider services and support.
- A targeted engagement and outreach strategy, with activities focusing specifically on the target group, rather than the community as a whole.
- Access to a wide range of high quality employment support which incorporates employer facing and work based interventions e.g. work experience, volunteering, pre-employment training and skills, matching and brokerage services, interview preparation.
- Sufficient lead time built into implementation plans to establish and build trust with both the local community and individuals.

The project has also learnt a number of lessons including:

- That collecting and systematically reviewing relevant and up to date area based data is key to ensuring the project meets local needs, the deliverables remain achievable and targeted delivery strategies can be developed and implemented.
- All stakeholders and providers need to have clear roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of services and competition within the projects
- Future delivery plans and profiles should adequately and realistically reflect the time required to implement new provision and support.

The next steps will be to carry out the second wave of longitudinal and thematic qualitative research and observations with stakeholders, providers and participants; relevant surveys and further analysis of data. To achieve this further development work is required relating to data collection processes for soft and progress outcomes and the collation of additional participant and provider case studies. This and the subsequent research will inform the Interim Evaluation Report which is scheduled for completion by the end of October 2016.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 This report presents preliminary findings based on the first wave of qualitative research on the delivery of the Black Country City Deal Working Together Project. The findings incorporate evidence drawn from several elements of research:

- Interviews with the project lead (Accord) and the Community Connectors
- Interviews with community and employment support providers involved in the project
- Interviews with participants eligible for and participating in the project
- Observations of interactions between provider staff and participants in the project.
- Observation of partnership and management arrangements including a lead partner information event for providers, contracted delivery providers partner and contract management meeting and monitoring visits.

1.2 The report also includes findings from analysis of:

- Project and performance data from the beginning of the delivery phase in April 2015 to the end of March 2016.
- Desk-based review of relevant documents and reports including year one procurement exercise, steering group minutes and provider review meetings
- The review of social housing tenant data and baseline data, an update and refresh of which was undertaken by the research team in September 2015.

1.3 Because of the qualitative nature of the research reported here, and the fact that the data is based on experiences at an early stage of the implementation of the project delivery, they should not be used to draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness or impact of the programme. As further results become available from subsequent stages of the research and evaluation between 2016-2018, including quantitative evidence from survey and administrative data, the scope for drawing stronger conclusions will increase. The results presented in this report provide an early qualitative and quantitative insight into the project delivery including the first operational year of community and employment support provision, the role of the Community Connectors and the experiences of early participants in the programme.

SECTION 2 – SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Background to the City Deal

2.1.1. The Black Country City Deal Working Together project forms part of the wider City Deal proposal by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Borough Council, Walsall Council and Wolverhampton. Originally referred to as the Housing, Jobs and Prosperity Demonstration Project, the agreement with government¹ described this element as being able to ‘test new ways to reduce unemployment in local areas of deprivation’.

2.1.2 The aim was to set up a five year project to reduce welfare dependency and increase employment in areas of high unemployment; learning from successful programmes in the US² and aligning with the Troubled Families and Help to Work programme. The project would operate within identified geographical areas to deliver an integrated ‘Journey to Work’ that aligns mainstream support service alongside bespoke interventions tailored to maximise value added.

2.2 Focus on social housing tenants in identified locations

2.2.1 The original project outline made reference to social housing neighbourhoods where periods of worklessness amongst residents were often longer in duration than their counterparts in other housing tenures. The outline included a commitment to expand and improve local partnerships between local authorities, social housing providers, skills providers and welfare benefit agencies.

2.3 The Original Delivery Model

The original model had three key pillars:

2.3.1 Employment support services

This included intensive job search, career planning, CV preparation and tailored Information, Advice, Guidance on jobs and benefits; pre-employment training and skills such as literacy, numeracy, employability and bespoke employer led training; mentoring; work trials, work experience and work placements; and post-employment support and re-employment activity to aid progression.

2.3.2 Community Support

This was described as support to assist residents from the same household, family or peer group.

2.3.3 Financial incentives

It was envisaged that this would be a combination of a flexible support ‘bursary’ to support the costs associated with the transition to work, which may be repayable over time once a set salary has been achieved. This would be coupled with rent

¹ www.the-blackcountry.com/Upload/01/Black_Country_City_Deal_Document.pdf

² E.g. Jobs Plus – www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/Promoting%20Work%20in%20Public%20Housing%20ES.pdf

freezes from housing providers and enhanced by the use of financial incentives for providers using performance-related payments for staff based on job sustainability and earnings progression.

2.4 The Funding

2.4.1 The Black Country City Deal agreement includes the provision of £2.8m by central government to support the delivery of the project; with expected match funding of a further £2.8 m provided by local authorities, social housing and other providers.

2.5 The outputs, outcomes and impacts

2.5.1 The project will focus on increasing the employability of 2,800 long-term unemployed and economically inactive Black Country residents in areas with high concentration of worklessness with the aim of helping 900 into sustained work. The original project modelling estimated that it could deliver £1.1m reduction in the welfare bill associated with savings on transition from unemployment to work and a further £19.7m associated with earnings gains. The project is monitoring a range of other outcomes and measures including increased confidence, digital inclusion, skills and qualifications.

SECTION 3 – EVALUATION PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

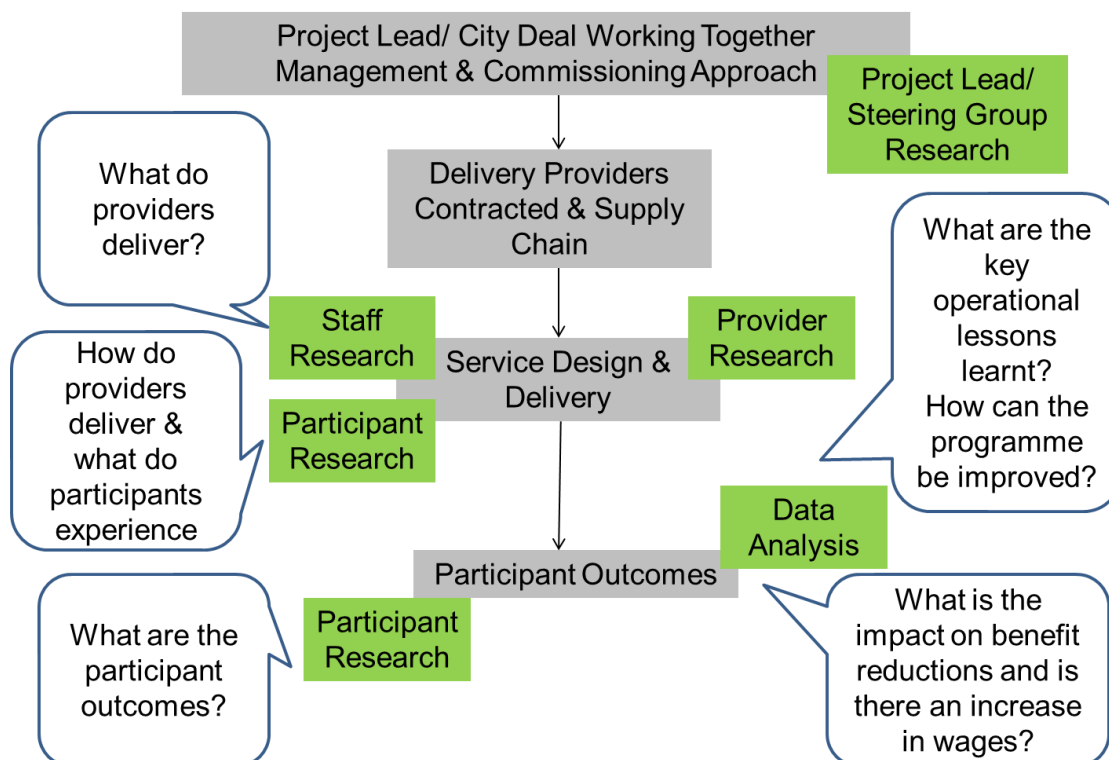
3.1 The Evaluation Overall

3.1.1 Background

Following a competitive tendering exercise, the Project commissioned Future Excel³ in autumn 2015, to undertake an independent evaluation of the five year project (2014 – 2019). The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent review of the five year project including:

- An assessment of what works in assisting unemployed people into sustainable employment and equally an assessment of what hasn't worked.
- The delivery and effectiveness of the project by assessing participant and provider experiences and outcomes.
- An interim and final report which will be used to disseminate this knowledge and evidence more widely.
- Research, findings and recommendations which will form part of the toolkit designed to help practitioners in rolling out similar projects in the future.

3.1.2 Structure of Research - Overview



3.1.3 High level research questions

- Project Management & Commissioning – How does the project management and local commissioning model influence service delivery and outcomes? Why do providers design their services the way they do?

³ a locally based consultancy and experts and specialists in the employment related and support service sector

- Delivery – What services do providers deliver to participants and how do they deliver them? What is the participant experience? What are the key operational lessons learnt from delivery?
- Outcomes – What are the outcomes and destinations of participants? What is the impact on reducing benefits, job entry and sustainment?

3.1.4 The project management and commissioning model

The evaluation will look at how the approaches to local project management and commissioning impacts and influences service delivery and participant outcomes. This includes desk based research; review of relevant management & monitoring documents/reports and 4 fieldwork waves⁴ of qualitative interviews and observations with stakeholders, the project lead, current and previous delivery providers and subcontractors.

3.1.5 Delivery Models

Evaluation of the support and service delivery itself involves research with both providers and participants. This research builds on and tests the information provided by providers during commissioning and outlined in their tenders.

Provider research

The provider research element of the evaluation aims to identify not only the service provided, but the factors shaping its nature, which will vary between providers, with local conditions and between different groups of participants. The provider research is being conducted through:

- Three waves of observational research⁵ comprising of observations of key interventions and interactions between participants and provider staff
- Three waves of qualitative research⁶ with Pilot provider managers and frontline staff, Lead /managing partner representatives and staff :

Participant research

The research with participants is exploring their end-to-end experience of the project and ascertaining their views on services and support received, the relevance and helpfulness of these, and outcomes from the programme as a whole. Several waves of research are being undertaken, employing a mixture of cross-sectional and longitudinal design:

- Up to four waves of qualitative in-depth interviews with participants in February/March 2016, Mid-2016, spring and autumn 2017, using a mixture of face-to-face and telephone interview methods;
- Two waves of survey of participants (using a mixture of telephone / written / online) in Mid-2016 with a follow-up wave in Autumn 2017.

3.1.6 Measuring outcomes and impact

An assessment of the project drawing on both administrative data and data generated by other strands of the evaluation will be used to identify the factors associated with variations in project effectiveness, the social return on investment and assess overall impact.

⁴ Wave 1 – February – March 2016; Wave 2 – Mid-2016; Wave 3 – Mid 2017; Wave 4 – 2018.

⁵ Wave 1 – February – March 2016; Wave 2 – Mid-2016; Wave 3 – Mid 2017

⁶ Wave 1 – February – March 2016; Wave 2 – Mid-2016; Wave 3 – Mid 2017; Wave 4 – 2018.

3.2. Coverage of this report and methods

This, the first published report from the evaluation, draws on several elements of the project management and delivery evaluation strands, described above, namely:

- The first wave of qualitative research with stakeholder, project lead, provider managers, front line staff and community connectors across the four identified areas.
- The first wave of qualitative in-depth interviews with participants (across all providers and in all identified areas).
- Observations of interactions between participants and provider staff (across all providers and in all identified areas).
- Desk based research and review of relevant project documents.
- Analysis of initial Project Data from April 2015 – March 2016.

The interview instruments including the interview protocol used for all qualitative interviews can be found in Annex 2, and copies of all interview/topics guides will be included in the interim and final reports.

3.2.1 Qualitative research with delivery providers and project lead

Interviews with providers

This element of the research focused on the provision delivered by the 8 contracted delivery providers (and their subcontractors) across all 4 localities. All of the organisations included in this phase of the study had provided direct support to participants. It should be noted that, within the project, end-to-end provision (from assessment to in work support) is provided, in some cases, by leads themselves and in other cases by their subcontractors within supply chains or both. The sampling approach adopted in choosing the organisations for interview was, therefore, primarily focused on ensuring that all contracted/lead providers were included, and a sample of sub-contractors from each of these lead providers. The interviews included one contracted delivery provider who left/exited the project voluntarily during the latter part of 2015.

The provider types, and the different models of provision they offer are explained more fully in Section Four. A summary table can be found at Annex 2. The design of the research was such that, within each organisation, the local manager was to be interviewed, as well as interviews with 'frontline' staff delivering the project. Overall 17⁷ senior level managers (3 interviews via telephone) and 17 front line project delivery staff were interviewed.

Interviews with project lead staff & community connectors

In parallel to the research with providers, qualitative interviews were undertaken with the project lead staff responsible for the day to day project management function and delivery of the community connector elements. Within the project lead, research aimed to capture the views of the Project Director, partnership & monitoring officer and community connectors who have contact with the wider community and participants involved in the project.

⁷ 3 of these individuals work in micro organisations and therefore also deliver front line services to participants but have been classified as managers only for the purposes of the report, rather than frontline staff.

The achieved sample is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Spread of achieved sample of providers interviews

Type of Organisation	No. of Organisations	No. of Individuals
Lead Partner	1	4
Contracted Delivery Provider	8	27
Supply Chain Provider	6	7
Total	15	38

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was undertaken from February to March 2016. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured topic guide, which differed for project lead, provider managers and for front-line staff and community connectors. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, except in a couple of cases where it was not feasible to have the interview recorded. In these cases, notes were taken and a visit note drawn up. There will be follow-up interviews (longitudinal) as part of the subsequent waves of research between July-September 2016.

3.2.2 Qualitative research with participants

The key questions that the evaluation sets out to explore through research with participants, focused on their experiences of the project, including the type and quality of services received, and the degree to which services were perceived as tailored to their specific needs. In respect of the participant journey, they will be at one of the following five stages:

- Initial engagement with project or provider ('new entrants');
- During engagement, with project or provider ('engaged participants');
- Job entry ('job entrants');
- In sustained employment of 13 or 26 weeks;
- End of engagement with the project or no longer engaging.

In the first wave of fieldwork, to which this report refers, interviews were carried out with participants in the first three stages. In later waves of fieldwork Stage 4 and 5 participants will be added, and subsequent reports in the evaluation series will consider the experiences of participants at these stages.

When interviewing participants who were engaging with the project (either new entrants or engaged) the aim was to explore perceptions about the project; closeness to work, aspirations and expectations, motivation, and barriers and needs or experiences of working with providers, changes in motivation, aspiration, and progress towards work (including the perceived impact of the project). For those who have moved into work (job entry stage) interviews focused on how entry to work was achieved and experience of in-work support from the provider. The most appropriate research method for addressing these issues and the interactions between them is qualitative, in-depth interviews.

All remaining 7 contracted providers were selected as fieldwork sites on the basis of their varied ranges of organisation and provision. Some provided the majority of services through their own organisation, while others subcontracted some provision.

Some had developed large and extensive supply chains, while others relied on far fewer organisations to provide services.

The providers drew their own sample of representative participants from new entrants and engaged participants; and where possible job entrants. In total, interviews were conducted with 34 participants; 5.5% of total project participants (615) on programme at the start of February 2016. Some risk was inherent in this sampling approach that providers might filter participants and include only those who would give a positive account of their experience. To avoid this, 'early leavers/non-completers' participant interviews will take place as part of the second wave of participant research. The initial sample will be used as a panel and further interviews will take place with them in mid-2016 and in 2017. This will allow a richer understanding of people's journeys back to work, and data on change, for example in motivation, aspirations, health, and the links between these. Future waves of participant qualitative research will capture larger numbers samples through the use of focus groups and forums, in addition to the qualitative one to one interviews. Figure 2 presents the principal characteristics and geographical spread of the achieved samples.

Figure 2: Principal & geographical spread characteristics of participants interviewed

	New Entrants & Engaged Participants	Job Entrants	Total
Under 25 years	2	1	3
Over 25	29	2	31
Male	11	1	12
Female	20	2	22
BME	8	0	8
Bilston East	8	2	10
Princes End	6	0	6
Darlaston South	12	1	13
Kates Hill	5	0	5

3.2.3 Observational Research

Fifteen observational visits to delivery providers and supply chain partner premises were carried out, as well as attendance at two events (a contracted delivery providers' supply chain meeting and a lead partner information event presenting 2016-18 delivery arrangements).

Various interventions were observed: engagement and enrichment activities; one to one interviews and sessions between advisers and participants, follow-up information, advice and guidance sessions and reviews; group information and training sessions; vocational and therapeutic activities. The interventions observed involved around 55 project participants. The observations were analysed for

information including how the provider staff delivered interventions and interactions; how participants responded and the use of tools and resources.

3.2.4 Presentation of Qualitative Findings

In this report the findings from the provider and participants interviews and observational research are, for the most part, integrated into the relevant report sections.

3.2.5 Analysis of Data

The project team has collated a range of administrative and progress data from the beginning of April 2015, when engagements commenced. Analysis of data from April 2015 –March 2016 can be found in Section 5 of this report.

SECTION 4: FINDINGS & EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 An overview of the Project Journey

4.1.1 Figure 3 below provides an overview and snapshot of key milestones during the first two years of the project.

Figure 3: The First 2 Project Years

		Key Milestones
Year 1 2014 – 2015 (Implementation & Planning)	April - June	Overarching project management arrangements agreed Recruitment of Project Director commences
	June	Project Director Recruited & In Place
	June – November	Partnership Building & Development of Steering Group Mapping & Gapping of existing provision Local Needs Assessment – Baseline Data Implementation, planning and shaping of how the project elements/strands will be delivered.
	December	Additional Project Team recruited & in place Recruitment of Community Connectors commences Procurement for 2015/16 local project delivery commences
	February	Procurement for Research & Evaluation services commences
Year 2 2015 – 2016 Operational Delivery (Year 1)	April	Community Connectors Recruited & In Place
	April - June	Contracted 1 Year delivery commences
	July	Research & Evaluation Contract Agreed (July 2015)
	Sept – October	Social Housing Data Analysis & Baseline Data Refresh Undertaken (Research Team)
	September - March	Desktop research & Wave 1 Qualitative Research (Research Team)
	Feb-March	Procurement for 2016 – 2018 local delivery commences
	March	Transitional Arrangements for 2015/16 delivery agreed

4.1.2 The first year of the project (2014/15) was spent implementing project infrastructure and working with key stakeholders to agree the operational requirements needed to deliver the key project elements and strands. This involved refreshing local needs assessments and undertaking local mapping and gapping of existing provision to ensure complementary and joined up project provision was implemented. No operational delivery of support services took place during this year.

4.1.3 Delivery of support elements commenced in April 2015 (Year 2 of the project). The project plans a further two full years of operational delivery of the key elements and integrated project strands (2016 – 18), following completion of a second commissioning round. The final project year (2018/19) will focus on supporting/capturing sustainable outcomes and evaluation.

4.2 Project Management Arrangements

4.2.1 Accountable Body & Project Lead

The accountable body for the City Deal project is Walsall MBC, with the day to day management of the project delegated by the Local Enterprise Partnership and Black Country Local Authorities to social housing provider, Accord Group. The project is led and managed on a day to day basis by a dedicated Project Team, led by a Project Director who was appointed in June 2014. There is a detailed grant agreement, quarterly reporting, monitoring and claim process in place between the accountable body (Walsall MBC) and Accord to manage the contractual and financial arrangements. There is a small project team in place comprising of the Project Director, Partnership & Monitoring Officer and Project Administrator. They are supported with back office and marketing functions by the wider Accord Group infrastructure. Good working relationships and a joined up approach exist between the accountable body and project lead (regular meetings and dialogue, joint monitoring visits to providers). Over time an open and supportive relationship has developed.

4.2.2 Relationship with Funder

A direct relationship between the project team and funder (Cabinet Office/DCLG) has been challenging due to changes in reporting arrangements and funder personnel/decision makers. A point of contact within the funder has recently been identified and key decisions relating to extension of eligible participants and remaining funding have been resolved. There are now regular scheduled teleconferences to review and discuss project progress.

4.2.3 Steering group

There is a steering group in place with representation from the Project Team (Accord Group), Accountable Body (Walsall MBC), Black Country Consortium, Black Country Local Authorities, Housing Providers, DWP/JcP, Voluntary Sector, Local FE Colleges, Talent Match and Training Providers. Its purpose is to oversee, guide and support the delivery of the project. It meets on a regular basis and meetings are documented in writing. There is openness and transparency by the project team with the steering group and the steering group are proactive in their involvement. For

example, impartial members of the steering group formed the assessment panel for the employment support tenders, with the project team acting in an advisory role. A full list of organisations represented on the steering group at the time of this report can be found at Annex 3.

4.2.4 Commissioning Approach to Local Delivery

Following agreement of the Project Steering Group, local provider delivery was commissioned. A series of provider briefing events were held during November and December 2014 across the 'identified' project areas. Key elements of the 'commissioning model' were:

- There was no set specification but support should meet **specific** area needs as identified by the *data analysis* and the *mapping and gapping exercise*⁸ undertaken by the City Deal project team. For example, the Princes End area data showed significant Health & Well Being indicators and priorities which needed to be addressed.
- Proposals should demonstrate innovation approaches to engagement and delivery.
- There should not be duplication of services, where funding already exists.
- Eligibility was aligned to overall project perimeters (defined geographical areas; social housing tenants) but with an additional emphasis on participants over 24 years old and longer term unemployed/economically inactive.
- Participation in the programme would be voluntary & supported by community connectors.
- Consideration should be given in proposals to all strands of the project including employment support, community support and financial incentives.
- Funding would be in the form of a one year grant agreement with contractual and financial target monitoring arrangements in place. The rationale for grant based payments, as opposed to outcome related payments was to support the piloting and testing of approaches, as well as encourage local voluntary and community based organisations to get involved.

The deadline for applications was the 30th January 2015, with a 2-3 month window allocated for assessment, due diligence and contract award (subsequently the majority of contracts commenced May 2016).

4.2.5 Who are the delivery providers?

Following the tendering process outlined above, 8 providers were contracted to operate as 'lead' providers in each of the areas. A list of the providers by identified area, type and their delivery/contracting structure is shown in Annex 1.

- Contracted providers were drawn from the not for profit (1), charitable (4), public/Local Authority Learning (2), and housing (registered social landlord) (1) sectors.
- Of the providers, there was a mix of those proposing to deliver services directly to participants (3), those using a network of sub-contractors / supply

⁸ Mapping & Gapping Activity available on-line at www.the-blackcountry.com/about-us/making-it-happen/black-country-city-deal

chain partners (either end to end or specialist services) (1), or those doing both (4).

- Two of the eight providers were operating their delivery model across multiple areas – one pan-Black Country basis i.e. across all four identified areas and one across the South Black Country (Dudley & Sandwell).
- Each identified area had between 3- 4 providers operating in the area.

4.2.6 Changes to the provider mix and their supply chains

In July 2015, one of the Dudley based contracted providers lost a key supply chain partner, when it closed down and in turn the loss of their primary delivery venue. During the latter part of 2015/early 2016, one of the contracted providers and its supply chain covering the Dudley and Sandwell area left/exited the project on a voluntary basis.

4.2.7 Project Management and Monitoring Arrangements

There is a service level agreement (profiles/targets), monthly reporting, monitoring and claim process in place between the lead partner (Accord Group) and contracted provider to manage the contractual and financial arrangements. The project team has issued a range of guidance and documents to support project evidence requirements and funding compliance rules. Using an in-house bespoke databased/CRM system, the project team collate, record and analyse project management information on a monthly basis. A number of individual performance monitoring meetings, reviews and audits were carried out by the project team during 2015/16, including joint on-site audit activity with the accountable body. A number of operational provider group meetings have taken place, with the intention of sharing project data, updates and good practice. Overall, providers found these meetings helpful, particularly where the focus was sharing practice. Overall, good working and open relationships exist between the project lead and contracted providers. However, some providers considered the management, monitoring, compliance and evidence arrangements (match and outcomes) disproportionate to the size of their individual project, too narrowly defined and time consuming.

4.2.8 Provider Supply Chain Management and Monitoring Arrangements

Five of the eight providers use a supply chain for delivering elements of the projects (either on an end to end service delivery basis or providing specialist and/or clearly defined services). Whilst there were some variations in the way supply chains operated on a day to day basis there were common elements across the board e.g. service level agreements, monthly collation of project data (to reflect the project requirements), co-ordinated dissemination of project documentation and regular meetings and progress reviews. Whilst the majority of supply chain organisations were satisfied with the arrangements and had good working relationships with the contracted provider, some indicated that they would like more opportunities to engage directly with the other providers and the project lead. Monthly grant payment arrangements between the project lead and contracted provider were broadly reflected in the arrangements with their own supply chains. There was one exception where payment to supply chain was on a unit cost basis for actual achievements

(with the introduction of grant payments to some supply chain members only occurring in the last two months of delivery).

4.3 The Delivery Model

4.3.1 Where are the project identified geographical areas?

The geographically defined wards are:

- Bilston East in Wolverhampton
- Darlaston South in Walsall
- Kates Hill and the wider St. Thomas' ward in Dudley
- Princes End (Tipton) in Sandwell

These areas were identified by individual Local Authority stakeholders based on their assessment of local needs. Initially Dudley identified a specific neighbourhood (Kates Hill) within one of its most deprived wards (St. Thomas'), with the project now extending to the whole of the St. Thomas' ward. See section 4.3.3.

4.3.2 Challenges Around the Data & Eligible Pool of Beneficiaries

Detailed information about each area can be found in the Baseline Review and Data Refresh Document compiled by the Research Team in September 2015 (and available from the Project Team). As part of this review, the Project Team requested a specific review of the numbers of unemployed and economically inactive social housing tenants in each area of benefit. The original project baseline data and information related only to the number of unemployed and economically inactive individuals in the general ward population; with no correlation between those who are social housing tenants (eligible project beneficiaries) and those with other types of tenure i.e. private renters and home owners (who fall outside of the current project scope). The data review formed part of the wider baseline refresh but specifically sought to establish the available 'pool' of eligible beneficiaries for the project against the original project targets. The full methodology and report can be found at Annex 4.

4.3.3 Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions from the Review

Applying a range of assumptions and measures the 'potential' unemployed and economically inactive social housing tenant cohort across all areas was circa 5,000; with the split across each area varying in line with the actual number of social housing properties. The volumes range from circa 900 in St. Thomas' ward to 1700 in the Princes End ward. In order to achieve the overall project target of 2800 social housing tenants supported, it would mean the project would need to work with nearly 60% of the total available cohort. However, if the overall project targets remain split evenly across all the four identified areas this would actually mean up to 80% of the cohort would need to be supported in some areas i.e. St. Thomas' ward. Whilst the research team cannot be absolutely definitive in the potential cohort numbers, the research and evidence relating to the profile (economic status and household type) of social housing tenants highlights additional and key factors/considerations in relation to project approaches, engagement and delivery. For example, social renting householders were more likely than other tenures to:

- Contain a householder who was economically inactive; with the economic status of partners following a similar pattern and a higher proportion claiming ESA (long term illness) or ISLP (Lone Parent households). This means many individuals are not currently engaged with or receiving any structured employment support as they are not currently 'required' or expected to look for work.
- Be female; attributed to households being more likely than other groups to have lone parent households.

Following the review and analysis of the social housing data, the identified area of Kate's Hill was extended late in 2015 (following steering group and funder endorsement) to include the whole of St Thomas' ward. However across the board the limited pool of eligible participants remains a challenge.

4.3.4 How do participants engage with the project?

The role of Community Connectors

The development and introduction of the community connectors role (previously referred to as community champions), as part of the community support strand took place between November 2014 and March 2015. The original scope of the role was to work in the community, developing relationships and trust with local people and organisations and facilitating project referrals and engagement through offering support and signposting to relevant provision. The model included employing unemployed or economically inactive individuals who lived or had previously lived or worked in the identified area, with good local area knowledge and a commitment to the principles of the project. Unlike the US jobs plus model, the connectors were offered paid employment, where the community members involved the US Jobs Plus model offered support on a voluntary basis. To support the recruitment and selection process, a two week customised pre-employment training programme with work experience was delivered in conjunction with JcP and a local provider; with guaranteed interviews for all those who completed the training. Four community connectors were appointed and in place between April – May 2015.

Relationship with Social Housing Providers

Whilst employed by the lead project partner (Accord) the community connector roles were 'hosted' by one of the larger social housing provider in each identified area. During 2015/16, the hosts were Walsall Housing Group (Darlaston South), Dudley MBC (Kates Hill/St Thomas), Wolverhampton Homes (Bilston East) and Sandwell MBC (Princes End). The purpose of the hosting arrangements was to facilitate targeted recruitment of eligible social housing tenants. The community connectors would in turn signpost potential participants to the employment support providers and other relevant support in each area.

Where are we now?

There have been a number of challenges faced in implementing these approaches across the board, including some of the host social housing organisations being

unable to share data or find a practical work-around. However, this is not across the board, with evidence of integration and good working arrangements in the Bilston East area. During 2015/16, the project monitored which social housing landlord participants were registered with; monitoring engagements as % of stock in order to develop targeted actions to increase participation rates. Finding individuals with the skills and experience to carry out the role of the community connector has proved challenging. At the end of March 2016, only two of the four community connectors remain in post. However, there is evidence that where the community connector had previous experience of similar community engagement work, combined with good local knowledge relationships across those project areas are positive. There is a current reshaping and extension of the two existing community connector roles, to provide a more focused and co-ordinating function across the project, employment support providers and the wider community.

Direct Community Engagement and Recruitment By Providers & Community Connectors

Both providers and community connectors have undertaken 'direct' recruitment of project participants. This has involved a range of activities from 'door-knocking' in the identified area, networking at community events and venues (local schools), promotion within Jobcentre Plus local offices and running specific 'engagement' events. Specific engagement events used to get residents involved, provide information and a 'hook' into the project have been wide ranging and diverse including community and family fun days, fitness sessions, community learning taster sessions and coffee mornings.

How well have these approaches worked?

Challenges were identified by providers and connectors around duplication of engagement activity and perceived 'competition' for project participants both between community connectors and providers; and between providers. To some extent, duplication/competition has been resolved through the exit of one provider covering Dudley/Sandwell and the loss of two community connectors from the Dudley and Walsall area. However, the project team has been proactive in brokering solutions and there is good evidence of collaborative and joined up approaches e.g. joint events/activities between providers and local community connector.

A specific challenge relating to area based recruitment and engagement activity, where there is mix of social, private rented and owner homed housing is the 'unintended' engagement of ineligible (non-social housing) residents. Whilst providers signposted these residents to other support, most providers felt that as these residents were from a deprived ward, the status of their housing tenure was an arbitrary factor. This is a feature of the project, that differs from the US Jobs Plus model. Jobs Plus was based on a saturation model, where all residents could access support (including those in work) but where the 'developments' targeted were exclusively social housing in nature.

4.3.5. Service and support design and operational project delivery

What do providers offer participants under the project?

Under the commissioning arrangements, providers were expected to develop and deliver support which met the specific 'needs' of unemployed and economically inactive social housing residents in the identified areas. The nature of that service was not specified and providers indicated the level and nature of the support they would offer participants under the project. The result was that whilst broadly speaking, all providers offer a range of universally 'recognised' employment support interventions this was combined with less traditional interventions, approaches to and methods of delivery. Some providers chose to target a wide range of needs through the development of large partnership or consortia models, whilst others focused on a particular support need or group within the identified area e.g. self-employment, supporting individuals with health conditions, older people.

Key Features & Themes of the Delivery Models

Kate's Hill / St Thomas (Dudley)	Darlaston South (Walsall)
<p>Partnership model –outreach, community and employment support through a diverse range of locally based support organisations – with a focus on creative(arts) & community learning interventions as means of engagement & initial delivery.</p> <p>Consortia Model (see below) Self-Employment (see below)</p>	<p>Theme - Older residents – targeted support focusing on unemployed & economically inactive residents aged 45 years or over – with a strong focus on digital inclusion, work experience & employer engagement.</p> <p>Partnership model based on a progressive customer journey moving from community engagement & learning to work-focused pre-employment support to employment</p> <p>Self –Employment (see below)</p>
Princes End (Sandwell)	Bilston East (Wolverhampton)
<p>Theme - Health conditions & disability – integrated therapeutic & employment support focusing on residents with health conditions & disability – with a focus on therapeutic activities as a means of engagement & initial delivery.</p> <p>Consortia Model (see below) Self-Employment (see below)</p>	<p>Use of the arts as a means of engagement & delivery – with a strong focus on mentoring & digital inclusion (through the creation of a community based internet café).</p> <p>Local training provider – with a focus on skills and targeted employer engagement.</p> <p>Self-Employment (see below)</p>

Across all four areas, one provider delivered an entrepreneurial / self-employment support model.

Across Dudley and Sandwell – one provider delivered a consortia model – delivering outreach, community and employment support through a diverse range of locally based support organisations

Identification and level of support

All new participants engaging with the project receive some form of initial assessment to establish the nature and level support required. In the majority of cases, this is delivered through professional discussion between the provider staff and the participant; with plans on the type and level of support to address individual needs captured in an action plan. Engagement with the project is on a voluntary and part-time basis, and a number of participants commented positively regarding the level of choice and flexibility in their engagement and interaction with the project. All providers had in place a timetable and schedule of project interventions, support and review activity, with participants able to access support on a drop in or appointment basis dependent on the nature of the intervention or their individual support plan. There was evidence of review sessions between providers and participants, as well as follow up by providers with those participants who were had stopped engaging with the project.

The nature and extent of support

All interviewed providers were asked for additional detail about the types of support they offered project participants. The most common forms of support offered were job-search skills and coaching, skills based training (literacy, numeracy, language, digital/ICT), employer-led/vocational skills training (health & safety, CSCS, care) work experience & volunteering, mentoring and confidence/ therapeutic activities (craft/drama/horticulture) employer-led pre-employment training and job brokerage/ matching. Other common interventions related to the provision of advice, guidance and support on a wide range of issues including self-employment, housing, benefits and debt/financial; followed by more specialised forms of support dependent on a participant's barriers. Other types of support mentioned related to direct financial assistance for the participants i.e. buying, interview clothes or travel to work costs. (See Annex 5: Support available through providers). The majority of participants interviewed were accessing a wide range of employment support (as detailed above) and often holistic packages of support tailored to their individual needs.

How support is delivered

As part of the research visits to provider premises, how provider staff delivered interventions and how participants (including new entrants) responded was observed. Questions around how support was delivered also formed part of the provider and participant interviews. Provider staff were relaxed, open and welcoming to participants, ensuring participants were quickly put at ease, comfortable and received relevant information prior to commencing any formal interventions. This included the provision of workers fluent in community languages, for those participants where English was a second language. Participants responded positively to these approaches and participated fully in the respective intervention. Some interventions were carried out in 'informal' or non-traditional settings e.g. converted housing within residential blocks, community centres, internet café. The

staff maintained a high level of professionalism and demonstrated an ability to adapt to different environments. A number of observed interventions and interviews took place with participants with a multiple and complex barriers to work. In these cases, staff demonstrated high levels of awareness and knowledge of the issues and used a range of management strategies in working with these participants. Participants interviewed were able to describe in detail the support (interventions) they had received and the majority identified positive changes as a result and felt more optimistic about finding work. The most common changes identified were improved confidence and new skills/qualifications including digital skills (often linked to improved job-search skills), Maths and English, work place relevant qualifications (CSCS, first aid, food hygiene, care). Time to build trust and credibility with the local community was a common theme in provider and community connector interviews. This was concept was reflected back in participants interviews where a number of long-term unemployed participants described negative experiences of mainstream employment programmes; and other participants talked about the transitory nature or loss of previous projects and local support services. There was evidence of effective multi-provider and agency working where a 'hub' approach had been established. In these 'hubs' multiple and simultaneous interventions were being delivered which allowed participants to access different types and level of support at one time and in the same place.

Where is the support delivered?

A key feature of the US Jobs Plus model was the provision of employment support services within the social housing developments. Whilst this is now the case across all four identified areas it has not been without its challenges. For example, in the Kates Hill area one partner's community venue was providing the hub for the whole provider partnership. When that partner closed down mid-2015, it left the contracted provider and remaining supply chain without a dedicated project base. Delivery continued on a peripatetic basis using available community space, until an alternative location(s) maximising empty and void premises within the social housing development were secured at the end of 2015. In the Princes End area, one providers original intention was to engage on an outreach basis using community facilities, provide transport and deliver the majority of therapeutic and work based interventions from purpose built market gardens and horticultural facilities in a neighbouring ward. As a result of participants being reluctant and resistant to travel, a dedicated base was established within an old housing office, forming part of a small social housing development. Even where an established community location was in place from the beginning of the project, challenges around its location in relation to specific social housing developments and pockets of the identified area community have been a challenge. This has been the case for Bilston East and Darlaston South, where multiple locations and specific outreach strategies have been required to engage with all communities within the identified areas.

4.3.6 Measuring Progress & the role of Outcome Stars™

The project uses Outcome Stars™, a recognised and widely used tool which both measures and supports progress for service users towards self-reliance or other goals. The Work Star™ version is designed for use with adults out of work or returning to the workplace. It is a holistic tool and covers seven key areas: 1. Challenges; 2. Job Specific skills; 3. Stability; 4. Job search skills; 5. Basic Skills; 6.

Aspiration & Motivation; 7 Social skills for work. It consists of a five-stage model of change (Not thinking about work; thinking about work; making progress; work-ready with support; self-reliance) and a Star Chart onto which participants and provider staff plot where the participant is on their journey. A reading is taken by the provider staff and participant at or near the beginning of the project. The process is then repeated at regular intervals to track progress. The data can be used to track the progress of an individual participant, to measure the outcomes achieved by a whole project and to benchmark with a national average for similar projects and client groups. The project provided employment support providers and community connectors with the training and tools to implement Work Star™ across all delivery. The project initially opted for the paper-based version of the tool, [as some support was being delivered on an outreach basis without access to ICT or internet connection.] There is an option for an adviser only 'reading' where it is not possible or practical to undertake this jointly with the participant.

The majority of provider staff were positive about the introduction and use of outcome stars within the project, recognising primarily the benefits measuring positive change can have for participants. One participant said seeing their progress in this format had been helpful in their development. Some provider staff felt the tool was difficult to administer on a practical level, describing it as time consuming. There have been implementation challenges in getting a consistent volume of readings after the initial point; which makes analysis of progress data currently unviable. The factors affecting this include:

- The project team initially set intervals for star 'readings' at the beginning, mid and end point of the participants journey. However, the length of time the participants spend with the project is defined by individual need i.e. variable lengths. These timescales are not always or clearly specified in the initial action plan. On this basis, mid-point readings have been difficult to establish and track.
- Where participants have stopped engaging with the project and contact cannot be established, there will be no further readings.

These factors will be addressed in year 2 of delivery through the agreement of defined time interval(s) for the mid-point reviews and by implementing a 'leavers' procedure for those who are not engaging, in order to distinguish between active and inactive project participants for the purposes of tracking and analysing progress measures.

The paper based tool has also led to constraints in the amount of useful data available for analysis, with a move to electronic reporting proposed for 2016/17. These measures will support improved capture of progress data.

Soft Outcomes Measures

Soft outcome measures are being monitored by the project relating improved confidence, digital inclusion, skills and qualifications and providers report this on a monthly basis. To ensure sufficient time for soft outcome measure data to be reported and evidenced, a full analysis will be carried out in the Interim Report scheduled for completion in September - October 2016. A snapshot of soft outcome evidence captured to date is shown in Section 5.

Case Studies

The providers and project are regularly documenting progress and outcomes measures through participant case studies. These will form part of the evidence base, along with independent case studies from the longitudinal research in the Interim Report scheduled for completion September – October 2016.

4.3.7 Delivery Arrangements from April 2016 - During the final quarter of the 2015/16 provision, providers were notified that there would be a new commissioning round for the 2016-2018 delivery. During the provider interviews, many providers reflected that in view of implementation challenges (i.e. securing venues and engaging eligible project beneficiaries) a one year contract had not been a sufficient length of the time to implement new provision and gain momentum. Many felt the challenges which had now been overcome and progress made to date could be lost if there was a change in provision. Changes in the delivery models from April 2016, will be reported in the Interim Report scheduled for completion between September 2016-October 2016.

4.3.8 Financial Incentives Strand – The original project strands (community support, employment support and financial incentives) have to some extent become integrated into the overall delivery model (although they are still clearly identifiable). However, only part of the financial incentives strand has been implemented i.e. access to support costs as part of the wider community and employment support provision. No agreement has been reached locally regarding rent freezes and performance related pay.

5 Analysis of the Data

5.1 What data and statistics have been used for analysis?

The project team has collated a range of administrative and progress data from the beginning of April 2015, when provision delivery commenced. The data in this report covers the second year of the project (but is in reality the first operational year of delivery). The data gives:

- The number of participants who received support.
- The number of participants who have started a job and the job sustainment points/achievements.
- The number of active and inactive project participants and relevant destination data.

It is possible to analyse these statistics by geographical area, provider and by demographical/participant characteristics and this analysis has been included in this report.

The Pilot Participants

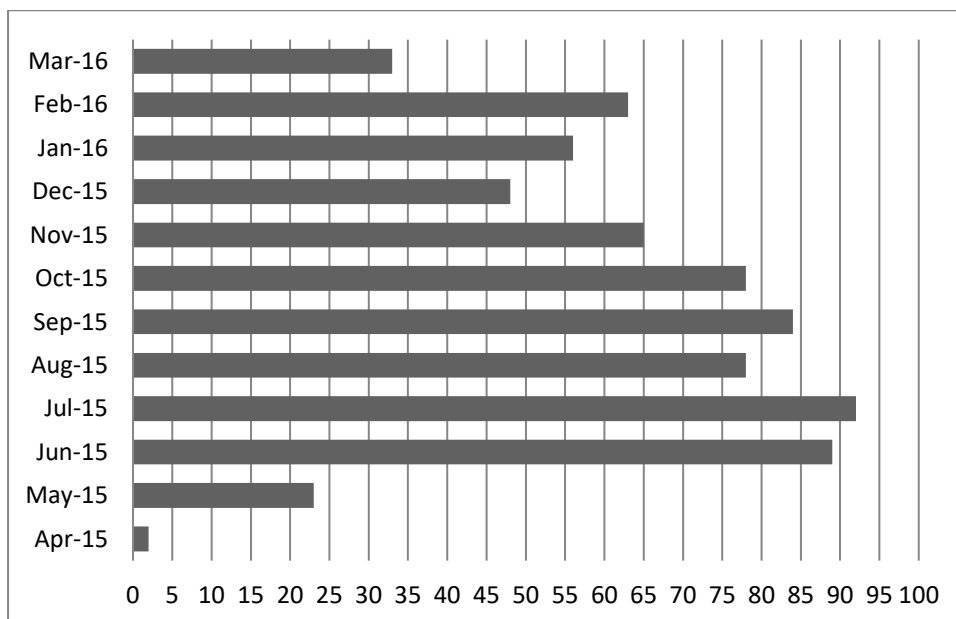
5.2 How many residents have been engaged and supported?

Between April 2015 and March 2016, 711 unemployed and economically inactive residents from the identified areas have engaged with the pilot on a voluntary basis. This represents 25% of the overall 5 year project target (2800 residents supported), achieved by the end of project Year 2.

5.3 Flow of Starts

Starts increased on a month by month basis between April and July 2015, as individual contracted provision came on stream; with new starts averaging 63 per month in the subsequent 8 month period (August 2015 – March 2016).

Figure 4: Number of Engagement & Starts (April 2015 – March 2016)



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.4 How long have participants been accessing the project support?

Nearly half (48%) of the project participants started the project 6 or less months ago; with 21% starting within the last 3 months ago.

Figure 5: Table indicating length of time participants accessing project support

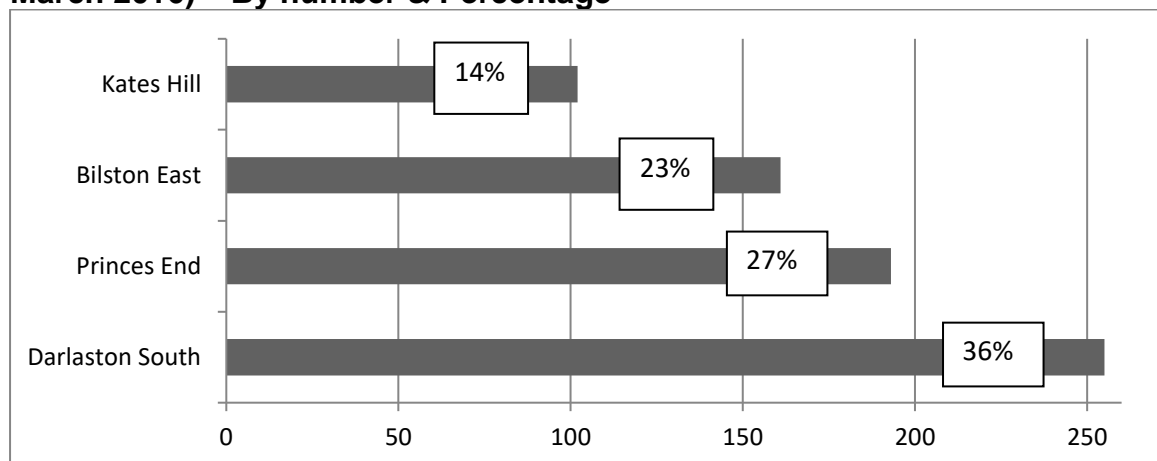
No. of Participants	% of total cohort	Length of time accessing project
152	21%	0-3 months
191	27%	3-6 months
170	24%	6-9 months
114	16%	9-12 month

Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.5 Which Areas of Support are participants from?

Whilst it was initially envisaged there would be an equal split of participation across the four identified areas, this has not been the case during 2015/16. Some of the factors influencing the lower participation rates in Kates Hill/St. Thomas area are reflected in the challenges identified by provider and stakeholder in section four. Other factors include the challenges raised by social housing data review, detailed in section four, which identified Kates Hill/St. Thomas as having the most limited pool of eligible participants and Darlaston South as the largest (albeit limited) pool.

Figure 6: Split of Engagement & Starts across Identified Areas (April 2015 – March 2016) – By number & Percentage



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.6 What are the characteristics of the participants?

5.6.1 Social Housing

99% of the 711 participants (703) are living in social housing, with the 1% representing the change and widening of eligibility to those residing in the identified geographical area and on waiting lists for social housing, which had been agreed

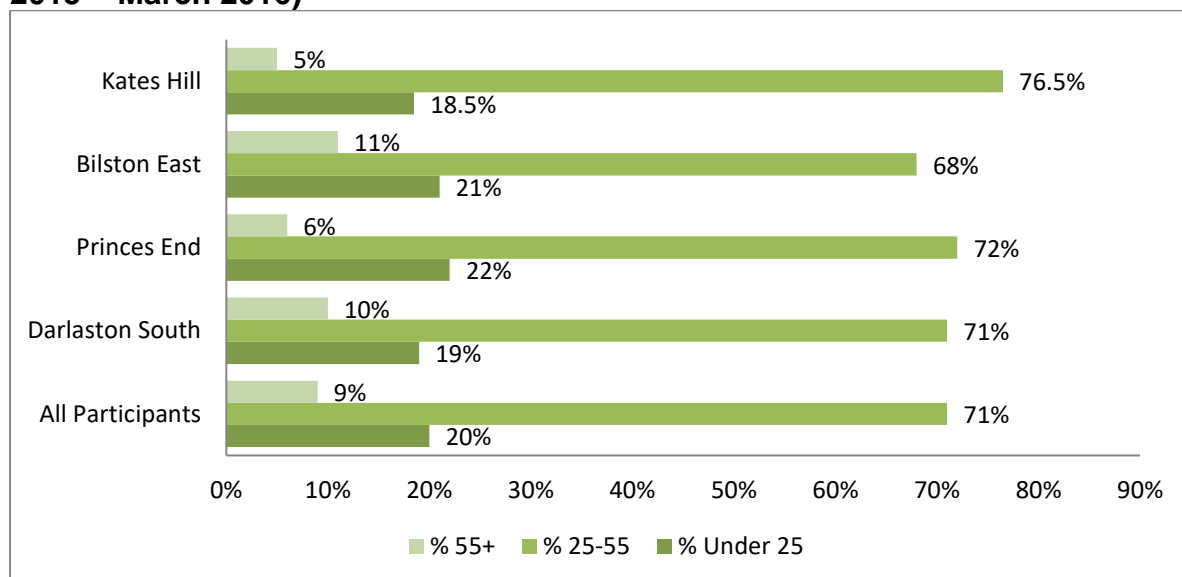
late March 2016. Future reports will analyse differences in outcomes between those currently residing in social housing & those who are on waiting lists.

Age, Gender & Ethnicity

5.6.2 Age

Following the mapping & gapping work by the project team in Year 1, it was identified there was a range of youth focused employment and skills support taking place within the identified areas. On this basis, it was agreed that whilst the project would support all unemployed and economically inactive residents in the identified area, the majority of resources would be targeted at those aged over 25 year olds. In addition, the review of social housing tenants in the identified areas (carried out by the research and evaluation team) suggests that younger people are less likely to be in social housing than other types of housing (private rented). The data shows 80% of overall projects participants (567) are over 25 years old; with 9% of participants (60) over 55 years old; which is broadly reflected across individual areas.

Figure 6: % participants by Age Group - Overall & By Identified Area (April 2015 – March 2016)

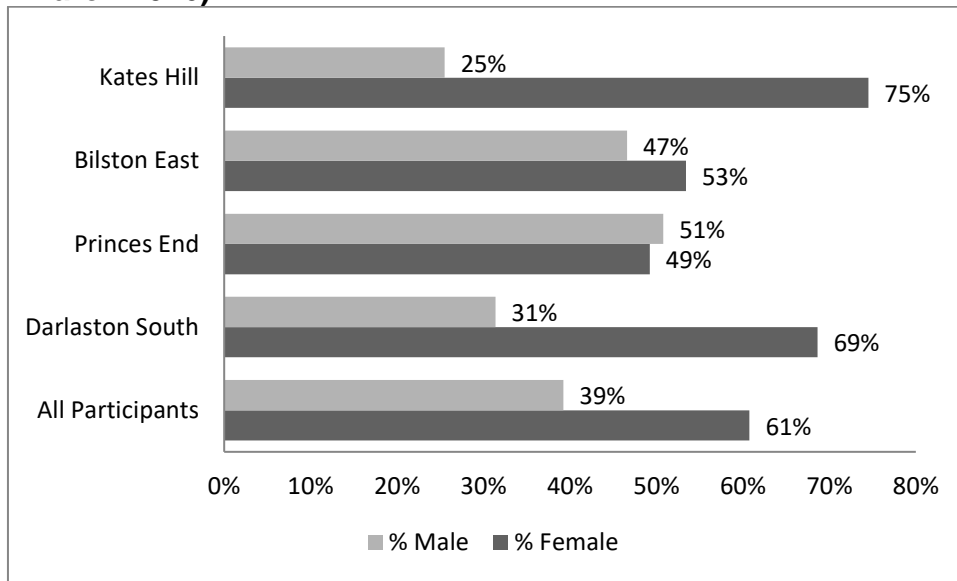


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.6.3 Gender

The profile of social housing residents (referenced in the Review of Social Housing Data in Annex 5), indicates that these residents are more likely to be female than in any other tenure, and therefore we would expect to see similar patterns in the pilot participation data. Over 60% of project participants are female, however, there is variation between each area with Kate's Hill and Darlaston South engaging almost a quarter more female participants (75/25), than Bilston East and Princes End, where male/female participation is broadly 50/50.

Figure 7: % Female & Male Participants Overall & By Identified Area (April 2015 – March 2016)

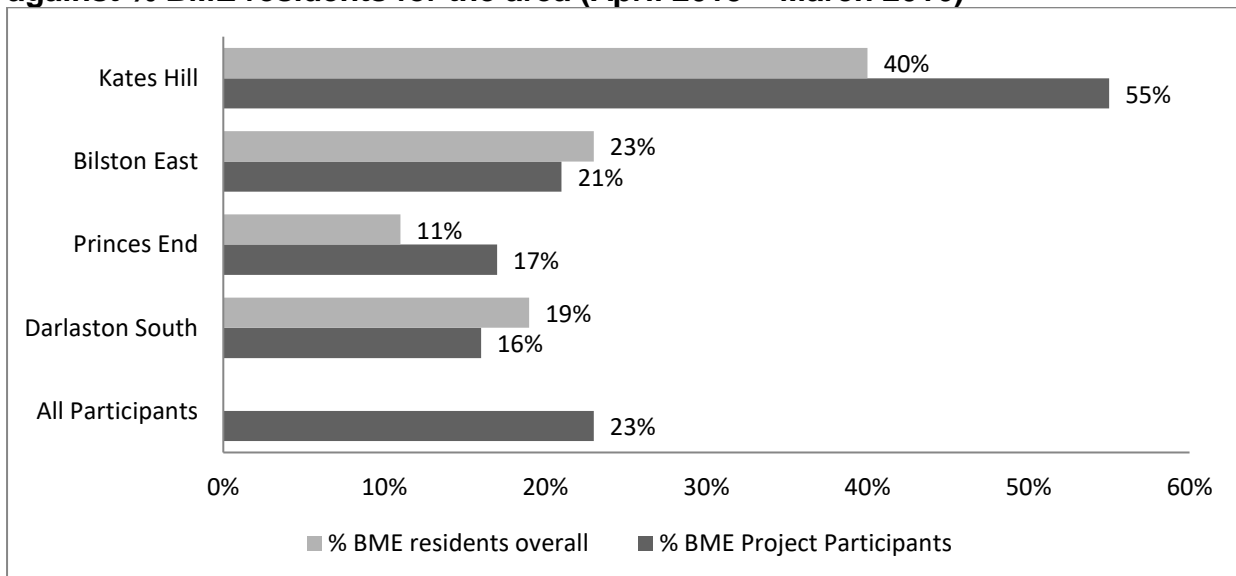


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.6.4 Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the resident population differs significantly across each of the four identified areas within the project; as well as in relation to the Borough overall in which those area sit. For example, Kates Hill/St. Thomas' ward has a BME population of 39.8%, compared to the Borough (Dudley) as a whole at 11.5%. Project participation rates of residents from BME communities are broadly in line with or above the ethnicity data for the identified area.

Figure 8: % BME Participants Overall & By Identified Area with comparison against % BME residents for the area (April 2015 – March 2016)

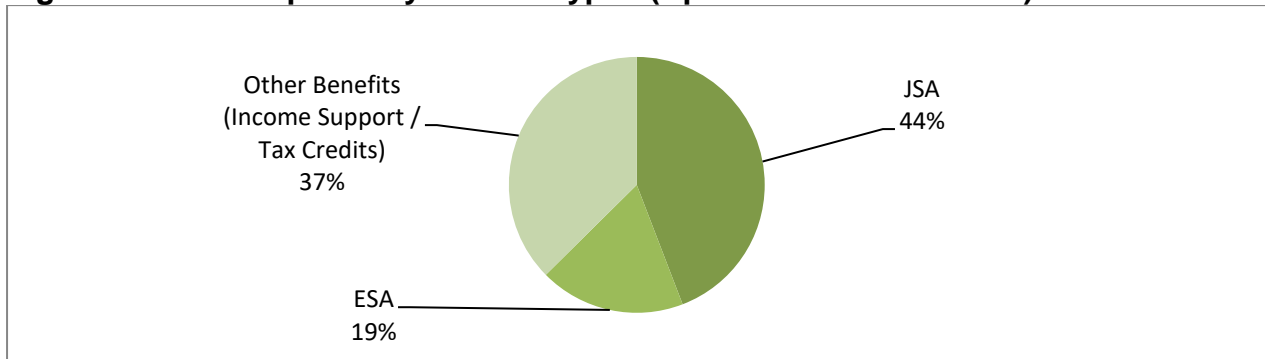


Source: City Deal Project Team; CENSUS 2011; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.6.5 Benefit Data

Non-JSA claimants (i.e. those claiming ESA/Health Related Benefits, Income Support and Other Benefits) account for over half of the project participants.

Figure 9: % Participants By Benefit Types (April 2015 – March 2016)



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.7 Destination Data

5.7.1 Overview

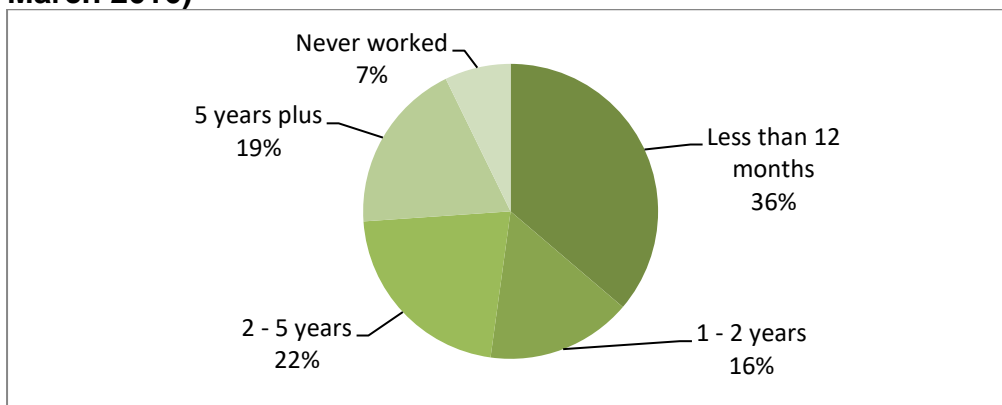
Between April 2015 and March 2016, of the 711 unemployed and economically inactive residents from the identified areas who **started** on the pilot:

- 401 (56%) are still engaging with the programme.
- 69 (10%) moved into employment during the same period.
- 241 (34%) either completed the agreed support, moved into other destinations i.e. full time education, stopped claiming benefits or are currently not engaging actively with the project.

5.7.2 Job Starts – Who found work?

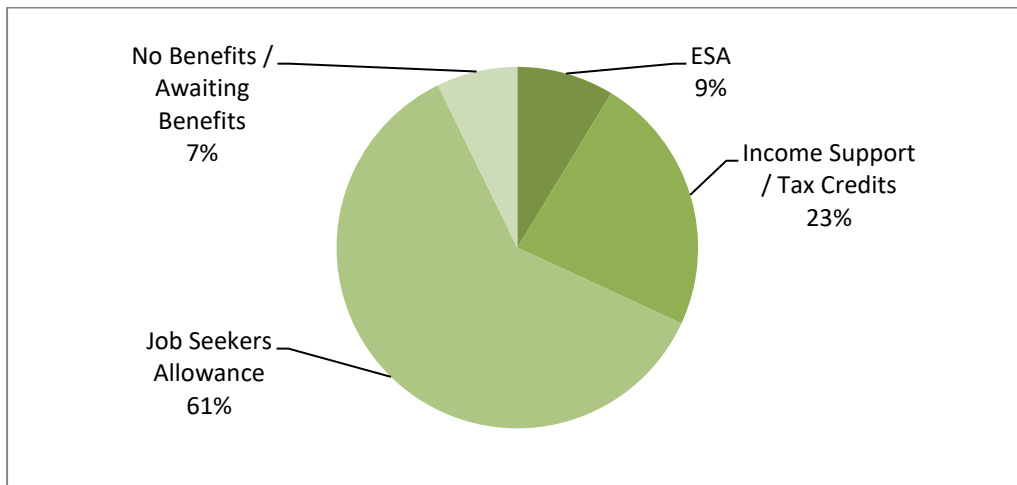
Of those 69 who started work during the period April 2015 – March 2016, 64% had not worked for 12 months or more; with 26% having not worked in 5 years plus or never worked at all. The benefits being claimed at the time of finding work are detailed below in Figure 9. However, it should be noted that approximately 7% of those claiming JSA had declared they had previously claimed other benefits including ESA and Income Support.

Figure 10: Length of time out of work for job start participants (April 2015 – March 2016)



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

Figure 11: % job start distribution by benefit (April 2015 – March 2016)

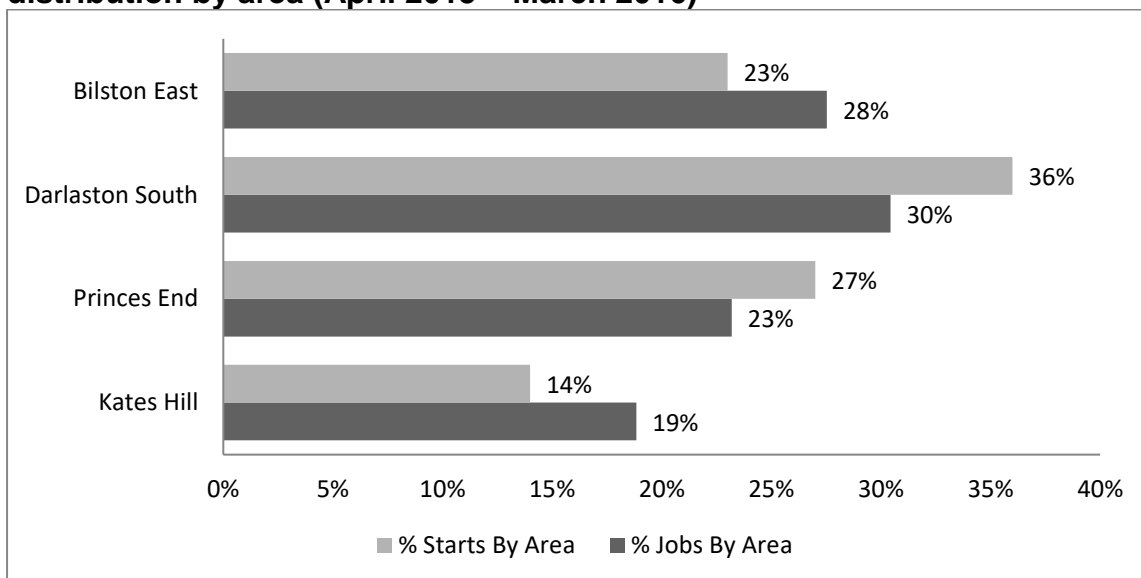


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.7.3 By Area

Analysis of the split of job starts by area compared to participant starts, shows Kates Hill and Bilston East achieving higher numbers of people into work than Darlaston South and Princes End. Further longitudinal data analysis and evaluation is required to analyse trends and factors affecting job entry rates by area.

Figure 12: % job start distribution by area compared to % participant distribution by area (April 2015 – March 2016)

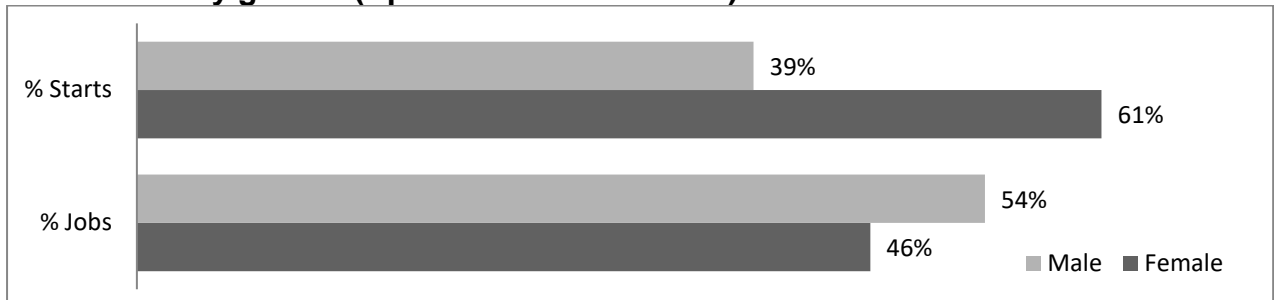


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.7.4 By Gender

Whilst female participants account for 61% of project starts, they only account for 46% of job starts. Further longitudinal data analysis and evaluation is required to analyse trends and factors affecting job entry rates for the project by gender.

Figure 13: % job start distribution by gender compared to % participant start distribution by gender (April 2015 – March 2016)

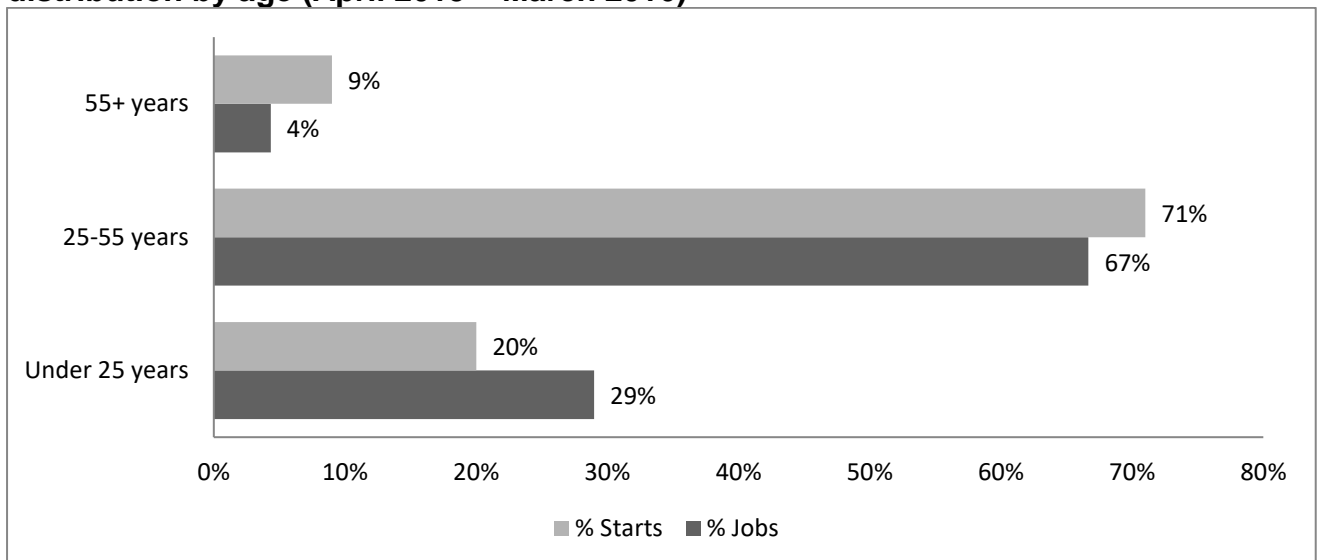


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.7.5 By Age

Participants aged over 25 years achieve job starts at lower rate than those aged under 25, who whilst only accounting for 20% of the participant cohort provide 29% of the job starts.

Figure 14: % job start distribution by age compared to % participant start distribution by age (April 2015 – March 2016)

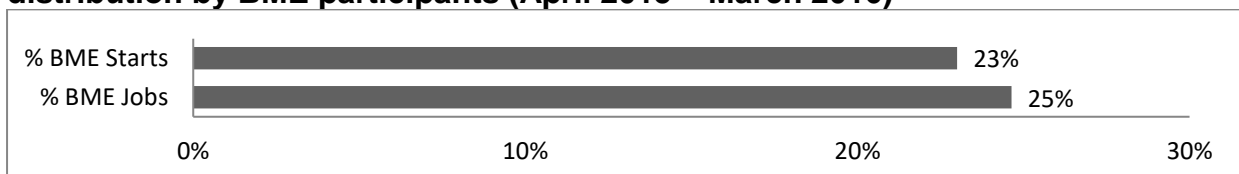


Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.7.6 By BME Participant Groups

There is parity in the BME participant and job start rates as a % of the project cohort.

Figure 15: % job start of BME participants compared to % participant start distribution by BME participants (April 2015 – March 2016)



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.8 Sustainability Data

5.8.1 Length of time a job must sustain

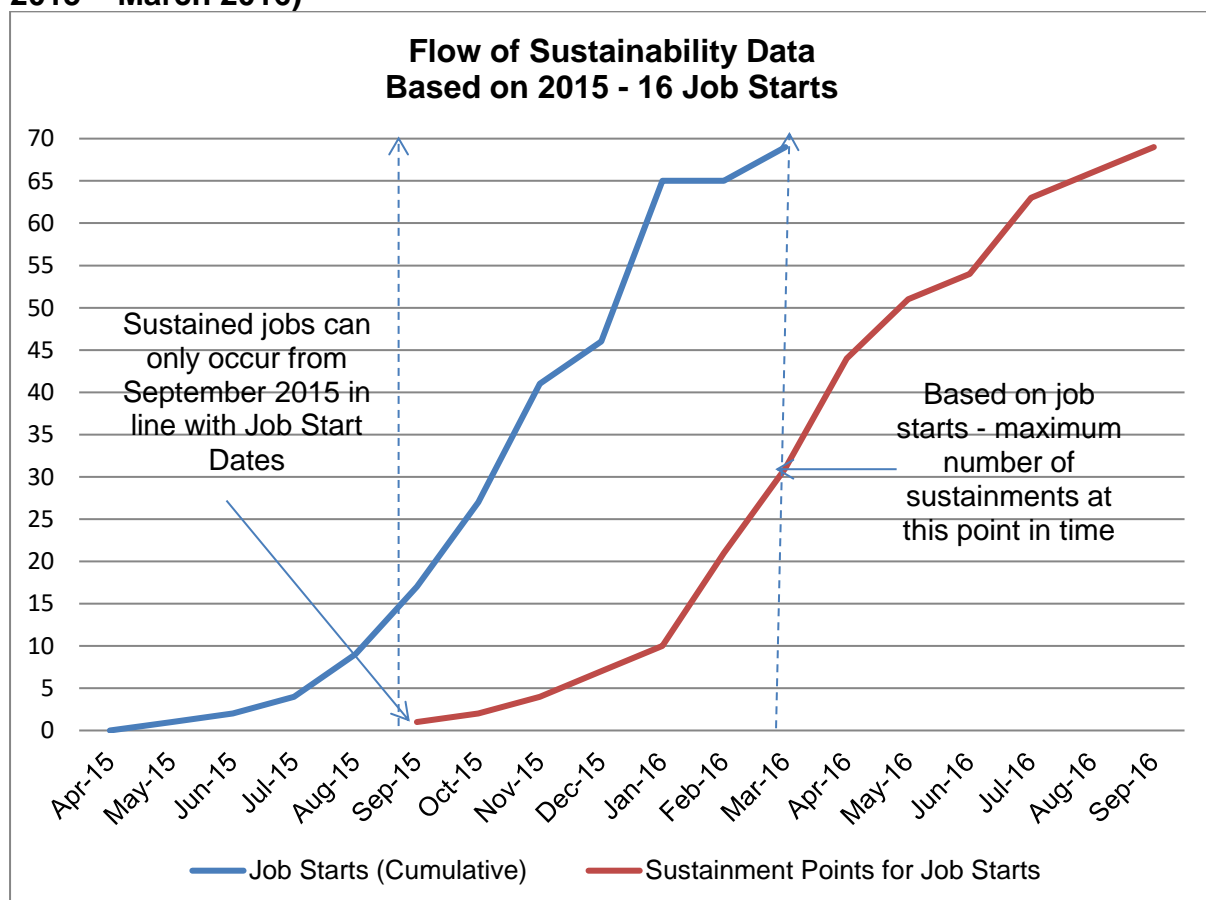
The project has aligned the job sustainability criteria with DWP mainstream provision. Namely, for project participants claiming JSA a job will need evidence of sustainment for 26 weeks; for other benefit claimants this will be 13 weeks sustainment.

Of all 69 jobs starts between April 15 – March 16, to be eligible as a sustained job under the projects sustainability criteria as outlined above:

- 38% (26 job starts) required 13 week (3 months) sustainment
- 62% (43 job starts) required 26 week (6 months) sustainment

This gives a blended sustainment rate of around 21 weeks (5 months). Figure 14 below shows the potential flow of sustained job outcomes; with the first job sustainment point being September 2015. Factored into this is the time required to validate the sustained job outcome (externally & by the project team). On this basis, the sustainability rates and impact of the 2015/16 job starts will not be fully seen and understood until September 2016. Sustainment data will be examined in more detailed in the interim evaluation report, scheduled for completion September-October 2016.

Figure 16: Flow of Sustainability Data – Based on 2015-2016 job starts (April 2015 – March 2016)



Source: City Deal Project Team; Research & Evaluation Team Calculations

5.9 Soft Outcomes

A snapshot of soft outcome *evidence* for individual participants captured by the project and providers to date is shown below in Figure 15. To ensure sufficient time for soft outcome measure data to be reported and evidenced, a full analysis will be carried out in the Interim Report scheduled for completion in September - October 2016.

Figure 17: Evidence Soft Outcomes By Numbers of Participants

Improved Confidence, optimism and support	241
Increase in Qualifications	98
Increase in Skills	438
Increase in Digital Inclusion	140

Source: City Deal Project Team

5.10 SROI/Fiscal & Economic Impacts

Initial work has been undertaken by the project (with support from local partners) in the calculation of benefit savings and increased revenue. Based on the current levels of jobs starts, they are currently projecting savings in benefits in 12 months' time of circa £260,000 and additional revenue generated in tax and national insurance of circa £550,000.

Actual cost savings against benefits and additional income generated will be examined in more detailed in the interim evaluation report, scheduled for completion September-October 2016, and be based on job sustainment data available at that point in time.

5.11 Comparison with other Employment Support Programmes

The Research & Evaluation team were asked to prepare a briefing note to form part of the research which compared performance expectations of other Employment Support Programmes against the project Sustained Job Outcome Offer. In summary, the sustained job outcome rate over the lifetime of the project is higher at 32%, compared to the Work Programme overall (sustained) job outcome measure of 28.5% and Work Choice job sustainment rate of 18%. A copy of the full briefing note can be found at Annex 6.

5.12 The Pilot Finances

5.12.1 The Grant

The accountable body received an initial £1.1m of the £2.8m grant at the commencement of the project; with the outstanding grant payment being received spring 2016.

5.12.2 What payments have been made?

The accountable body (Walsall MBC) receives payment for the overall management of the project including audit functions. The project lead (Accord Group) submits quarterly claims to the accountable body in respect of costs relating to the management and delivery of the project strands, including payments to providers and those relating to the community connectors. Between April 2015 and March 2016, the grant expenditure for the direct delivery of the community and employment support elements was circa £600,000; and total project expenditure circa £735,000.

SECTION 6 - CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

6.1 Introduction

Whilst this research enriches our understanding of project and provider delivery of the strands, the nature of the research and the fact that it is based on early experiences of the project mean that it should not be used to draw conclusions about the **overall effectiveness** of the Black Country City Deal Working Together pilot. This will require longer term analysis, including examining additional progress and sustainability data and the differences in community and employment support approaches to identify factors affecting employment outcomes. However, for the purposes of this report, a number of emerging themes from the findings start to help us to identify what has worked well and what lessons have been learnt so far.

6.2 What Works?

- A physical presence in the heart of the community where the target group lives that can act as a hub, focal point and 'go-to' place for the provision.
- Operating co-located and joined up multi-agency and provider services and support.
- A targeted engagement and outreach strategy, with activities focusing specifically on the target group, rather than the community as a whole.
- Access to a wide range of high quality employment support which incorporates employer facing and work based interventions and opportunities e.g. work experience, volunteering, pre-employment training & skills, matching and brokerage services, interview preparation.
- Sufficient lead time to establish and build trust with both the local community and individuals

6.3 What Lessons have been learnt?

- That relevant and up to date area based data needs to be collected and reviewed systematically to ensure the project meet local needs, the deliverables remain achievable and targeted delivery strategies can be developed and implemented.
- All stakeholders and providers need to have clear roles and responsibilities to avoid duplication of services and competition within the project.
- Future delivery plans and profiles should adequately and realistically reflect the time required to implement new provision and support.

6.4 Recommendations

- Use the emerging lessons and what works well to shape and develop project management and delivery models from year 3 onwards.
- Monitor and assess the roll out of the reshaped community connector roles

Prior to the next wave of qualitative and quantitative research (July 2016- September 2016):

- Undertake further review (project and research team) of the data collection processes, particularly in relation to the soft outcomes, progress and impact measures/SROI; making improvements as required.
- Consolidate all participant and provider case studies from the 2015/16 cohort into a compendium for use in the Interim Report.

6.5 Next Steps

In line with the overall, evaluation methodology, the next steps are to carry out:

- Wave 2 of Longitudinal & Thematic Qualitative Research & Observations – Stakeholders, Providers & Participants (July – September 2016)
- Participant surveys (July – September 2016)
- Analysis of Data (From March 2015 – September 2016)
- Complete Formal Interim Report – Research completed September 2016 – production of report by end of October 2016

Annex 1 – Table of Working Together Project – 2015-16 Delivery Providers

Lead Provider	Provider Type	Identified Area	Sub-contractors / Delivery Partners	Delivery Model Description
Age Concern UK	Registered Charity	Darlaston South	Yes	Collaborative Partnership Delivery
Black Country Housing Group (BCHG)	Housing Provider – Registered Social Landlord & Charity	Pan Black Country	Yes	Direct delivery with use of specialist providers
Black Country Training Group (BCTG)	Not for Profit (Company Limited by Guarantee)	South Black Country (Dudley & Sandwell)	Yes	Managing Agent with supply chain delivering end to end
Bilston Resource Centre (BRC)	Registered Charity	Bilston East	No	Direct delivery & Spot purchase only
Dudley 19+ Partnership led by Dudley MBC	Public Sector – Local Authority – Learning	Kate’s Hill (St. Thomas’)	Yes	Direct Delivery & End to end sub-contracting & specialist provision
Gazebo Theatre in Education	Registered Charity	Bilston East	No	Direct Delivery & Spot purchase only
Ideal for All (IFA)	Registered Charity	Princes End (Tipton)	No	Direct Delivery & Spot purchase only
Walsall Adult Community College (Walsall MBC)	Public Sector – Local Authority - Learning	Darlaston South	Yes	Direct Delivery & end to end Sub-contracting end to end.

Annex 2 – City Deal – Working Together Pilot - Research & Evaluation

Qualitative Research – In-depth Interviews: Instruments

(For Year 1 R&E September 2015 – March 2016)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL:

- **What to say to interviewees when setting up and beginning the interview**
 - Introduction to interviewer (name, background, contact details)
 - Purpose of the overall evaluation (what works & what doesn't work in getting unemployed 'social housing' tenants back to).
 - Role of the qualitative interview (in-depth; opportunity to explore issues in more detail)
 - Topics for discussion
 - Expected length of interview
 - Confidentiality/anonymity
 - How it will be conducted (semi-structured questions relating to topic; note taking & recording)
 - Informed Consent Letter/Form

- **What to say to interviewees in concluding the interview**
 - Any additional comments the interviewee would like to add
 - Next steps – analysing information & following completion of 'wave' of interviews – capturing in report which will form part of larger interim and final evaluation reports.
 - Thank participant for their time

- **What to do during the interview**
 - Use relevant interview guide which lists questions and issues to be explored
 - Keep question open-ended rather than closed
 - Ask factual question before opinion questions
 - Use probes as needed
 - Key characteristics of a good interviewer – be open-minded; flexible and responsive; patient; observant and demonstrate good listening skills.

- **What to do following the interview**
 - Transcribe and/or review data
 - Analyse data
 - Write report
 - Solicit feedback from stakeholders/interviewees
 - Revisions
 - Dissemination as appropriate

INTERVIEW GUIDES:

- Questions or issues to be explored during the interview
- Limit to 15 main questions and probes per topic
- Separate interview guides for each group of stakeholders – Delivery Partners/Providers (Supply Chain); Lead/Managing Partner (Accord); Strategic Stakeholders/Steering Group; Working Together pilot participants
- Year 1 Topic Guides: Lead/Managing Partner management & delivery approaches & Delivery Partner/Provider Programme/Service Delivery - (Refer to individual guides)

Annex 3 - Steering Group Members – By Organisation

City Deal Project Team (Accord Group)

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Wolverhampton City Council

Walsall Housing Group
Heantun Housing
Wolverhampton Homes

DWP/JcP
Black Country Consortium

Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
Talent Match
Black Country Colleges
Black Country Training Group

Annex 4

City Deal Working Together Project Review & Evaluation

Data Review Social Housing Tenants

Compiled By Christine Brown, Lead Consultant, Future Excel
September 2015 – Internal Use Only (For Review)

1. Background to Data Review

As part of the baseline data refresh (to be undertaken by the Research & Evaluation external consultants), the City Deal Working Together Project Team requested a specific review of the numbers of unemployed and economically inactive social housing tenants in each area of benefit. The original project baseline data and information relates only to the number of unemployed and economically inactive individuals in the general ward population; with no correlation between those who are social housing tenants (eligible project beneficiaries) and those with other types of tenure i.e. private renters and home owners (who fall outside of the current project scope). The data review will form part of the wider baseline refresh but specifically seek to establish the available 'pool' of eligible⁹ beneficiaries for the project against the original project targets¹⁰.

2. Methodology

Introduction

There are no definitive, current and recognised data sets available on the total number of social housing tenants who are unemployed or economically inactive by project area. For example, the current NOMIS¹¹ and DWP¹² data does not capture or categorise unemployment / economic inactivity by tenure. Where data does exist on the economic status of an individual by tenure i.e. the ONS, Census 2011 the data held relates only to the Household Reference Person (HRP) or 'householder' and not to other individuals living within the property. There is however a recently published (July 2015) English Housing Survey Household Report (2013-2014)¹³ which by tenure identifies data trends in household types, economic status of the householder and of their partner. This has been a key driver for developing a set of assumptions which can be applied to establish a clearer picture of the total number of social housing tenants in each project area. A summary of key findings from the survey and relevant to this project can be found at Appendix 3.

The Approach

2.2 The methodology used to establish the number of social housing tenants included the following steps and assumptions:

⁹ Social housing tenants in defined geographical areas – Kate's Hill Estate (Dudley); Princes End (Sandwell); Bilston East (Wolverhampton) and Darlaston South (Walsall)

¹⁰ Increase the employability of 2800 long-term unemployed and economically inactive Black Country residents

¹¹ NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics

¹² DWP Data and Analytics Working Age Claimants

¹³ The English housing survey is a continuous national survey commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It collects information about people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England

Methodology Step	Supporting Narrative / Assumptions Applied
1. Establish the number of social housing householders / properties in each area of benefit.	The data used to establish the number of social housing householders/properties in each area of benefit was taken from existing City Deal Working Together project data, which had been provided by social housing providers at the commencement of the project (some of which had been collated by the Black Country Consortium). This is summarised in a spreadsheet at Appendix 1 alongside a comparison of the householder data for each ward from the ONS, Census 2011.
2. Establish total number of individuals living in social housing	A set of assumptions (driven from the findings reported in the English Housing Survey 2013-2014) has been developed. Using the data relating to household type of all social renters ¹⁴ (i.e. 42% of households were either couples or multiple households) enables us to establish the additional/total number of working age individuals within each social housing household (per area of benefit).
3. Establish number of unemployed and economically inactive individuals living in social housing properties in area of benefit.	A set of assumptions (driven from the findings reported in the English Housing Survey 2013-2014) has been developed. Using data relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The economic status of all social renter householders¹⁵: 8% unemployed; 24% inactive: 32% total. - The economic status of partners for all social renters¹⁶: 9% unemployed; 30% inactive: 39% total; enables us to establish the total number of individuals living in social housing who are unemployed and economically inactive (per area of benefit). When applied to the base data, this suggests around 34% of social housing residents are unemployed or economically inactive.
4. Apply assumptions to base data and review against target.	The table at Section 3 shows the application of the assumptions to the base data (broken down by area of benefit) and compares the overall target cohort numbers to the available pool of eligible beneficiaries.
5. Test Assumptions and check findings	The data/findings from the English Housing Survey 2013-2014 on which a number of the assumptions are based have been compared against other relevant research. This includes data from the recent Worklessness, welfare and social housing report (July 2015) ¹⁷ by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion for the National Housing Federation. The report suggests more than half (53%) of social housing residents are out of work ¹⁸ . This alternative data allows us to draw a best and worst case scenario regarding the numbers of eligible beneficiaries in each area. Comparison against other measures e.g. current economic inactivity rates (NOMIS/DWP) against the numbers of social housing householders (ONS, Census 2011) produces comparable results (albeit not social housing profile sensitive).
6. Evaluate data / conclusions.	The narrative at Section 4 outlines the key findings and conclusion following data evaluation against the original review brief.

¹⁴ Appendix 2 Figure 1

¹⁵ Appendix 2 Figure 2

¹⁶ Appendix 2 Figure 3

¹⁷ <http://cesi.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/NHF%20CESI%20FULL%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁸ Stating the source of data as the Labour Force Survey, 2013

3. Application of the Assumptions to the Base Data

Analysis of Potential Beneficiary Pool of U/E & Inactive People in City Deal Working Together Social Housing												Review Against Project Deliverables	
Ward / Area	Social Housing Householders				Social Housing Persons (Non-Householders)				All In Social Housing			Project Beneficiary Target Split Equally Across Each Area Over Lifetime of Project	% of social housing tenants cohort to be worked with
	No. of Social Housing Householders / Householders	No. of U/E (8%)	No of Inactive (24%)	Total U/E & Inactive (32%)	No. of Additional Non-Dependents (42% of Householders)	No of U/E (9%)	No of Inactive (30%)	Total U/E & Inactive (39%)	Grand Total U/E	Grand Total Inactive	Grand Total U/E & Inactive (Working Together Project Beneficiary Pool)		
St. Thomas	1806	144	433	578	759	68	228	296	213	661	874	700	80
Princes End	3636	291	873	1164	1527	137	458	596	428	1331	1759	700	40
Bilston East	2463	197	591	788	1034	93	310	403	290	901	1192	700	59
Darlaston South	2248	180	540	719	944	85	283	368	265	823	1088	700	64
Total	10153	812	2437	3249	4264	384	1279	1663	1196	3716	4912	2800	57

4. Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

- 4.1 Applying a range of assumptions and measures the 'potential' social housing tenant cohort across all areas is 4912; the split across each area varies in line with the actual number of social housing properties. The volumes range from 874 in St. Thomas' ward to 1759 in the Princes End ward.
- 4.2 In order to achieve the overall project target of 2800 social housing tenants supported, it would mean the project would need to work with 57% of the total available cohort. However, if the overall project targets remain split evenly across all four areas of benefit this would actually mean up to 80% of the cohort would need to be supported in some areas i.e. St. Thomas' ward, compared to 40% in other areas i.e. Princes End.
- 4.3 Whilst we cannot be absolutely definitive in the potential cohort numbers, the research and evidence relating to the profile (economic status and household type) of social housing tenants highlights additional and key factors/considerations in relation to project approaches, engagement and delivery. Social renting householders were more likely than other tenures to:
- Contain a householder who was economically inactive; with the economic status of partners following a similar pattern and a higher proportion claiming ESA (long term illness) or ISLP (Lone Parent households). This means many individuals are not currently engaged with or receiving any structured employment support as they are not currently 'required' or expected to look for work.
 - Be female; attributed to households being more likely than other groups to have lone parent households.

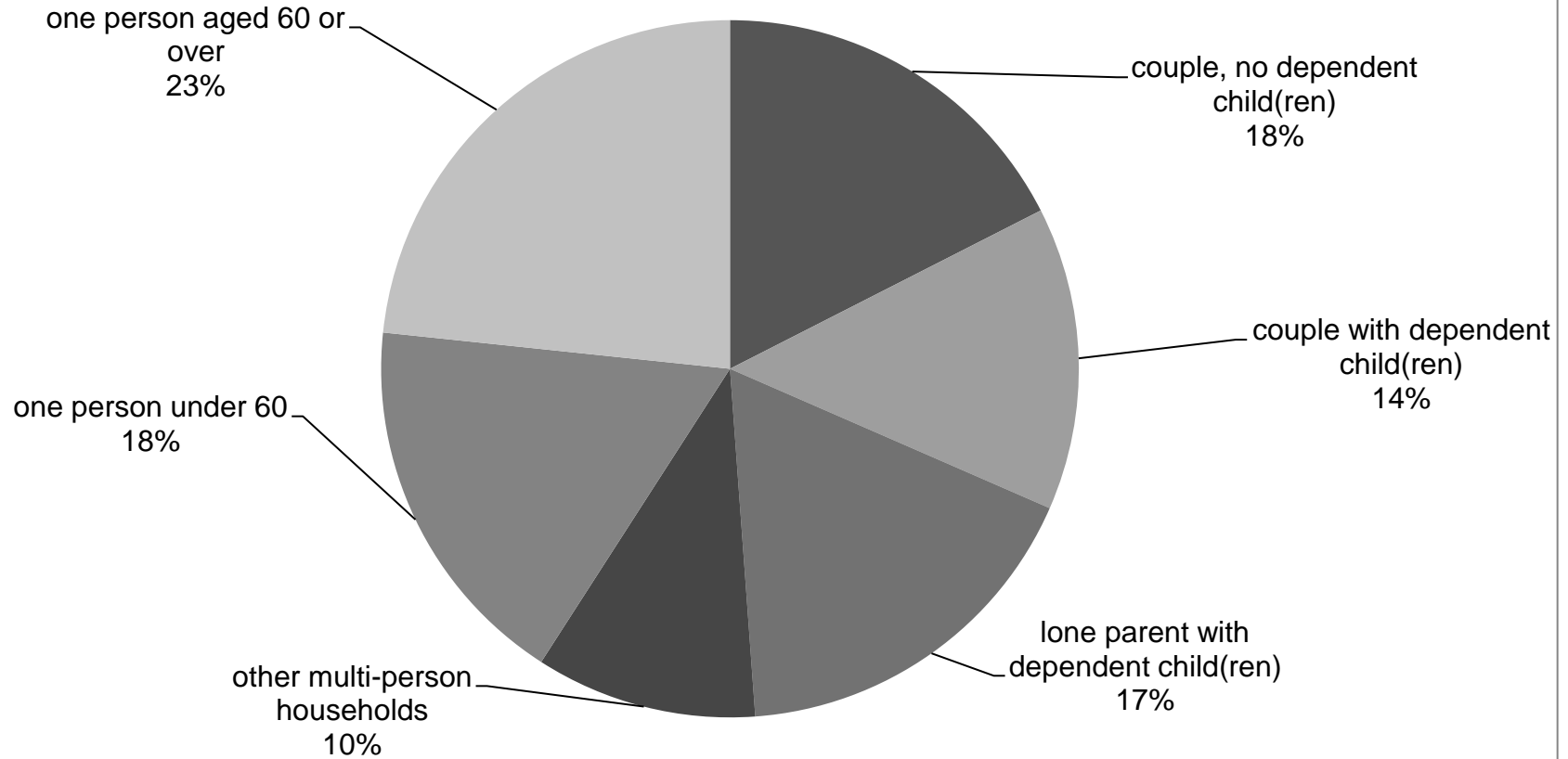
Appendix 1 – Number of Social Housing Units / Social Housing Household Reference Persons (HRP)

Fig 1. No. of Social Housing Units - Source: From Social Housing Providers for City Deal Working Together Project Baseline Data, 2014	St Thomas	Princes End	Bilston East	Darlaston South	Total
Accord	0	110	0	438	548
BCHG	0	153	25	0	178
Heantun	0	0	307	0	307
Wolverhampton Homes	0	0	2131	0	2131
Walsall Housing Group	0	0	0	1810	1810
Sandwell MBC	0	3373	0	0	3373
Dudley MBC	1587	0	0	0	1587
Social Housing - Other	219	0	0	0	219
Total	1806	3636	2463	2248	10153

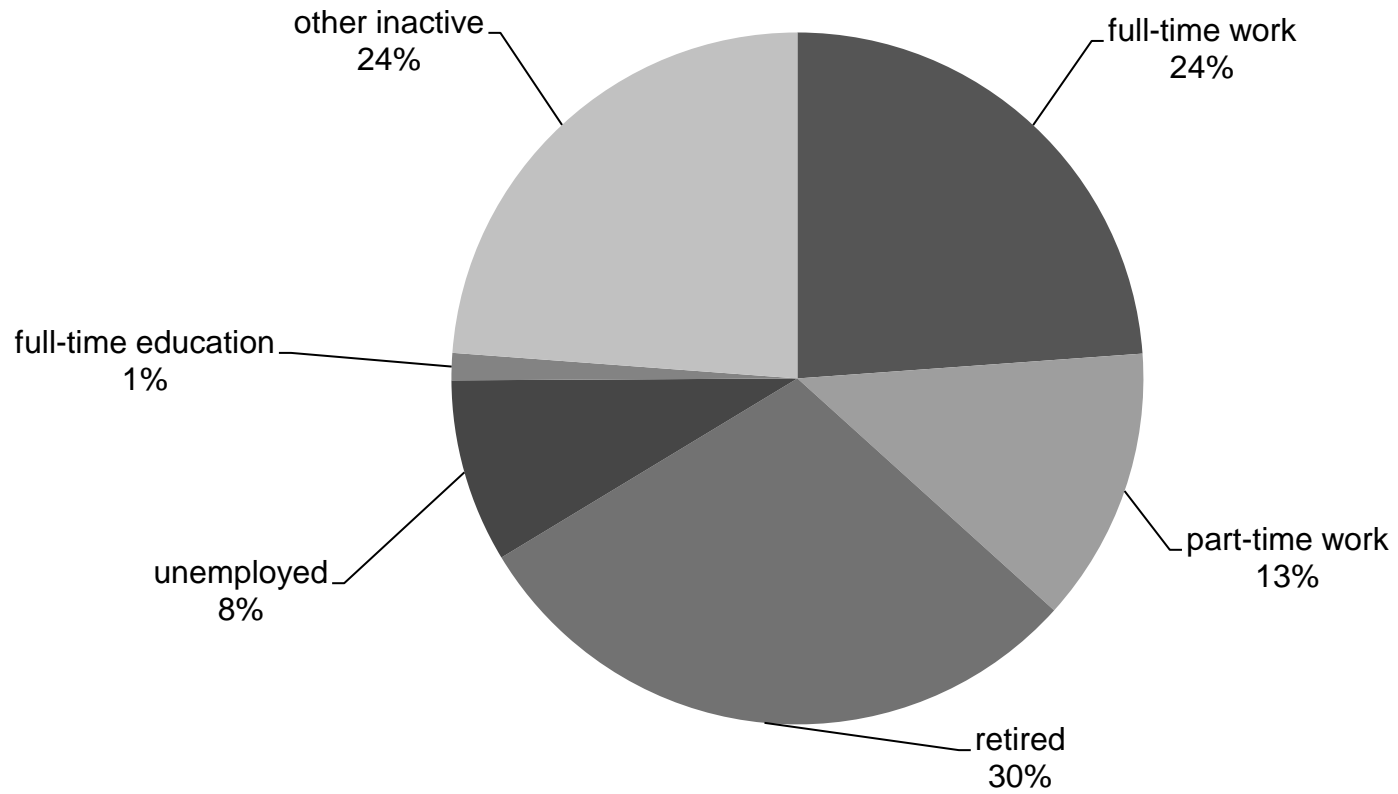
Fig. 2 Tenure / No. of Household Reference Persons (HRP)- Source: ONS, Census 2011	St Thomas's	Princes End	Bilston East	Darlaston South	Total
Social rented: Rented from council (Local Authority)	1,507	1,869	2,082	1,055	6,513
Social rented: Other	208	373	415	1,168	2,164
All Social rented	1,715	2,242	2,497	2,223	8,677

	St Thomas's	Princes End	Bilston East	Darlaston South	Total
Variance from 2011 - 2014					
All Social rented	91	1,394	-34	25	1,476
% Increase / Decrease	5%	62%	-1%	1%	17%

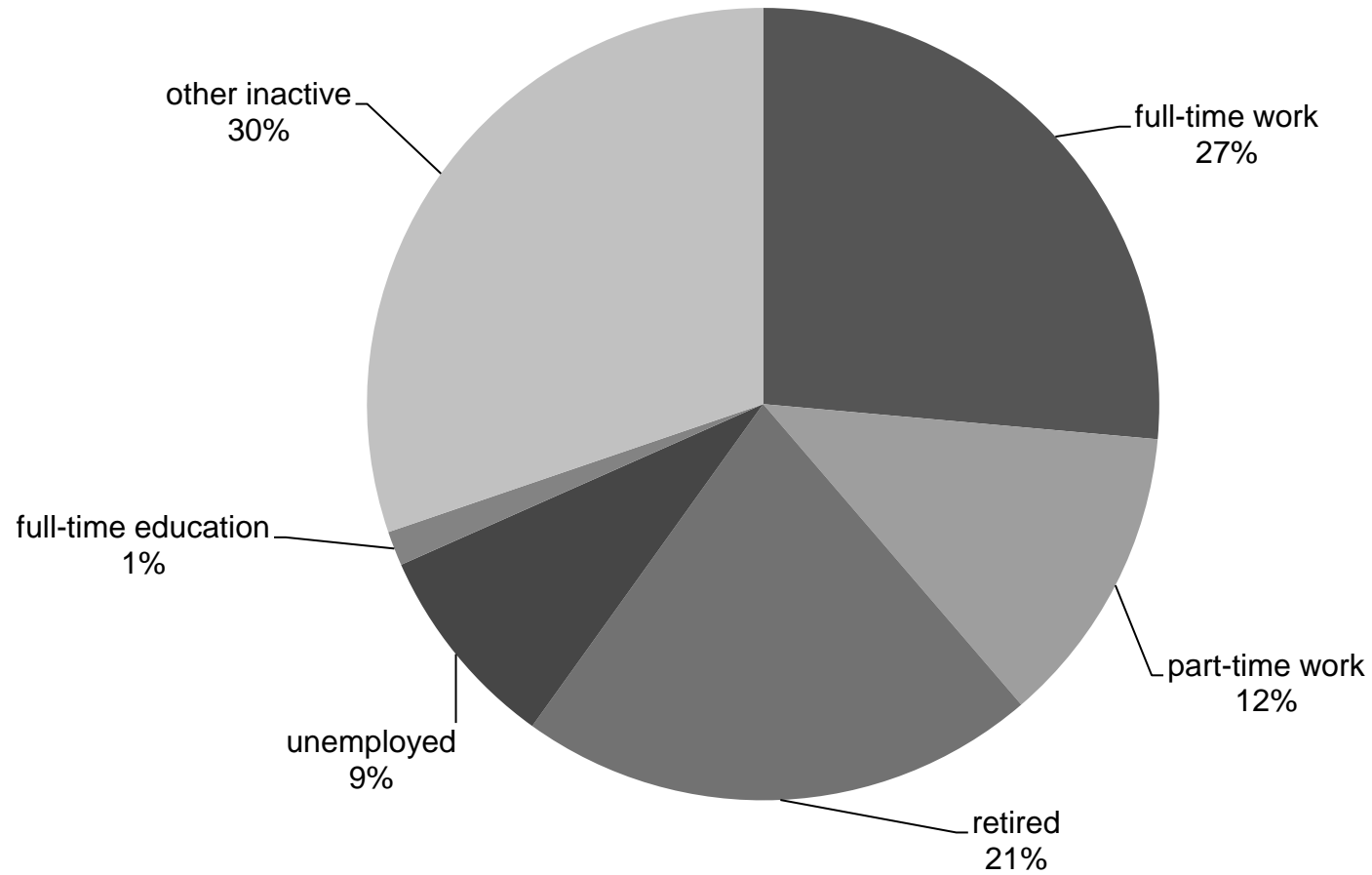
Appendix 2
Household Type - All Social Renters (Fig. 1)
Source: From Annex 2.2 English Housing Survey Households 2013-2014



Appendix 2
Economic Status of Householder - All Social Renters (Fig. 2)
Source: From Annex Table 2.2 English Housing Survey Households 2013-2014



Appendix 2
Economic Status of Partner - All Social Renters (Fig. 3)
Source: From Annex 2.1 English Housing Survey 2013-2014



English Housing Survey Household Report 2013 -2014

Key Facts and Figures – Comparison of tenure groups¹⁹

Social renting householders:

Economic Status

- Were **more likely** than other tenures to contain a householder who was **economically inactive** (24%).
- With the exception of outright owners, were **most likely** to be **retired** (30%)
- **37% working.**
- Economic status of **partners** follows a similar pattern to the householder - 21% retired; 9% unemployed; 30% other inactive (including long-term sick and carers).

Household type and size

- Were **more likely** to be **female** (57%) – attributed to households being more likely than other groups to have **lone parent households** (17%) and household with one person over 60 (23%).

Income

- Social rented sector accommodation is offered at a subsidised level and tenants tend to have **lower incomes**; mean gross weekly income was £315 for households compared to £580 for private renters and £798 for owner occupiers.

Length of residence

- Average of 11 years & more evenly distributed across differing residency lengths; compared to average of 17 years for owner occupiers and 4 years for private rented sector.

¹⁹ The full report and data tables can be found at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2013-to-2014-household-report

Annex 5 – Nature of Support Available Through Providers

Assessment

Action Planning

Help with writing a CV, job application or interview skills

Financial support (travel expenses/discretionary)

Motivation or confidence sessions

Therapeutic interventions

Mentoring and coaching

Careers advice

Financial/debt advice

Vocational Training / Training Course

Work experience / voluntary work

Employer Opportunities / Vacancy Matching & Brokerage Services

Employer Led Pre-Employment Training

Literacy, numeracy & language skills

Digital Inclusion

Self-employment advice or support

Help with housing issues / homelessness

Help re criminal record

Help re caring responsibilities (child/adult)

Help with addiction (drug/alcohol)

Annex 6 -

Copy of Research & Evaluation Briefing Note for Project Team

Prepared April 2016

Employment Programme Job Outcome Comparison Rates

Purpose: To compare performance expectations of other Employment Support Programmes against the City Deal Working Together Sustained Job Outcome Offer.

Work Choice²⁰

The performance expectations are:

- 30% unsupported job outcomes (starts) with 60% of job starts continuing for 26 out of 30 weeks (sustained).
- This would give an actual sustained job outcome rate of 18%.

Work Programme²¹

The overall performance expectations²² are:

- 11.4% on the one-year Job Outcome²³ Measure²⁴
- 25.8% on the two-year Job Outcome Measure²⁵
- 28.5% on the overall Job Outcome Measure²⁶

However, the DWP expected that the job outcome measure would vary across different 'payment groups²⁷' and set differential benchmarks (for example new ESA claimants 10%).

City Deal Working Together

The performance expectations over the lifetime of the project²⁸ are:

- The engagement of 2800 eligible participants
- 900 sustained²⁹ jobs
- This broadly equates to a sustained job outcome rate of 32%.

²⁰ Specialist employment support to disabled people

²¹ Employment Support programme of up to two years for long term unemployed.

²² Source: Work Programme statistics: Inclusion Analysis 17 September 2015 based on DWP published statistics from beginning of Work Programme in June 2011 to the end of June 2015.

²³ 13 or 26 weeks depending on payment group (same definition used by City Deal Working Together)

²⁴ Starts who have been on the programme for one year

²⁵ Starts who have been on the programme for two years

²⁶ Starts who have completed overall and completed the job outcome period at the end

²⁷ JSA 18-24; JSA25+; JSA Early Access; JSA Ex-IB; ESA Volunteers; New ESA Claimants (2 groups), ESA Ex-IB; IB/IS; JSA Prison Leavers.

²⁸ Still in year one of operational delivery of employment support activity

²⁹ The pilot uses the DWP Work Programme job outcome measure definition of 13 or 26 weeks dependent of participant benefit profile