

PRESS RELEASE

5th January 2018

PROVIDER ANNOUNCED FOR DEVOLVED WORK AND HEALTH PROGRAMME IN SOUTH LONDON

The new provider of a £14m Work and Health Programme that aims to help south London residents who have previously been excluded from the world of work back into employment, has been announced today.

Reed in Partnership is to deliver the new programme in Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton. Croydon Council led work to commission the service on behalf of all five boroughs, after the budget was devolved from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop, procure and deliver localised versions of the new programme. The programme is part funded by the European Social Fund.

The devolution deal has allowed the boroughs to commission a service provider that best meets the needs of their residents. The new programme, which will be known as Better Working Futures, will concentrate on helping people with disabilities or health conditions, the long term unemployed and other local priority groups into jobs.

Reed in Partnership will begin delivering the programme in March 2018 and it will run until 2023. One to one advice and support from a case worker will be offered to residents to address the often complex barriers to employment. The support will be integrated with existing local services offered by the councils and other local partners, which will ensure local expertise is drawn upon when helping with additional matters such as basic skills, training, health, housing and English for speakers of other languages.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Leader of Merton Council and Chairman of the South London Partnership, said: "There are 75,000 people living across the five boroughs who are either long term unemployed, have health problems or disabilities or face other kinds of barriers to employment. The devolution of the Work and Health Programme to south London will realise the potential of our residents who are excluded from the social and economic benefits of work.

"I am delighted it has recently been agreed Reed in Partnership will be the contractor for the Work and Health Programme, bringing the roll-out of this vital programme in Spring 2018 one step closer."

Martin Fallon, Managing Director at Reed in Partnership, added: "We are delighted to be working with the South London Partnership to deliver the Work and Health Programme across Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames. There are many people who want to work, but whose individual circumstances - including health conditions and disabilities - have presented a barrier to employment. We are looking forward to providing these people with the right support so that they can confidently progress into work."

Sarah Newton, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work said: "Everyone should be able to go as far as their talents can take them at work, and we are determined to provide extra tailored support to those who need it. The Work and Health Programme plays a key role in our ambitious plan to help one million more disabled people and people with health conditions in work over the next decade. Working together with our local partners we can help ensure everyone has the chance of reaching their full potential."

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Notes to editors

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European Social Fund

The project is receiving £6.9m of funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) programme in London. The Greater London Authority is managing the ESF programme in London. Established by the European Union ESF funds help local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, skills development, job creation, social inclusion and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>