

## **Priority 2 - Strengthening the positive impact of work on health**

### **Why is this important?**

The Marmot Review outlines the links between work, health, and health and social inequalities. Being in good employment can protect health and wellbeing, whilst unemployment can have short and long-term effects on health and is linked to increased rates of long-term conditions, mental illness, and unhealthy lifestyle behaviours. Access to good quality work (i.e. sustainable, offering a living wage, with opportunities for development and flexibility to balance work and family commitments, with protection against adverse working conditions) is central to reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing.

The positive impact of employment, and the negative impact of unemployment, affect the whole population across the lifecourse, influencing the lives of children, adults and older people living in the city. Work can have a major positive impact on health and wellbeing through both economic reward and participation in society. For young people a bad early experience in the job market can have a lasting effect for many years. Increasing the skills of, and employment opportunities for families will contribute to improving education and training outcomes for them and their children and so will contribute to the wider ambition to reduce their social exclusion, health inequalities and family and child poverty. For adults and older adults, intermittent and unstable employment results in reduced self esteem and confidence and poorer mental and physical health.

### **Where are we now?**

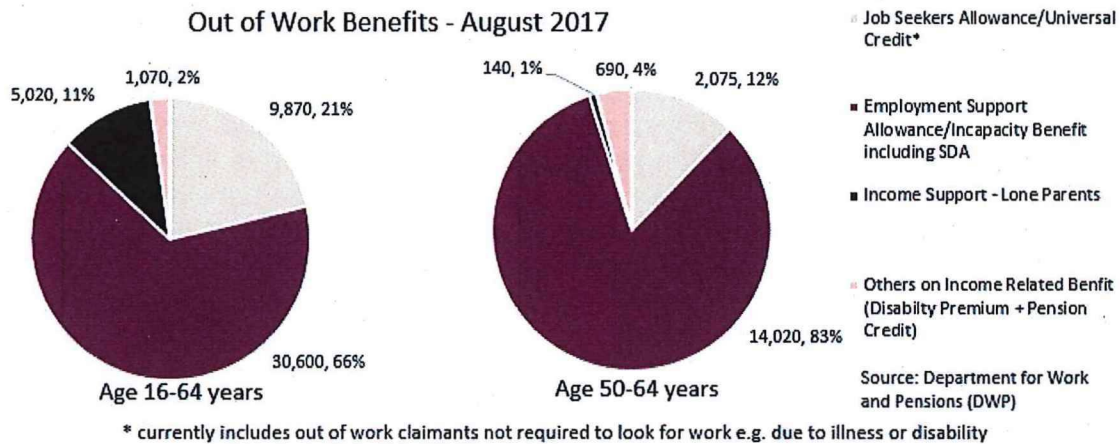
We have a well established Work and Health Programme in Manchester endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Work and Skills Board. The primary care led Healthy Manchester (people out of work with a health condition) and Fit for Work (people in work but off sick) services have informed the development of the Greater Manchester Working Well/Early Help Programme.

### **Out of work benefits**

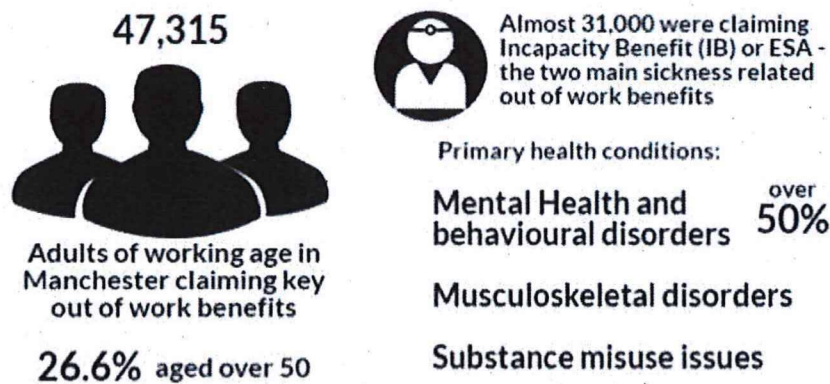
High rates of health-related worklessness have persisted in the city during times of economic growth as well as during the economic downturn. Getting back into employment increases the likelihood of reporting good health and boosts quality of life.

Almost 31,000 people are claiming sickness related out of work benefits, with mental health and behavioural disorders, musculoskeletal disorders and substance misuse issues being the top three most prevalent causes of sickness absence.

**Figure 8: Breakdown of types of benefits claimed**



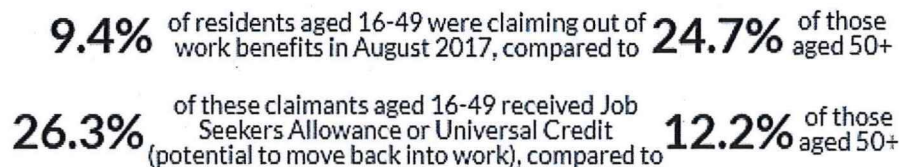
**Figure 9: Sickness related benefits**



Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) November 2017

In the 50-64 age group 24.7% residents are claiming out of work benefits (9.4% in the under 50s) whilst only 12.2% of the 50-64 age group are claiming benefits with the potential to move back into work (26.3% in the under 50s).

**Figure 10: Age profile of benefit claimants (August 2017)**



Source: DWP, ONS, Nomis

These levels of benefit claimants both reflect and reinforce the health and social inequalities and comparatively poorer health of the 50-64 age group.

### Getting back to work

A key part of a more proactive approach is maximising opportunities to refer residents to health and employment services and to connect residents to community assets such as

community work clubs.

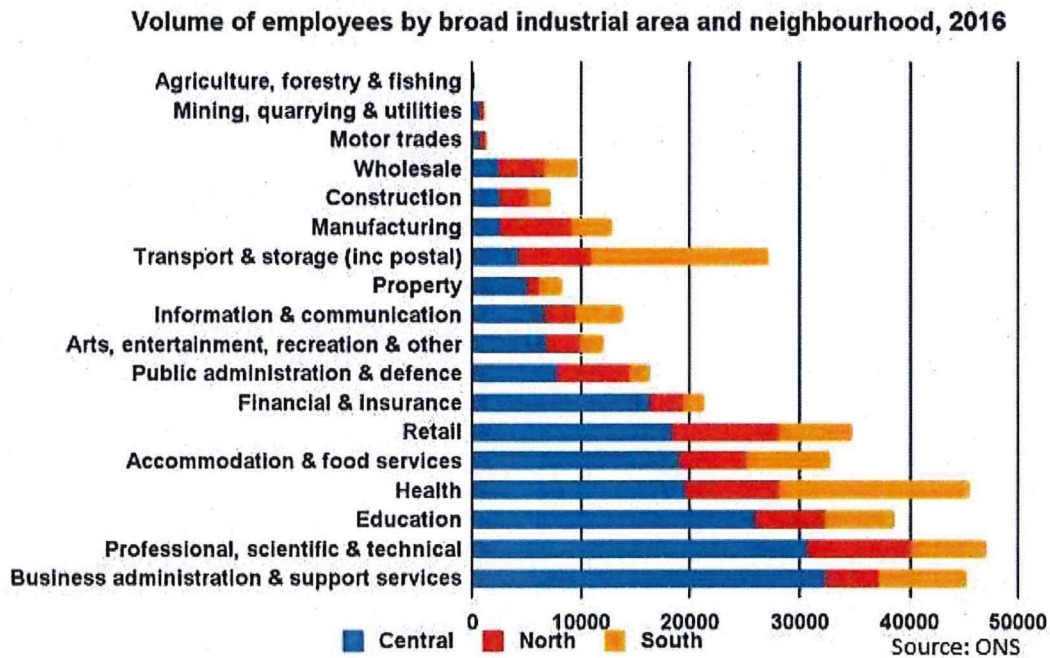
**Figure 11: Out of work assets**



**Employment sectors**

Training and support is required to improve access to jobs in the major employment sectors and health and care is by far one of the largest employers in the city.

**Figure 12: Manchester residents' employment by industry**



**What we will do**

- Integrate the evidence based programmes that support residents to stay in, and get back into work as part of the wider wellbeing service offer to residents
- Pilot a joint initiative with Job Centre Plus, for people newly unemployed with a health condition, under the Greater Manchester Working Well/Early Help Programme
- Increase employment rates for the over 50s by developing "Age Friendly"

approaches within the existing employment support system and strengthen links between over 50s seeking work and the sectors where there are large numbers of vacancies and skills shortages e.g. the health and social care system

- Encourage all Manchester health and care organisations to recruit more local people with targeted support for disabled people, those people in mid life with long-term health conditions, other under-represented groups and through the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Continue to target support programmes for households with children to reduce the cycle of unemployment across generations
- Encourage a positive attitude to work and career aspirations for young people through good work experience and meaningful job opportunities
- Support more people who become disabled or acquire a health condition to start or stay in work through good employment practice such as flexible recruitment and in work support
- Promote good employment conditions across all employers, with Manchester public sector organisations acting as exemplars by implementing the recommendations of the 2017 Workplace Health Baseline Assessment (Health and Wellbeing Board) and prioritising social value through procurement and other processes.
- Develop more opportunities for volunteering and training to improve self esteem and social connectedness with specific target groups (e.g people with substance misuse problems)
- Improve health and work outcomes through in-house policies and service commissioning e.g. host young disabled people to gain work experience and a job through supported internships

### **The journey back to work**

Manchester has a citywide GP referral service, working with people who are finding it difficult to find work because of ill health and related problems. Those referred must be of working age (16-64 years), not in work and experiencing wider issues impacting on their health that medical treatment alone cannot address.

Following assessment by a case manager, an intervention programme is designed to meet the individual's needs in relation to their current circumstances, health and wellbeing and condition management, all of which can affect their employment potential. For those people who have a desire to find employment, specialists will support them to find work that would suit their health condition, vocational aspirations, skills and qualifications. People will also receive guidance and advice on employment skills and how to have effective conversations with potential employers and agree the optimum level of role/responsibility to maintain healthy mental wellbeing.

An example of how the service works can be demonstrated by a positive outcome for an

out-of-work woman in her mid-30s suffering with long term depression. In the past, her low mood and frustrations had led to self-harm and attempted suicide.

Following a referral from her GP she was provided with a range of support including motivational interviewing to incorporate changes to routines, counselling to enable her to understand her depression and anger and confidence-building to apply for jobs and attend interviews. The programme also provided wellbeing advice, addressing her increased alcohol intake related to boredom/lack of routine and exploring alternative activities to relieve stress

Her outcomes included a better understanding of how to manage situations more positively by thinking about them differently and gaining the confidence to enable her to successfully apply for a job and gain employment.