

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	22 October 2013
Subject:	Joint working around long term unemployment
Responsible Officer:	Caroline Bruce, Corporate Director, Environment and Enterprise
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Cllr O'Dell – Performance Lead Environment and Enterprise Policy Lead Environment and Enterprise (to be confirmed)
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Service Level Agreement between Jobcentreplus, Local Authority and the Work Programme Prime Providers in the London Borough of Harrow.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report outlines the council's work to reduce long term unemployment, in the context of the Harrow economy, national and regional policy, and joint work with partners. It complements the September report submitted to Overview and Scrutiny on Regeneration.

Recommendations:

Harrow Council continues its activities to stimulate the economy, in order to promote job growth and reduce worklessness.

Section 2 – Report

The resolution will help the Council reduce the demand on the council and wider public sector, by reducing the number of residents claiming Job Seekers Allowance.

2.1 Introduction

This report follows September 2013's Overview and Scrutiny appraisal of Regeneration in North Harrow. The report should be seen as part of the wider Economic Development / Regeneration work to improve Harrow as a Place economic activity, support business within Harrow, and support residents to access opportunity

Addressing long term unemployment and worklessness is a complex issue. This report outlines the issue in the context of

- The Economy – national, regional and local strategies, unemployment trends
- Barriers to Employment
- National provision – Work Programme, Families Programme
- Harrow Council's approach
- Joint working
- Conclusion
- Case Studies

In addressing the above, the report outlines how the council works with others, the performance of its employment initiatives (Xcite) and ends with Case studies illustrating the impact of Xcite's work on residents.

2.2 The Economy

Stimulating Economic Growth is central to addressing worklessness, managing the demand on public sector services, and enabling economic well being. At a national level, the government aims to rebalance the economy by reducing the role of the state and stimulating business competitiveness. Regionally, the Mayor of London announced the Jobs and Growth Plan in May 2013, with a focus on four priorities,

- Skills and employment: to ensure Londoners have the skills to compete for and sustain London's jobs;
- Micro, small and medium sized enterprises: to support and grow London's businesses;

- Digital creative, science and technology: for the capital to be recognised globally as world leading hub; for science, technology and innovation - creating new jobs and growth; and
- Infrastructure: to keep London moving and functioning.

Sub-regionally, the West London Borough Councils are developing a Business Case through the West London Alliance for a Community Budget. The focus will be on support to address worklessness, support business growth and address skills gaps. The aim of the Community Budget is to transform public services and produce better outcomes through co-designing programmes at a more local level. There are currently 4 pilot areas (Cheshire West & Chester, Essex, Greater Manchester, the London Tri Boroughs) and 9 other areas that are developing business cases.

Harrow's economy has shown signs of recovery in the last 3 years, unemployment has reduced, the number of jobs has increased, and the number of empty "shops" has decreased. However, unemployment is still higher than it was in 2008 when the period of economic uncertainty began. According to Jobcentreplus figures, there was a ratio of 1 vacancy to 6 jobseekers in May 2013. (The Universal Job Match data for Harrow in May 2013 showed 2,912 active jobseekers, and 492 vacancies advertised). Not all jobs are advertised through the jobcentre, and a change in JCP systems has led to a (temporary) reduction in advertised vacancies, however the above would suggest that work needs to continue to stimulate job growth.

There are time lags in the data collected to measure worklessness. However irrespective of those lags the broad trends can be summarised as

- Unemployment is falling, but is still above 2008 levels.
- The number of lone parents claiming income support has fallen in the last 3 years.
- The number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants is relatively static.

Changes in eligibility criteria for Income Support could explain the decline in lone parent claimants. (Lone parents are required to seek employment once the youngest child is aged 5 years.) One could expect this to inflate JSA numbers, but the number of JSA claimants has also declined.

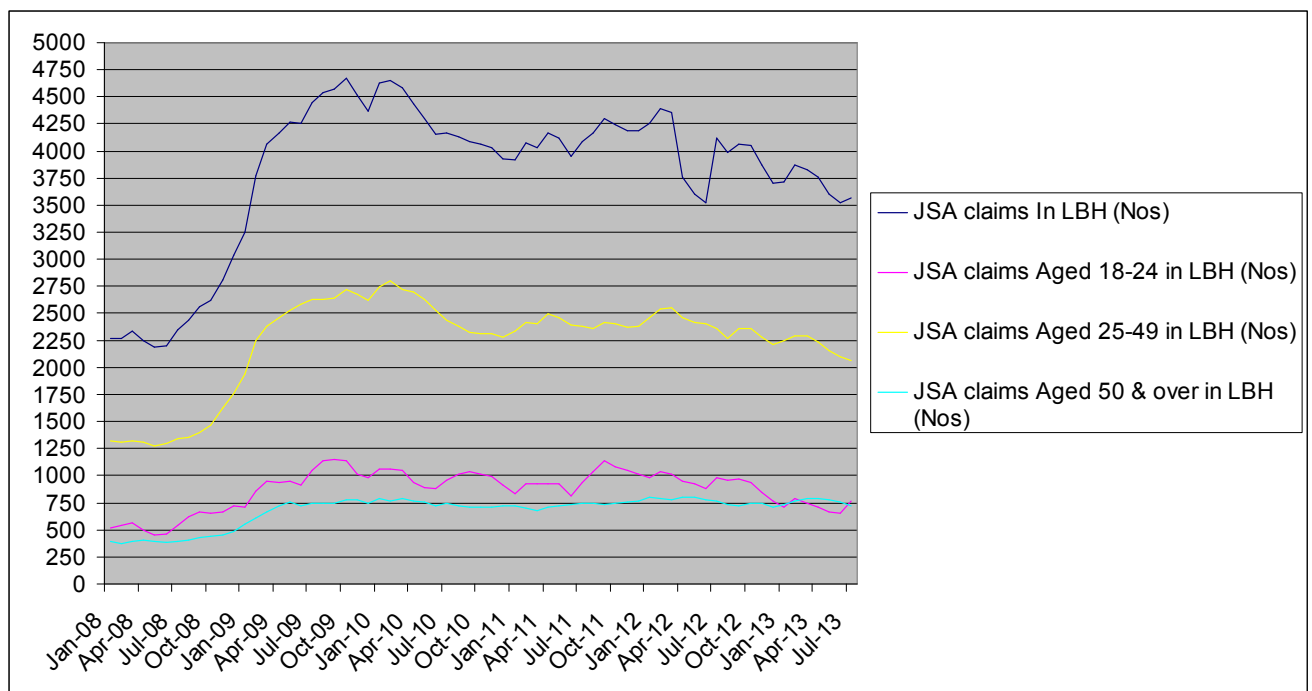
The support needs of ESA claimants is one reason for the lack of change in the number of claimants. ESA is split into two categories, the Work Related Activity Group and the Support Group. Claimants on the Work-Related Activity Group are required to "go to regular interviews with an adviser. The adviser can help with

things like job goals, improving your skills, work-related issues” (Direct.gov.uk Benefits and Credits Employment and Support Allowance) Clients on the Support Group “don’t have to go to interviews, but ..can ask to talk to a personal adviser if [they] want to.” Claimants are usually in this group if [their] illness or disability severely limits what [they] can do.” (Direct.gov.uk Benefits and Credits Employment and Support Allowance). A breakdown of claimants on the Support Group and Work Related Activity Group is not available.

Table 1 Benefits

	JSA	Lone Parent / Income Support	ESA / Incapacity Benefit
May 2013	3,605	1,460	6,860
Feb 2010	4,320	2,390	6,810

Table 2 JSA 2008 - 2013



2.3 Barriers to employment

The report What Works Tackling Worklessness in London stated barriers to employment include *Low skills (literacy, innumeracy, ESOL), Cost of childcare, Discrimination in the labour market, Debt, Substance abuse, Health, Criminal record, Homelessness, Attitudinal issues (low motivation and confidence).* The

Mayor's Jobs and Growth Plan identifies Skills and employment as a key barrier to employment. That strategy states the need to ensure Londoners have the skills to compete for and sustain London's jobs, and includes sub strands to work with boroughs to promote local recruitment, provide additional funding to promote apprenticeships, and provide an effective careers service for Londoners and employers.

The council's Economic Development team produces a monthly Economic Dashboard, which shows that the highest incidence of unemployment in Harrow is amongst lower skill occupations. The relationship between commuting distances, skill levels and travel costs was demonstrated in GLA Working paper 36 which stated the lower the skill level and salary, the shorter the commuting distance that a worker undertakes.

The relative shortage of jobs to jobseekers (JCP data), and the propensity of unskilled and low skilled workers not to commute suggests the need for a twin track approach to tackling unemployment. This approach would include creating new jobs and supporting residents to enter those jobs (and existing jobs). Section 2.4 outlines the council's broad approach to create jobs. One rationale for the work to regenerate Harrow Town centre, is that it has the highest concentration of jobs in the borough and the Town Centre offers entry level jobs, providing opportunities for lower skilled workless residents.

2.4 National Provision

2.4.1 The Work Programme

The Work Programme is the government's central initiative to support long term unemployed claimants into employment. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a budget of £5 billion to deliver the Work Programme (WP) over a 5 year period until 2016.

Claimants on JSA for 12 months or more are mandated onto the WP. Disabled people, people with physical and mental health problems and ex-offenders can be referred to the programme earlier. The Department for Work and Pensions pays prime contractors for a sustained job outcome that reflects the difficulty of helping long-term claimants back into work - six months or more for most JSA claimants, or three months for those with particular challenges to getting a job.

Operational delivery of the programme in London has been contracted to six prime providers (Primes), so they can contract work out to other providers. Three are located in West London Contract Package Area (CPA) and three in East London CPA. The three in West London are Ingeus, Maximus, and Reed.

In London the WP has had 70,470 referrals and has achieved 18,500 sustained job outcomes. Table 4 shows performance in Harrow for the 2 year period to

March 2013. It details the number of attachments (claimants that joined the Work Programme) and the number of job outcomes (clients getting work and staying in work for 6 months or more).

Table 4 Work Programme Performance

Payment Group	Attachments	Job Outcome (6 months or more sustained)	% Job outcomes (6 month or more sustained)
JSA 18-24	260	40	15.4
JSA 25 and over	1520	220	14.5
JSA Early Entrants	280	40	14.3
JSA ex Incapacity Benefit	10		
ESA Volunteers	130		
New ESA Claimants	290	10	3.4
ESA Ex Incapacity Benefit	130		
Incapacity Benefit / Income Support Volunteers	10		
JSA Prison leavers	20		
Total	2640	310	11.7

2.4.2 DWP Families Programme

DWP awarded Reed in Partnership the national delivery of the Families programme designed to aid families facing multiple barriers to work in 2011; the London contract alone was valued at £24 million

The following summarises the Families programme

- Designed to help families with multiple problems back into work.
- 3 year project
- Harrow allocated 600 places.
- Support lasts for 12 months.
- 1 member of the family must be on an employment related benefit, although they themselves do not have to participate if they choose not to.

An Economic Development Officer (also Xcite Project Manager) acts as the Single Point of Contact with Reed. The Officer developed the council's Agreement with Reed and the referral process. The officer is responsible for facilitating operational links with council services, facilitating referrals and meetings with clients, and ensuring space for 1-2-1 consultations with referrals.

The programme experienced early staffing difficulties and there were issues with the length of time it took for Reed to process a referral from Harrow Council. We are now into year 2 of the programme and these difficulties have been resolved. Performance to date shows that 207 have joined the programme and 12 have entered employment.

2.4.3 Work Choice

Work Choice is funded by Job Centre Plus/ DWP for people with a disability or health condition who are looking for work or need support to remain in work. Support is offered to the participant and employer offering work for up to two years after a job starts.

The offer from Work Choice includes

- One to one support from a Personal Adviser
- Job search support (interview Techniques and CV writing)
- Confidence building
- Access to support from specialist healthcare organisations
- Vocational training
- Work placements

Seetec has been commissioned to deliver the West London contract. It is located in Rayners Lane. Claimants can also be referred to Remploy, a national training provider, with an office in Waterloo.

The council's Xcite project has reciprocal referral arrangements with Seetec and Remploy, both organisations the Job Fairs organised by Xcite.

Performance figures are not available to us at borough level.

2.5. Harrow Council

At a local level Harrow council's approach to promote job creation and support residents into employment can be summarised as

- a proactive planning policy to secure investment (Kodak, Royal National Orthopedic Hospital), and provide premises for business (innovation centre Stanmore, incubation space Colart)
- use the planning process to secure funds for employment and training initiatives and to agree employment and training plans with developers (Goodwill, Canning Road, Douglas Crescent, Station Road, Northolt Road, Honeypot Lane developments, future contributions from Kodak and RNOH sites).
- invest in public realm improvements in town centre to stimulate investment and spend (safeguarding existing businesses and therefore jobs and attracting new business and business growth thereby supporting job creation)
- work with banks and business support agencies to promote access to finance and to develop the skills of Harrow businesses (safeguarding existing businesses and jobs, attracting new business and business growth thereby supporting job creation)
- promote local supply chains and the use of local labour and provision of training opportunities through the procurement process. .
- direct delivery of employment support through the council's Xcite projects
- co-ordination of activities and progression routes with strategic partners (Jobcentreplus, Further Education Colleges, training providers)

The council directly supports residents into employment through its Xcite projects. The first projects started in 2008, since then there have been 9 "Xcite" projects supporting residents into work. Table 5 provides a summary of those projects, funding received, and performance against targets.

In the last 5 years Xcite has also secured section 106 funding through the planning process. This has been money from developers to fund a construction employment initiative to support residents access training (apprenticeships) and employment opportunities on site. Table 6 outlines funding and outcomes resulting from the construction initiative. In addition to Section 106 monies, Home Group provide a small sum (£5k p.a.) to help their tenants secure employment on

the Rayners Lane estate. Future funding for employment initiatives have been negotiated on the Kodak, Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, and Colart sites. Payment will be triggered on commencement of development.

The provision offered by Xcite must conform to the criteria of the funding body. In 2012/13 a Growth bid was submitted on behalf of Xcite as part of Harrow Council's MTFS process. The growth bid responded to the localisation of council tax benefits and welfare reforms (including housing benefit caps and the forthcoming introduction of universal credits). The proposal calculated it would provide better value for money to support workless residents into employment and help them stay in their homes and pay council tax, than dealing with potential homelessness. (In this instance unit cost is calculated by dividing the total budget divided by number of clients into employment. The Xcite unit cost is far lower than housing a homeless family in Bed and Breakfast (£7,000 for 10 weeks) and lower than the proposed maximum £25,000 per annum universal credit payment.

The Growth bid was developed by officers in Economic Development, Revenues and Benefits and Housing, and approved through the budget setting process. In the 2013/14 financial year, Children Services commissioned Xcite to provide structured employment advice and support to working age members of families they are working with.

Xcite's provision in 2013/14 can be summarised as

- support working age adults referred by Family First key workers (These clients have multiple issues that collectively make social and employment inclusion more difficult)
- help to get into work residents affected by changes in housing benefits and council tax benefits (including referrals from the Harrow HELP scheme).
- Support residents into employment and training on construction sites in Harrow.
- providing residents with access to training and employment opportunities through job fairs

Xcite's provision must conform to the requirement of the funder, but the delivery model is tailored to the needs of the client / client group. As a result Xcite will adapt to meet different support needs. For example, Graduates on the X21 programme had little or no work experience, but they were motivated, therefore provision was tailored to provide short focussed project work which could help them gain experience and demonstrate their skills. This in turn helped the graduates market themselves more effectively and secure jobs after the

placement ended. Other clients may have work experience but lack confidence and motivation. Xcite's generic programme of support can be summarised as

- Initial contact with resident to explain the support offer
- Attendance at Work Club workshop(s) – CV writing, completing application forms, job search, interview practice, identifying transferable skills, motivation and confidence building.
- 1-2-1 Information advice and guidance, assessment of need, aims and aspiration. Identification of barriers to work.
- Referrals to Basic skills ESOL, English/Maths,
- Work specific training Security Industry Authority certification, Food Hygiene qualifications
- Volunteering, work experience
- Support is not time limited
- In work support – pastoral care
- Travel expenses to interview

This work is delivered from Council premises at the Civic Centre but additional outreach delivery is from the Beacon, Rayners Lane, Children's Centres and Job Centre Plus.

The construction model includes

- Outreach
- Initial Assessment
- Work placement / training placement
- Provision of Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment
- Ongoing liaison with the college and employer
- Support is not time limited
- Ongoing pastoral support to the client
- Travel expenses to interview

As mentioned above, the primary focus of (non construction) activities are to support residents affected by welfare reform and adults referrals from Family First key workers. However, any workless resident can attend a Work Club and any resident can attend the job fairs that are organised with employers and training providers.

The Job Fairs in 2012/13 had an attendance of 1223 jobseekers, 57 employers, and 35 training providers. The Job Fairs held in June 2013 attracted 232 job seekers, 10 employers and 10 training providers, in September 427 job seekers attended and 33 exhibitors of which 13 were employers.

Table 5 details the number of residents supported through the various employment projects delivered by Xcite. Up until this financial year only the LDA in 2010/11 required Xcite to track the duration of an employment programme. Xcite is currently contacting over 1,000 former clients to determine their employment status and identify whether clients that were helped into work are still in employment.

In the same way that schools may teach the national curriculum but operate to a different ethos and get different results. Employment providers tend to include similar provision, for example “teaching” employability skills and jobsearch techniques, but they operate in a different manner from each other.

London Council’s “Getting London Working” report argues that local government employment initiatives are performing better than Work Programme providers. It claims that the ambition for the Work Programme to deliver personalised tailored support is not being met, and that “Planning at a national level for local circumstances is not providing the best outcomes for local people”.

It is easy to be critical of provision and it is difficult to make like for like comparisons between different programmes. There are though some key “Unique Qualities” that Harrow Council’s Xcite project provides. These can be summarised as

- Local knowledge; job brokers are qualified to provide Information Advise and Guidance, they know the local labour market and emerging patterns and can advise accordingly.
- Local networks; the job brokers have developed extensive links with local employers and local community agencies (eg Harrow MIND, Harrow CAB, etc). The job brokers are aware they are part of bigger picture and will offer support to other organisations outside the Council.
- Xcite is integrated into the work of Harrow Council. It works with with Familes, Adults and Housing, Revenue and Benefits and the Planning service.
- Ongoing staff development (Advisers are encouraged to seek development opportunities).
- Emphasis on in depth interviews with clients to build rapport, understand the clients barriers to work, and build trust. (This contrasts with clients claims that JCP interviews that last minutes with the aim pushing them into any job.)

Tables 7 and 8 provide examples of case studies demonstrating where Xcite has supported clients into work and also where the project did not secure the intended outcomes. Table 8 has been provided to demonstrate how difficult it is to help a resident into work.

In terms of value for money the following table summarises the immediate cost to the council of Jobseeker Allowance claimants also claiming support from the council tax support scheme.

Table 5

JSA Claimants	3,526
JSA claimants claiming Council Tax Support (from Harrow Council)	1,229
Cost to the council of JSA claimant in council tax scheme if band D (council pays 77.5% of council tax) Band D £1,513.28 (more than 1 resident) Band D £1059 (single person)	£1,172 £820.
Cost to the council of JSA claimant in council tax scheme if band A (council pays 77.5% of council tax) Band A £1,008.85 (more than 1 resident) Band A £756.37 (single person)	£781 £586
Cost of Bed and Breakfast Homeless household for a year	£8,000
Number of families currently in B&B	100
Families potentially affected by changes in benefits	350

In the first two quarters of this financial year 92 residents have been supported into employment, by Xcite of those 29 were funded through section 106 and 63 by the council. Supporting an unemployed resident into work reduces the call on the council tax scheme.

Xcite's Work with Families First should also be noted. Families First is a programme which seeks to identify families who meet various deprivation criteria and through coordinated intervention improve family outcomes. Families First has obtained considerable benefits from working with colleagues in Economic development. Harrow Council was able to claim £10,400 for the long-term unemployment clients who have been found work through the Xcite program. It is expected that the Families First program will be able claim addition funds in future through the Xcite program

2.6 Work with Partners

Partnership working lies at the heart of how the council tackles unemployment. The journey for a client on the construction employment initiative is only possible because of joint work

- between Economic Development, Planning and Legal Services to enter into agreement with Developers
 - between Xcite and the main contractor and sub-contractors to identify employment, placement and apprenticeship opportunities
 - with Jobcentreplus and partners to identify clients
 - with the colleges to provide opportunities for college students and to secure training for unemployed clients
 - The journey of a client attending a Work Club could have included
 - referral from a partner for example Jobcentreplus, Harrow Citizens Advise Bureau, or the HELP scheme
 - joint work between Housing, Revenues and Benefits and Jobcentreplus to identify residents most affected by benefit changes
 - referral to a training provider / college to acquire basic and / or vocational skills
 - securing employment or a placement with a company exhibiting at a Job Fair organised by Xcite

The Council's work with Reed is outlined in section 2.4.2 In addition to this work, the council has a Service Level Agreement with Jobcentreplus and the Work Programme Providers, manages the Harrow Skills and Employment Group.

The SLA with Jobcenterplus includes aspirations to reduce the claimant count, and details how the council will work to support job growth (outlined in 2.X and JCP will develop tailored provision for Harrow and ensure welfare to work providers deliver to contract.

In respect of Jobcentreplus this includes

- Weekly contact with business development managers and advisers
- Weekly outreach by Xcite and Xcite Construction adviser at Kings House (Jobcentreplus)
- Quarterly meetings with Jobcentreplus and the Work programme providers to share information, and to manage referrals from the Work Programme. (Xcite has volunteered to provide on-going support to clients leaving the Work programme without employment)
- Co-marketing of Job Fairs to job seekers
- Jointly delivered Work Clubs with sessions from Jobcentreplus and Xcite staff
- Supporting clients mandated by Jobcentrpelus to attend Xcite provision

Membership of the Harrow Skills & Employment Group comprises Jobcentreplus, Skills Funding Agency, National Apprenticeship Service, Central & North West London Mental Health Authority, Skills Development Agency, Third Sector Potential (Community Interest Company), Reed in Partnership, JTJ Work Skills, Stanmore College, Harrow College, Home Group (Housing Association),

A2Dominion (Housing Association), Wiseworks, Ignite, Harrow Association of Disabled People, Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau, and Mind in Harrow. In addition representatives from the following council services attend, Family Learning, Harrow Services for Young People, Adult Community Learning, X16, the Children's Centres

The Group provides

- Networking and information exchange,
- Updates local providers on current issues, (for example presentations from Skills Funding Agency, National Apprenticeship Service, and Jobcentreplus
- Co-ordination of provision to maximise take up
- Identification of gaps in provision
- Development of partnerships for funding opportunities, bringing resources into Harrow.

One practical example of Joint Working was securing vacancies at the New London Designer Discount Village. The Skills Development Agency facilitated joint working with Brent which resulted in vacancy sharing and employers advertising their jobs at the September Job Fair. That Job Fair included 13 employers and 20 training providers. It provided an opportunity for members of the Skills and Employment Group to refer their clients to meet employers and discuss vacancies face to face.

2.7 Conclusion

There are a complex interplay of factors to address to reduce worklessness, these need to be addressed at a national, regional and local level. Harrow Council's provision can be aligned to the Mayor's strategy for Jobs and Growth in London.

Fundamental to tackling worklessness is working with partners to tackle the barriers faced by workless residents.

The council has developed a range of internal and external partnerships to refer and support residents through their journey into employment. It has also developed policies to stimulate job growth through the planning and procurement process. It funds the Xcite programme to support residents that are likely to have a big impact on the council's budget if they become homeless because their housing benefit is less than their rent.

Project name	Value Funder name	Amount	Client Group	Targets	Actual performance
December 2008 – March 2010 Xcite	LDA ESF	£250 K Of which £83,500 was awarded to voluntary sector partners	Black Asian Minority Ethnic) (BAME) Lone parents Over 50s Disabilities (Harrow residents)	Starts 123 Jobs 26 Sustained employment after 6 months 10	Starts 152 Jobs 26 Sustained employment after 6 months, 11
Outreach and Personal Advice Xcite Dec 08 – Mar 2010	DWP West London Working	£150K	Social housing tenants mainly parents on low incomes with carer/parental responsibilities who are social housing and or in temporary accommodation (Harrow residents)	200 starts 59 residents to cease claiming benefits. 66 residents in training from targeted groups. 120 accessing mainstream provision from targeted groups. 200 Libra Action Plans, drawn up and implemented by March 2010.	229 Starts 48 Jobs
Future Jobs Fund October 2009 – March 2010	DWP West London Programme, led by London Borough of Ealing	£6,500 per clients supported into employment. Less M&A from lead body = £5,300 (Therefore £222,600 was secured for Harrow in wage	18 -24 age group, uemployed for between 39 and 52 weeks, Or live in unemployment hot spots (where unemployment is 1.5% over national average Harrow residents	Provide 6 months paid employment to eligible clients. There were an estimated 70 .young people that met the eligibility criteria December 2009.	42 into 6 month sustained employment.

		subsidies and training allowances for clients)			
Childcare affordability (CAP) April to December 2012. however contracted terminated 2010.	LDA ESF pilot (terminated at 9 months)	£250K	Families with Children aged under 10 Income less than £20k p.a. Harrow residents	378 starts 250 job entry 203 sustained employment (12 months In work)	The LDA terminated the programme with all London boroughs in December 2009. Projects were allowed to continue to work with clients until Marc 2011, but could not recruit new clients. .In 9 months Xcite had supported. 50 clients into Jobs > 16 hrs 40 clients Jobs < 16 hrs
Xcite Construction Training Initiative	Section 106 Honeypot Lane July 2008 – July 2012	£250k	Harrow workless residents	65 jobs 120 CSCS Cards 12 Apprenticeships 9 Training opportunities linked to a job 4 Careers Fairs 27 Qualifications	65 jobs 179 CSCS Cards 13 Apprentices 9 Training opportunities linked to job 4 Careers Fairs 23 Qualifications

X21 Graduate scheme 202/13	Flexible Support Fund	£48k	Harrow recent Graduates on JSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts 48 • Jobs 22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts 60 • Jobs 50
Xcite Work Clubs 2012/13	Residual reward grant		Harrow workless residents	No target	72 jobs
Xcite Markets 2012/13	Flexible Support Fund	£38k	Harrow residents on JSA	30 participants	30 achieved
Xcite 2013/14	Harrow Council	£155k	Family First referrals (multiple barriers, eg inter-generational employment, criminal activity, child truancy etc) Residents affected by Housing Benefit Cap, Council Tax Benefit, referrals from HELP scheme. Workless Harrow Residents	20 jobs 80 jobs	Q 2 performance 63 jobs . of which 11 referrals from Housing / HELP.and 1 from Families.
Xcite Construction Training Initiative 2013/14	Section 106	£100k	Harrow workless residents	110 Registered 45 jobs 68 CSCS	Q2 performance 29 jobs 1 apprentice 47 Registered 14 CSCS cards

Table 7 Positive Case Studies

Sonia is a lone parent of 3, the youngest aged 8 years old. Sonia was referred to me from the Job Centre Plus and was in the process of being transferred from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance. This transition created a lot of anxiety as she had been out of work for 29 years, had a number of health issues and no solid Childcare support, an extra concern for her was that her child was extremely clingy and sometimes suffered from panic attacks if anyone else looked after her. Sonia felt this prevented her from finding the right employment. Sonia had completely procrastinated so we worked together over a number of months mainly to build her confidence and self motivation in order to get her to the level of even applying for work. Sonia is now working as a Catering Assistant for a local Secondary School and has been informed that she has passed her probation period. This job suits her perfectly as it is part-time 10am – 2 pm so she is able to take her child to school and pick her up when school finishes, it is also term time only so again she does not have to worry about childcare when her child is on school holidays an issue many parents face, particularly when you are a lone parent and as a result her health and sense of well-being has improved enormously.

“G came here from Spain a few years ago having studied to become a teacher in Spain. Although she had done some private tuition she had never really had the chance to work in a school. She came to London in the hope of finding a teaching job but her plans had to be put on hold when she found herself alone with two children. She was really demoralised and her confidence at an all time low and she was on the verge of giving up. Xcite helped her to find work experience in a Nursery and gave her advice. She was not filling in her application forms with enough information. When we went through a few together she understood how to really sell herself and eventually found a **job in a school** as a teaching assistant. The school has expressed an interest in helping her to build her experience and G feels very positive about the future. The thing she found really useful was the moral support she was given and the firm but gentle push she was given each time she felt her attempts were futile. Her perseverance paid off but she may well have given up with the support she got. “

“M has 5 children and was unable to find work to fit around her family. She was a bright and intelligent woman but had never worked since being a teenager. She was now 35. M just needed someone to talk to and be guided on her CV, application form filling and interview skills. She attended every workshop Xcite ran alongside her 1-2-1s. She came to CV writing, interview training, job search, confidence boosting and goal setting. Within a week of starting to send her CV she **got a job as a carer** with NVQ training prospects. Her confidence has risen and she is really happy with the support she got from Xcite.”

“D is a new recruit , she started on the Xcite Project about 6 weeks ago. She is in her early 30’s and has 2 children under 9 year of age. A young parent, who

wants to be a fitness trainer as she has done courses in this. After signing her up, a week later there was a Health and Wellbeing event taking place at the Council. There were local organisations eg. fitness centres, health care etc, all promoting their services and products. I spoke to the manager of one of the fitness centres about D and arranged an interview for voluntary work. D was successful in her interview and secured a placement at the fitness centre, taking classes with the manager to start of with.

D was very thrilled at how quickly it all happened. The confidence and the motivation that she got was great because not only did she secure the placement at the **fitness centre** but she also landed herself a **job** which she can work around her child and voluntary work at the fitness centre. D feels that after all the setbacks that she has had, she now feels that she is on a roll with new confidence and motivation to keep her on track and focused.”

F is a lone parent of 3, the youngest aged 8 years old. F was referred to me from the Job Centre Plus and was in the process of being transferred from Income Support to Job Seekers Allowance. This transition created a lot of anxiety as she had been out of work for 29 years, had a number of health issues and no solid Childcare support, an extra concern for her was that her child was extremely clingy and sometimes suffered from panic attacks if anyone else looked after her. F felt this prevented her from finding the right employment. F had completely procrastinated so we worked together over a number of months mainly to build her confidence and self motivation in order to get her to the level of even applying for work. F is now **working as a Catering Assistant** for a local Secondary School and has been informed that she has passed her probation period. This job suits her perfectly as it is part-time 10am – 2 pm so she is able to take her child to school and pick her up when school finishes, it is also term time only so again she does not have to worry about childcare when her child is on school holidays an issue many parents face, particularly when you are a lone parent and as a result her health and sense of well-being has improved enormously.”

“One of my client’s J has been a full time mother and had one short term job after leaving school. She left school with no formal qualifications but developed her computer skills at home.

J came to see me in March 2010 after she had heard about Xcite for Parents project via her Advisor at Jobcentre Plus. J wasn’t confident and said that she had been actively looking / applying for jobs but with no success and not even getting short listed or getting an interview. She had childcare issues / commitments.

When she met with me, we re-wrote her CV and went through how to fill in application forms effectively.

Couple of weeks later a **job** came up within the council, I told her to apply and complete the application form which she did, she was shortlisted and invited for a

interview, I gave her a mock interview to see how she comes across and how confidently she would answer the questions. J had her interview and few days later she was offered the position of an **administrator** within the council. She started her job in June. I have spoken to her after she started her job to see how she is getting on and if she is enjoying it, she is very thrilled and enjoying it very much. She had only been on the project for less than 8 weeks.”

*E, a lone parent of 2 children had been working as a Lunchtime Supervisor at a local primary school for 10 hours per week but felt it was time to move on and increase her working hours.

Soon after *E realised that it was going to be difficult to find work that will fit around the job she already has and decided that she would leave in order to increase her availability and in turn her employability.

In the Summer I asked E if she would be interested in joining the Marks and Start programme, I explained that it was a joint venture with Marks and Spencers and the Gingerbread charity (a charity for one parent families), a combination of a 3 day pre-employment training followed by a 2 week work experience placement at a Marks and Spencer store with a view that if they pass their accreditation and perform well, they will be considered for any vacancies. *E was pleased to accept this opportunity and performed extremely well.

During E’s placement she was approached by a gentlemen seeking help, who required shoes that were not available to him in store. E offered options on how to obtain these shoes to which he was pleased. He was a mystery shopper who also happened to be one of the directors. His feedback was very positive on E’s performance. He noted she was on 'work experience' due to her badge, so even more impressed with her conduct and customer service skills. E consequently was offered a temporary contract with her local Marks and Spencers branch for the Christmas period and more recently has been offered **employment** at a local Sainsbury’s branch”

Table 8

Mrs H. Housing referral – Secured employment August 2013, as a cleaner for a hotel chain. She provided a pay slip showing £48 total for 3 days work cleaning 8 large rooms with bathrooms. Mrs H is required to clean them to the required standard, no matter how long this takes for £1.44 per room. Mrs H has asked her adviser to help her find another job as she can not afford to work for this level of pay.

Miss B had a criminal record following several years of a custodial sentence. She had very low morale and confidence. With intense support from her adviser, she applied for a council department vacancy. Miss B was offered the post despite fully disclosing her past in a competitive interview. (She was coached to enable her to be honest in her responses and able to discuss the offence). Routine

checks revealed Miss B was several hundred pounds in debt to the council and the job offer was withdrawn

The Xcite Construction Broker negotiated apprenticeship opportunities with a local contractor, He spent 8 weeks preparing clients for work on site. Mr T was offered work on a construction site having impressed the company in a competitive interview and they agreed to pay for additional training and make him an apprentice. The offer was withdrawn after routine testing for illegal substances revealed his drug use.

Mr A is facing benefit cap sanctions and been offered help from Xcite, as both he and his wife are unemployed. Mr A refuses to allow Mrs A to work, and claims that as the father of six children he must stay at home to look after them. He has bitten his doctor.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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Background Papers: SLA Jobcentreplus Harrow Council, Grant Applications CAP09, CTI Evaluatuion