

From: **Derek Murphy, Cabinet Member, Economic Development**  
**Simon Jones - Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport**

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 9 November 2023

Subject: **Youth Unemployment and Apprenticeships**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of paper **N/A**

Future Pathway of paper **N/A**

Divisions Affected; **All**

**Summary:** This paper provides the Committee with updated information on unemployment statistics and apprenticeships: the Committee previously discussed these at its meeting on 11 January 2023. Prior to that, the Committee discussed these matters at its meeting on 20 September 2021, in the context of the impact on youth unemployment of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and health measures introduced at the time to mitigate the consequences.

**Recommendation:**

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and presentation and to note that the Cabinet Committee for Children, Young People and Education will be invited to consider the same issues at one of its future meetings. It is proposed that a further analysis should be presented to these Committees in the new year, taking into account changes in Government policies and funding.

**1. Unemployment statistics**

- 1.1 In August 2023, there were 31,440 people aged 18 and over claiming unemployment benefits in Kent, an increase of 1.55 per cent since November 2022 when the figures were last reported to the Committee in January 2023. (The data for August 2023 are the most recent unemployment figures for local authority districts published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) at the time of writing this report. The ONS derives the data from the number of people claiming either Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit principally for the reason of being unemployed.)
- 1.2 Kent's unemployment rate was 3.3 per cent of the working age population, below the Great Britain rate of 3.7 per cent but higher than the South East's rate of 2.8 per cent. Over the past five years, the unemployment rate in Kent has consistently been approximately 0.5 percentage points below the Great Britain average.

1.3 Thanet had the highest unemployment rate in Kent at 5.5 per cent. Sevenoaks had the lowest, at 1.9 per cent. Similarly, Thanet had the highest numbers unemployed and Sevenoaks the fewest.

1.4 The youth unemployment rate in Kent (people aged 18 to 24 years) was 5.0 per cent compared with Great Britain's 4.9 per cent and the South East's 3.8 per cent. At 9.1 per cent, Thanet had the highest youth unemployment rate in any district in the South East of England. The number of young people unemployed in Thanet was 840; in Sevenoaks, the number was 210.

1.5 The table below shows these unemployment figures by district:

<b>Kent Districts</b>	<b>18-24 year claimants</b>	<b>18-24-year claimant rate</b>	<b>25-49-year claimants</b>	<b>25-49-year claimant rate</b>	<b>50-64 year claimants</b>	<b>50-64 year claimant rate</b>
Ashford	455	4.9 %	1,435	3.4 %	535	2.1 %
Canterbury	675	3.1 %	1,720	4.0 %	700	2.4 %
Dartford	380	4.9 %	1,420	3.2 %	425	2.1 %
Dover	505	6.7 %	1,440	4.4 %	635	2.5 %
Folkestone & Hythe	450	6.2 %	1,340	4.3 %	675	2.5 %
Gravesham	490	6.2 %	1,730	4.9 %	610	3.0 %
Maidstone	555	4.6 %	1,930	3.3 %	685	2.0 %
Sevenoaks	210	2.9 %	845	2.4 %	320	1.3 %
Swale	655	6.0 %	1,900	3.9 %	715	2.4 %
Thanet	840	9.1 %	2,665	6.5 %	1,010	3.5 %
Tonbridge & Malling	330	3.9 %	1,025	2.5 %	410	1.5 %
Tunbridge Wells	235	3.3 %	1,020	2.8 %	450	1.9 %
<b>Kent Total</b>	<b>5,780</b>	<b>5.0 %</b>	<b>18,470</b>	<b>3.8 %</b>	<b>7,190</b>	<b>2.3 %</b>

## 2. Apprenticeships

2.1 Based on third quarter data for 2022-23 and 2021-22, Kent has seen a decrease in apprenticeship starts of 3 per cent, from 7,320 in 2021-22 to 7,050 in 2022-23. Nationally, apprenticeship starts are down by 5%. Kent's numbers have declined, but not as much as the national trend. (Note: figures have been rounded up to nearest 10.)

2.2 Comparison of apprenticeship starts by age group (*figures rounded up to nearest 10.*).

	<i>Kent</i>	<i>England</i>
16-18	+4% 2021-22 =1560 2022-23 =1620	-0.3%
19-24	-2% 2021-22 = 2100 2022-23 =2050	-8%
25+	-6% 2021-22 =3620 2022-23 =3380	-5%

*Data source: KCC Analytics*

This highlights that the work currently supporting young people into apprenticeship by The Education People and Kent County Council is having a positive impact to ensure Kent is achieving above national results.

2.3 The following table shows the numbers of apprenticeship starts in Kent in 2021-22 and 2022-23, showing the level and age range:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>2021-22 3rd Qtr</b>	<b>2022-23 3rd Qtr</b>
Intermediate Apprenticeship Under 19	Under 19	680	660
Intermediate Apprenticeship 19 - 24	19-24	400	390
Intermediate Apprenticeship 25+	25+	620	380
Advanced Apprenticeship Under 19	Under 19	720	770
Advanced Apprenticeship 19-24	19-24	1000	940
Advanced Apprenticeship 25+	25+	1500	1400
Higher Apprenticeship Under 19	Under 19	160	190
Higher Apprenticeship 19 - 24	19-24	700	720
Higher Apprenticeship 25+	25+	1500	1600

The figures in the table reflect the Government's drive to increase the number of starts across level 3 and above and to reduce the number of level 2 starts. (A sectoral breakdown for Kent is not available: this data is only available nationally.)

### **KCC sharing the apprenticeship levy**

3.1 Since summer 2018, all levy paying employers have been able to share up to 25 per cent of their levy contributions with other employers to support apprenticeship training. KCC has been sharing its contributions since 2019. Recipients of the KCC funding must show how they will deliver KCC's Strategic Outcomes by supporting:

- Children and Young People,
- Kent economic growth, or
- Older and vulnerable residents.

There are currently 104 employers in the KCC Programme supporting 254 apprenticeships. The largest number of apprentices (129) are in the adult social care sector.

3.2 This table shows the skills qualification levels for these apprenticeships:

Levels 2 & 3	186
Level 4	30
Level 5	26
Level 6	5
Level 7	7
TOTAL	254

The Annex to this paper summarizes the information on the Gov.Uk Website on the equivalence of these qualification levels to other qualifications.

3.3 KCC also uses its levy to support a Graduate Programme which offers the opportunity to develop professional learning pathway and is recognized as the top Charitable, Education and Public sector organization in the Top 100 Employers for graduates to work for.

3.4 KCC is also working in partnership with Mid-Kent College to receive industry placements with Kent Scientific Services and with Kent Training and Apprenticeships (KT&A) to pilot a Business and Administration Traineeship.

3.5 KCC offers face to face work experience opportunities in those areas whose working arrangements can support this. 31 have been arranged this year. KCC is also working with Kent Supported Employment (KSE) to create a tailored Supported Internship Programme for SEND students or those with an EHCP.

### **4. Labour and Skills Shortages: the Kent and Medway Employment Task Force**

4.1 In 2020, the County Council's Leader, Roger Gough, established the Kent and Medway Employment Task Force to identify and progress actions that would mitigate the extent and impact of both employment shortages and unemployment. Membership of the Task Force includes the Cabinet Members responsible for Economic Development and for Education and Skills, as well as Council Leaders

representing other local authorities in Kent, two members of Parliament, and representatives from education, business, and employment support (including the Department for Work and Pensions). The Task Force meets regularly to identify and assess the most critical issues and problems and to initiate solutions through appropriate action. The actions that fall to the County Council are reported to the relevant Cabinet Committee. In cases where responsibility lies elsewhere, the Task Force seeks to exert influence for reform:

- 4.2 Employers have reported considerable difficulty in recruiting the numbers of staff they need with the right level of skills. This is a national issue and not one which is unique to Kent and Medway. Nonetheless, the Employment Task Force has considered what measures could be implemented to improve the situation in Kent and priority has been given to finding ways of increasing the numbers of apprenticeships in sectors with skills shortages.
- 4.3 The County Council itself plays a significant part in delivering that improvement and the Services involved, The Employment People, Education and Personnel, are represented in the Employment Task Force's discussions through the Reference Group.
- 4.4 As these KCC services report to separate Cabinet Committees, the chairs of the Children's, Young People and Education Committee and the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Committee have suggested that reports relevant to skills and employment should go to both Committees and that the relevant Corporate Directors should co-ordinate these reports.

## **5. Data Protection and Equalities**

- 5.1 This report does not contain any information protected by GDPR; nor does it require an EQIA. The work of the KCC Apprenticeship Board is informed by an EQIA for each of its individual strands.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 This report does not have financial implications for budgets which are the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and the Cabinet Member for Communities. Personnel Committee reviews the budgets for KCC Apprenticeships and the Cabinet Committee for CYPE reviews the education budgets.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 This report makes no recommendations which have legal implications.

## **8. Recommendation**

### **Recommendation:**

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and to note that the Cabinet Committee for Children, Young People and

Education will be invited to consider the same issues at one of its future meetings. It is proposed that a further analysis should be presented to these Committees in the new year, taking into account changes in Government policies and funding.

**9. Background Documents**

None

**10. Contact details.**

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