



**An employment and skills outcome agreement for
the health and care sector in central London**

A prospectus

Second edition

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We are keen to hear your thoughts on this work, particularly your responses to any of the questions posed to you throughout this document. If you would like to comment on its content, please send over your thoughts to either:

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Summary

This document is intended to stimulate a conversation between both employers and education and skills providers in the health and social care sector, as well as councils in their role as commissioners of health and social care and as a local anchor organisation. The product of this work will be the development of an outcomes framework for employment and skills in the health and social care sector. This will need to reflect and address the emerging impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which has become a driver for change across health, care and education.

[Central London Forward](#)¹ has commissioned [Shared Intelligence](#) to help prepare this framework. In addition to this, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has committed to embedding a focus on outcomes into its commissioning framework. This may in time demonstrate that a sector-based outcomes agreement approach will deliver the greatest impact. This prospectus has been developed to establish a shared understanding of what an outcomes agreement is and the potential impact of an agreement on the health and care sector in central London, delivering positive outcomes in a post-Covid world.

Introduction

The health and care sector is one of the biggest employers in London. It is one of the top three sectors in eight of the twelve member boroughs of Central London Forward (CLF) and it is the biggest employment sector in Lambeth, Lewisham and Wandsworth. Employers range from some of the most famous hospitals in the country to GP practices, and from national care providers to small residential care homes.

CLF sees considerable potential in the creation of an employment and skills outcomes agreement for the health and care sector in central London. Its ambition is that the outcomes agreement will bring benefits to the communities served by its members helping residents into work, enabling employers to access people with the skills they require and improving the quality of health and care.

This ambition has been built over the last year but in light of the current pandemic, it is now more central to the priorities at a sub-region, London and national scale. The sector has been tackling Covid-19 over the last few months and has seen accelerated transformation. Over 700,000 people registered as an NHS volunteer and the voluntary and community sector saw large numbers of people offering their time and resources for support within the community. Councils have played a large part in this by organising volunteers, offering up car parks and removing parking charges for NHS staff during the immediate crisis, and supporting the sourcing and redistribution of PPE equipment. The health and social care sector has responded by beginning to address some of the structural workforce challenges anticipated in the future. Now is the time to build on this momentum and address some of the issues as has been commenced through the #NHSReset campaign.

¹ Central London Forward is the sub-regional partnership representing the twelve Central London boroughs: Camden, City of London, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster

“The clear message we have been hearing from health and care leaders and clinicians has been that this is an opportunity to reset the way we plan, commission and deliver health and care.”²

What is an employment and skills outcome agreement?

The former UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), in a report produced in collaboration with the Association of Colleges (AOC), proposed employment and skills outcome agreements as a framework for securing collaboration to develop a system which better responds to local economic need³. Outcome agreements are a mechanism for agreeing what particular investment in what specific skills will drive the best local employment opportunities and best enhance business performance, and provide a framework to align skills provision so it can better address the skills needs of local employers and residents. They provide a valuable opportunity for key players in a skills system to develop a joint understanding of these needs and the role they can play in addressing them.

An outcome agreement, as described in the UKCES/AoC report, sets out specifically the outcomes of a learner’s participation in the skills system. These outcomes consider the wider impacts of skills development, beyond just the acquisition of a qualification. Employment and skills outcomes may include employment outcomes such as progression into or within work, and social outcomes, such as improved health and wellbeing.

The UKCES/AoC report argues that because of the significant change in thinking and behaviour required of organisations within the skills system, the process of developing an outcomes agreement is just as important as the final product. New forms of relationships between the key partners will need to be developed, and these will need to be of the highest quality to not only carry out the complex tasks of identifying and agreeing long term goals, but to sustain the commitments to achieving the agreed outcomes in the long term.

Whatever the outcomes identified, it is essential that these are reflective of local economic need, the local labour market, and have been developed and agreed by the key partners involved in developing and delivering the agreement. We are building on that to include outcomes for employers in Health and Social Care, providers of learning and training and the system as a whole.

² <https://www.nhsconfed.org/supporting-members/nhs-reset>

³ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKES) (2015) *Local Action, National Success: How outcomes agreements can improve skills delivery* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-action-national-success-how-outcome-agreements-can-improve-skills-delivery>

A CLF perspective

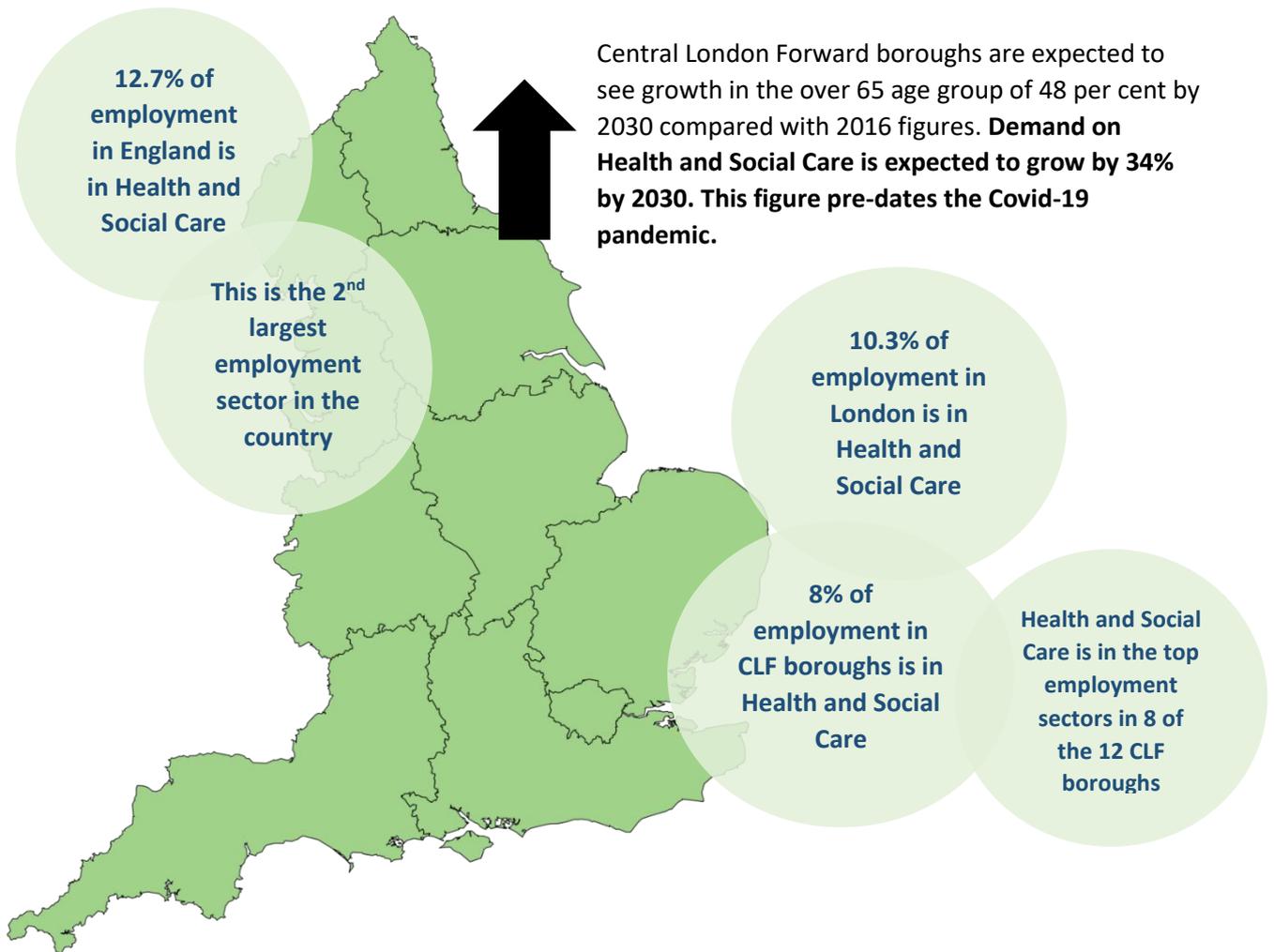
Key drivers

Successful action to enable local residents to access and progress in these jobs hinges on collaboration between employers, education and training providers, and local councils; particularly to ensure that provision is available to enable residents to obtain the skills necessary to access employment in the sector. There are a number of key drivers for this work which need to be addressed to deliver a successful outcomes framework. These are:

1. Covid-19 presents a significant opportunity to attract new entrants into the workforce, while helping to reshape the future needs of the health and social care market. The emerging framework has a major contribution to make in the transition to the 'new normal'.
2. A significant number of residents in central London have low skills, have difficulty accessing work, or experience in-work poverty. Groups most at risk of experiencing these challenges include vulnerable young people, BAME people, people with a disability or long-term health condition, older workers, and people who have been involved in the criminal justice system.
3. The importance of the health and care sector in central London and the availability in health and care provider organisations and businesses of entry level posts. The care sector is often perceived as being low skilled and poorly paid. The median pay of a care worker in the independent sector is below the real living wage, but the fact that there are low skilled posts in the health and care sectors provide opportunities for people in these priority groups to move into employment and provide opportunities for progression into work and further training once in a role.
4. Devolution of the AEB to London has made adult skills policy a key priority for the Mayor and London government. As set out in the Mayor's Skills for Londoner's Strategy⁴, there is an opportunity for London to shape the future of skills provision in the capital. This has created the potential to influence the delivery of the devolution powers and resources to help provide better conditions for health and social care staff in London.

⁴ <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/skills-and-employment/skills-londoners/strategy-and-research>

The sector in numbers



Developing a CLF health and care outcomes agreement

The approach to developing the outcomes agreement reflects a number of important recommendations in the UKCES/AoC report. The report stressed that “the process of developing an outcome agreement is as important as the agreement itself” and should recognise the fact that “local players will need to work differently, requiring a maturity of approach and a commitment to a longer term goal that has not been systematically fostered to date.” It also stated that “being clear about why local outcome agreements are being introduced and aligning the model and its characteristics to that purpose is an important process and should be agreed and communicated prior to the development of outcomes and measures.”

The UKCES/AoC report is clear that “it is important to introduce outcome measures that are relevant and accurately demonstrate impact rather than those most easy to count and evidence....This approach requires the use of a variety of measures to best demonstrate impact, even if this is sometimes less straightforward to capture and quantify.” Our first task will therefore be to agree the outcomes the agreement should cover. The plan is then to consider how the outcomes can be measured, building wherever possible on existing data. Finally, we will craft the final agreement including mechanisms for the partners to mutually hold each other to account. The aim is for the agreement to be formally signed off in autumn 2020.

We are working with a small group of five CLF boroughs including: Islington, Haringey, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Westminster. They have been engaging their local employers and education and training providers in the work and the learning from this is being used to inform the wider CLF partnership of councils, employers and providers across the central London geography.

So far, the partnership has agreed the proposed focus of the framework which will be for residents who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- People who are facing barriers to accessing employment;
- People who are experiencing in-work poverty;
- People who match the priority groups identified by health and care employers.

The aim is to enable these residents to improve their skills levels, access employment opportunities and progress in work in a way that meets the needs of health and care employers in the CLF area. It will need to consider the needs of employers as well as appropriate career pathways for residents.

CLF is also committed to extracting the learning from this process to inform subsequent work including:

- Applying the approach to other sectors in the CLF area;
- The approach being adopted in other places, in London and beyond;
- Influencing the GLA’s approach to skills.

This is being delivered through a learning group to help extract lessons from this work including representatives from the Local Government Association, Greater London Authority, London Councils, NHS Confederation, Association of Colleges and one of London’s other sub-regional partnerships, the West London Alliance. This group will meet three times over the course of this work to help to extract the learning from this work.

In considering this approach, a number of examples of good practice have come to light as set out below.

Tower Hamlets' women in health and social care programme supports local women into the health and social care sector, gives them opportunities to boost their skills, and offers a wider programme of support. It works with those facing a range of barriers including childcare responsibilities, low confidence, domestic violence, stigma from the community, mental health issues and disabilities. Participants are screened, recruited and employed by Tower Hamlets, and then seconded out on six-month work placements within the NHS. Roles are available in business administration or as health care assistants, and participants have the option to work 16, 25 or 30 hours per week, depending on their circumstances and preference. All placements are paid at the London Living Wage, and participants gain valuable paid work experience as well as an accredited qualification (Principles of Business Administration Level 2 or the Care Certificate).

Proud to Care North London is a jobs portal specifically focussed on adult social care. Proud to Care North London covers the North London Partners in Health and Social Care, London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington. The service lists a variety of jobs and other opportunities, including training, for people at all levels of experience. In addition, the site also offers information for new providers and new employees in the care sector. This support helps to develop the understanding of the sector and helps those working and operating in the sector to develop and improve their skills, through training and career development opportunities. This includes offering advice to those who have never considered taking a job in the social care sector about the requirements and the challenges of working in it. This ultimately aims to improve the care sector, making it easier for people to find new opportunities in the context of rapidly increasing demand and an increasingly elderly population.

Islington Health and Social Care Academy is in the process of developing a more focussed outcomes-based approach to Health and Social Care by working with employers and providers operating in their borough. Under the banner of the Islington Health and Social Care Academy, Islington is bringing together key local anchor institutions with a shared vision of creating a strong local offer around employment in the sector. Collectively the NHS, Health and Social Care Providers, and the Local Authority have extensive employment and purchasing power. This initiative seeks to address opportunities brought forward by the sector, creating a clear local point of contact for residents and employers, to ensure that more focus is on the local talent pool, building resilience in the community and in the Health and Social Care Sector.

Outcome areas and outcomes

Work on the development of the outcomes agreement is at an early stage, but there is an emerging consensus about the focus of the agreement, and some initial thoughts about the areas on which outcomes should be agreed. We anticipate that the next phase of activity will enable us to add further detail to the focus of the health and care outcomes agreement and refine and develop the emerging list of impact areas for these outcomes and measurements. In the meantime, the following areas have been highlighted as priorities across the sector.

More people are interested in pursuing a career in the health and care sector

A higher level of awareness of employment and progression opportunities in the health and care sector and the training and development available.

Harnessing the opportunities in ESOL classes to raise awareness of the opportunities in health and care sector.

More people facing barriers to employment secure jobs in the health and care sector

The development of new pathways to meet the needs of priority groups including adjusted apprenticeships and flexible learning.

A reduction in the impact of social factors including exclusion, family circumstances and personal confidence.

A reduction in drop-offs (based on an improved understanding of the reasons for drop off).

More opportunities for progression and career development within the health and care sector

The creation of skills pathways that enable career development and progression including transition between sectors and conversion into clinical roles.

The development of a skills passport for the health and care sector and other portable qualifications and skills.

People have access to skills required to work in the health and care sector

New entrants have the necessary core skills including digital literacy and “fusion skills” and an appetite to progress within the health and care sector.

Availability of short bespoke provision to meet specific skills needs identified by employers.

Good work

An increase in the number of employers in the health and care sector offering London Living Wage and meeting high quality workplace practices, including those set out in the Mayor’s Good Work Standard.

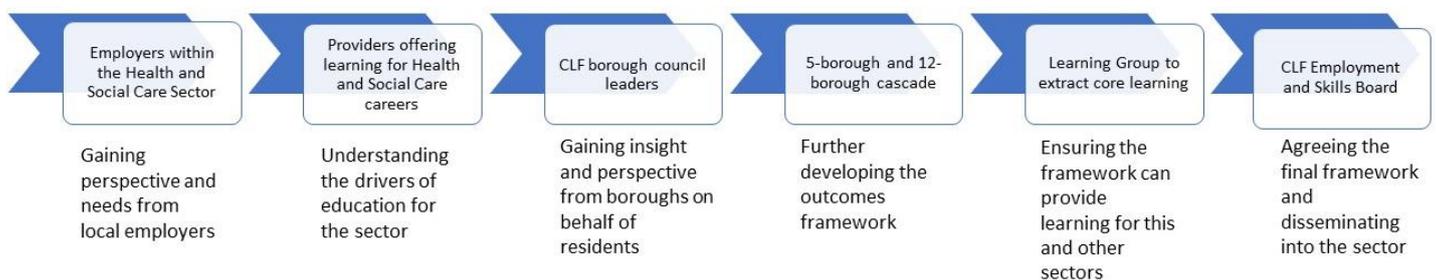
Increased use of apprenticeships.

Improved quality of care

Improved entry-level recruitment and career progression, as well as more people entering the field, contributes to improved health and care provision.

How you can get involved

The next stage of developing the outcomes agreement will be to work with partners across the health and social care sector, the education sector, and councils to build the employment and skills framework. This will be done through a series of roundtables and discussions with stakeholders to build up the framework agreements and test within the sector. Ensuring that the framework can be measured, but appreciating the outcomes can vary considerably, depending on the stage of the learner's career journey. The diagram below sets out who is involved and the particular role that they will play.



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