



Young People | Experts through Experience

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



European Union
European
Social Fund

This project is receiving up to £34 million of funding made up of £17 million European Social Fund and £17 million Youth Employment Initiative, plus match funding of up to £8m from the Big Lottery Fund and funding from partners

WE ARE TALENT MATCH



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FOREWORD

BIG LOTTERY



Talent Match is a national test and learn programme with a focus on how we understand what works in helping young people who are unemployed. At the heart of the programme is a core belief that young people matter. We need to support them to fulfil their potential; from becoming 'work ready', securing employment or taking up enterprising opportunities. This progression is important. Long-term unemployment can seriously harm the future life prospects of young people, from lower earnings, further unemployment and more ill health later in life.

The programme has not been without its challenges. Numerous partnerships have told us that the young people they are dealing with are not just furthest away from the labour market, they have multiple and complex issues and barriers which prevent them from accessing work. These needs take time to address and overcome but with the correct wrap-around support they are not insurmountable and progress can be made. A key aspect of this progression is to continue to demonstrate and share the principle findings from Social Return on Investment studies, to not only show the

economic impact but more importantly the human impact these interventions can and do have.

Now in its third year of delivery, Talent Match is having a real impact. Over 13,000 young people have engaged with the programme and over 2,100 of these have secured employment; many of which have previously been classed as 'hidden'. We want our investment to have a deep and lasting impact. We also wanted to test new approaches and provide learning to influence policy and practice. The findings from this report combined with the early findings from our national evaluation led by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University, continue to give us the belief that this is possible, and that the hard work is beginning to have a positive impact.

I wish you continued luck in the remaining three years of the project.

Scott Hignett, Funding & Relationship Manager, Talent Match, BIG Lottery Fund

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PROFESSOR IAN OAKES

CO-CHAIR BLACK COUNTRY TALENT MATCH BOARD

Significant numbers of young people in the Black Country face multiple disadvantages through unemployment, low income, low attainment, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to learning. Experiencing such problems is extremely stressful for them and their families. Depression and acute mental health disorders are more common in disadvantaged areas with many young people finding themselves abandoned before they have even begun their working lives.

At Talent Match, we believe all young people should be given the chance to reach their

full potential by giving opportunities for disadvantaged young people to have the appropriate training and support they need so that they can eventually take care of themselves both personally and financially.

Through our network of Hubs across the Black Country, our team of expert Mentors, our supportive business partners and our highly motivated and committed management team, Talent Match delivers support which gives our young people the chance to choose which route in life suits them best - taking effective action to transform young lives!

FOREWORD

BLACK COUNTRY TALENT MATCH

The Black Country comprises of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton covering 356 square kilometres. It is a product of its industrial past and is home to just under 1.1 million people, accounting for one fifth of the West Midlands region's population. It has a special place in UK and world history as the area that pioneered the urbanisation of the industrial revolution.

The average Black Country resident earns significantly less than the national average, and many parts of the region are dominated by concentrations of low priced private housing and large areas of social rented housing. The Black Country has high levels of unemployment, reducing the opportunities for those who live here. At the time of writing, the Black Country has a total of 131,156 people of working age that have declared themselves as having a disability or a limiting long term illness. This is about 20% of working age adults.

Although national unemployment rates have been falling, high levels among young people in the Black Country are still present.

West Bromwich and Walsall were ranked 2nd and 4th in the Office for National Statistics official study of March 2016 into housing and poverty; which published figures for the country's 10 'most deprived towns'.

A positive response to this landscape is to help ensure that young people in our sub-region, those who will be its future, are supported to develop their own high aspirations and break down the barriers they face in achieving those aspirations. It is within this context that Talent Match Black Country provides a much needed and different holistic approach to supporting young people across the area. Empowering young people to develop, grow and realise their potential

by putting them at the heart of the project and the decision making process.

Talent Match Black Country as part of the Impact project works alongside people aged 18-29 who have been out of work, training or education for at least 6 months and who require additional support to overcome specific barriers to employment including, mental ill health, a history of offending, a background in care or a physical disability. The uniqueness of Talent Match is that it is led by the aspirations, needs and wishes of the young people it is designed to support.

DELIVERY

Over the last two years a dedicated team of delivery partners consisting of Senior Mentors and Mentors have been engaging with and supporting over 500 young people to overcome barriers, gain confidence, develop new skills, access volunteering and work placement opportunities as well as gain and sustain employment. During this time we have adopted a theory of change that will enable future generations of young people furthest from the labour market to navigate an easier pathway to employment. We hope this learning will be used to inform future policy decisions, because our young people deserve the best support and the widest range of opportunities to reach their full potential regardless of the start they have had or the barriers they face.

We hope this document clearly demonstrates both the human and the economic impact the work Talent Match does, and the fantastic progress and successes that young people in the Black Country are achieving.

Enjoy

Talent Match



This project is receiving up to £34 million of funding made up of £17 million European Social Fund and £17 million Youth Employment Initiative, plus match funding of up to £8m from the Big Lottery Fund and funding from partners

VISION, PROMISE, PRINCIPLES:

TALENT MATCH BLACK COUNTRY:

WORKS ALONGSIDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN CO-DESIGNING THEIR OWN TAILORED SUPPORT TO DEVELOP PERSONALISED PATHWAYS, RECEIVE BESPOKE SUPPORT AND ACCESS THE RIGHT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE LOCALLY.

DEVELOPS STRONG LINKS BETWEEN BUSINESSES AND YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE HUBS AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND USES THESE LINKS AS A PLATFORM FOR **OPENING UP EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** FOR TALENT MATCH YOUNG PEOPLE.

IS CREATIVE AND LOCALLY DRIVEN, USING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES TO CREATE **INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS** THAT FOCUS ON THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE AREA.

At Black Country Talent Match, we understand the complex factors which can prevent our young

HAS A FOCUS ON IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING BUSINESSES AND *to report the* EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE HEAVILY INFLUENCED THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE PROGRAMME.

We believe every young person is an individual, and has the potential to transform their own IS FOCUSED ON THE AREAS OF GREATEST NEED IN ORDER TO MAKE A DEMONSTRABLE **IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE** WE ARE WORKING WITH.

support; developing personalised pathways bespoke support and access to the right advice and guidance locally

AIMS TO PROVIDE GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY AND HIGH LEVELS OF SOCIAL RETURN ON WHAT IS A **SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT** AND TO DEVELOP AN APPROACH TO ENSURE THAT THE BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER CONTINUE WHEN THE FUNDING ENDS.

OUR AIM

TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE FURTHEST AWAY FROM BEING WORK-READY TO SECURE OR TAKE UP ENTERPRISING AND/OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES, BY IMPROVING THEIR **CONFIDENCE** AND **OPTIMISM** BY OFFERING INTENSIVE SUPPORT THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED MENTORS.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

100%

of young people have improved confidence, motivation and optimism

21%

in to employment

80%

access training and development

30%

access work experience

30%

access volunteering opportunities

100%

young people take responsibility for co-designing their own support packages

THE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS

- ▶ ONE-2-ONE MENTOR SUPPORT IS IMPERATIVE
- ▶ MATCHING MENTOR TO MENTEE
- ▶ DEVELOPING A NICHE FOR EACH HUB IN RELATION TO THEIR CLIENT GROUP
- ▶ SHARE LEARNING ACROSS THE PROJECT
- ▶ RANGE AND BREADTH OF ACTIVITY
- ▶ WALKING-WITH-YOU CULTURE
- ▶ SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN TO SAFE SUSTAINABLE HOUSING
- ▶ PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN HOUSING, HEALTH, POLICE
- ▶ UNDERSTANDING OUR CLIENT GROUP AND SPEAKING THEIR LANGUAGE
- ▶ OUTREACH SUPPORT





Meet the team at Sandwell

KYLE'S STORY

Before Kyle joined Talent Match he was not working and he was socialising with the wrong crowd who got into trouble with the police. Kyle underwent some training before he joined Talent Match but was unable to gain any work experience or full-time work from it. Kyle found himself homeless for a period of time and in addition to this, Kyle's girlfriend was expecting their first child. Kyle wanted to find work as soon as possible so that he could help support his girlfriend and child.

"I REALLY ENJOY COMING TO TALENT MATCH. THEY HAVE REALLY HELPED ME TO GET MY CAREER ON TRACK AND KEPT ME ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW..."

What attracted you to talent match?

Talent Match was a final opportunity for me to achieve something in life and get a job. I liked the idea of having a mentor who I could turn to for help and support when I needed it and someone I could talk to and would listen.

What positive change has Talent Match brought about?

I've made a number of achievements on the program, Talent Match has helped me to gain more qualifications and full-time employment. On a personal level, Talent Match has changed my life for the better and has helped me with issues in my personal life.

What are you doing now?

I am now working full time at UK Scaffolding whilst waiting to take up additional training for my Part 1 qualification. My life is much more settled and I'm excited to be expecting my second child.

What are your future aspirations?

My future aspirations are to complete Part 1 of my scaffolding qualification whilst continuing to support my family. However, eventually I would like to have my own removal business.

"I AM GLAD I CAME ON THIS PROGRAMME. IT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE FOR THE BETTER".

WE'RE TRANSFORMING LIVES.....

Meet the team
at Central



MELISSA CENTRAL HUB MENTOR

What difference has Talent Match made to your young people in your area?

I can see a huge difference the project has made for young people in Bilston. We have a really vibrant hub and it is clear that the young people are invested in the project and their respective Talent Match Mentor. They enjoy using the facilities and take part in many activities such as art and football club. There are also lots of volunteering opportunities and as we are a theatre, many young people have tried their hand at performing live. It is evident that the majority of our hub users have increased their confidence and motivation as a result of their engagement, and this in turn had broadened their horizons and ability to achieve.

Why become a Talent Match Mentor?

I would encourage other practitioners to become a Talent Match mentor as the work is varied and exciting. Our hub is very creative and supportive and I feel the work we do here is rewarding. The clients we encounter are often challenging and sometimes it can feel like a difficult slog as their journey is a constant rollercoaster. However, sometimes there are real moments of joy when you know you have made a difference and can see small changes within an individual.

What's your favourite aspect of being a Talent Match Mentor?

One of my favourite aspects of being a Talent Match Mentor is having the opportunity to support young people to make change. The program offers the freedom for both client and practitioner to be creative, to think outside the box and generate ideas on how to holistically support the individual to bring about change. This freedom is an integral part of the job as most young people are set in their ways and find thinking and behaving differently challenging. However, when change starts to happen it is a wonderful thing to witness and these are the nuggets of joy that make the work we do feel worthwhile and important.

What are your future aspirations for your young people?

I hope that the young people I have supported over the past two years are better able to function in society and have the necessary life skills to be independent citizens. I hope that the creative and holistic work I do, helps them to understand who they are and be confident to express themselves positively. I hope that the program will increase their chances of having a more rounded life, so that they can make positive decisions that do not put themselves or others at risk. Ultimately, I hope they are happier people.

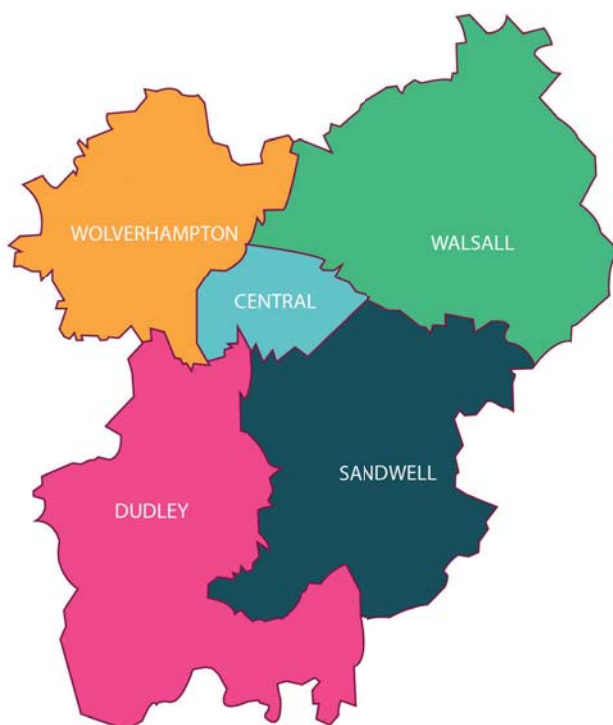
WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

SINCE LAUNCHING IN OCTOBER 14, WE'VE REACHED OVER **500 YOUNG DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE**, (AGED 18-29) FROM A DIVERSE RANGE OF BACKGROUNDS, ALL OF WHOM ARE SUPPORTED BY OUR TEAM OF MENTORS.

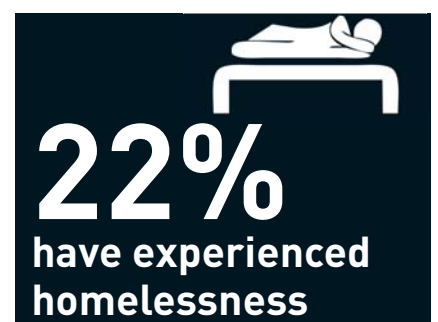
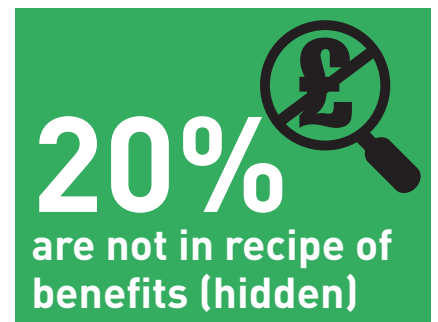
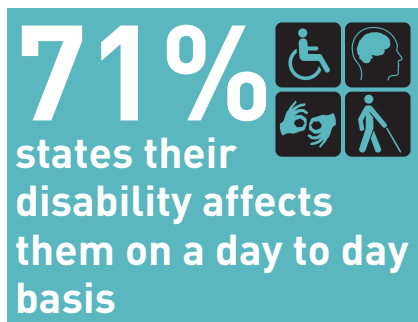
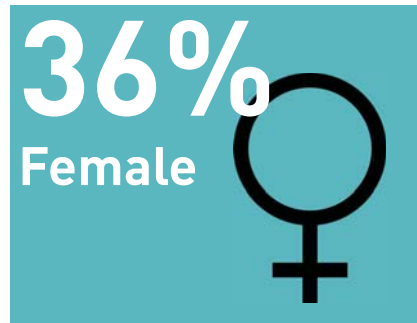
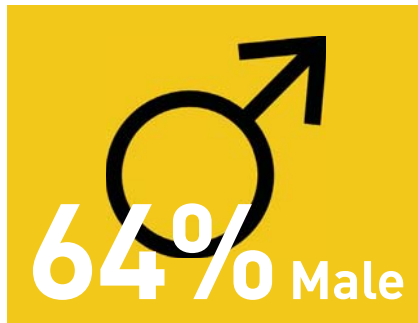
At Black Country Talent Match, we understand the complex factors which can prevent our young people entering employment, receiving training and gaining experience. Two years on we are delighted to report the positive impact the project is bringing.

We believe every young person is an individual, and has the potential to transform their own lives. With the support from Black Country Talent Match young people can co-design their own tailored support; develop personalised pathways for bespoke support and access the right advice and guidance locally.

OUR DELIVERY PARTNERS



WE'RE REACHING FURTHER





Meet the mentors from our Dudley hub

CHARLOTTE'S STORY

Charlotte had finished college and felt like she had no direction, she knew wanted to start and progress her own business, but did not know where to begin. Charlotte suffered from mental illnesses and received counselling support from the What centre. She was informed of Talent Match and signed up straight away.

What attracted you to talent match?

Talent Match is very knowledgeable about running businesses and getting contacts to others. They always have the right support to offer when I have needed them whether it be professional or personal. I always feel like I can turn to them whatever the need.

What positive change has Talent Match brought about?

I am more confident in the decisions I make about my business and my mental health.

What are you doing now?

I now own a Baking and Event Business called 'The English Rose.'

What are your future aspirations?

I'm thinking about finding premises and expanding my business.

**"I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE
I CAN TURN TO THEM
WHATEVER THE NEED."**

WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT WE DO

DANNY – MENTOR SANDWELL HUB

What difference has Talent Match made to your young people in your area?

Talent Match has given young people with multiple barriers and issues an opportunity to obtain intensive quality support at a time when Youth Services have become drastically reduced, due to government cuts. It has also given young people more needed support at a time when youth unemployment has reached an all-time high due to other factors, such as the recession.

Why become a Talent Match Mentor?

I became a Talent Match Mentor because it was an opportunity to do some quality, intensive work with young people with multiple barriers and issues. I also became a Talent Match Mentor so that I could have the opportunity to be able to work with young people in a new and different job role. This gives young people and workers a longer period of time that they need to carry out some quality, meaningful and substantial work.

What's your favourite aspect of being a Talent Match Mentor?

My favourite aspect of being a Talent Match Mentor is seeing the young people that you work with move on and achieve their goals and aims that you have also participated in. Another favourite aspect of mine is to see young people develop and grow in their outlook of life, their attitude and their behaviour over the period of time that I am working with them.

What are your Future aspirations for your young people?

My future aspiration's for my young people are to see them achieve their goals and aims that they have and for them to develop in a positive way while they are on the Talent Match program. I would love for my young people to find a sense of purpose and direction in their lives and for them to continue to develop and grow once they have left the Talent Match program.





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES TO DATE

Of 207
young people
surveyed after
12mths of
being on the
Talent Match
programme...

54%

received additional training
– on the job training, life
skills budgeting, health
eating

11%

completed a formal college
course – courses included
beauty, engineering and
business

47%

completed work
experience – working with
local employers to gain
experience and skills and
to understand employer
expectations

61%

applied for jobs – helping to
apply for jobs, CVs and job
applications

26.5%

gained employment –
secured a part time or
full time job with a local
employer

51%

had a job interview

2%

set up their own business

36%

volunteered – working
with community and
voluntary groups to gain
work experience – giving
something back

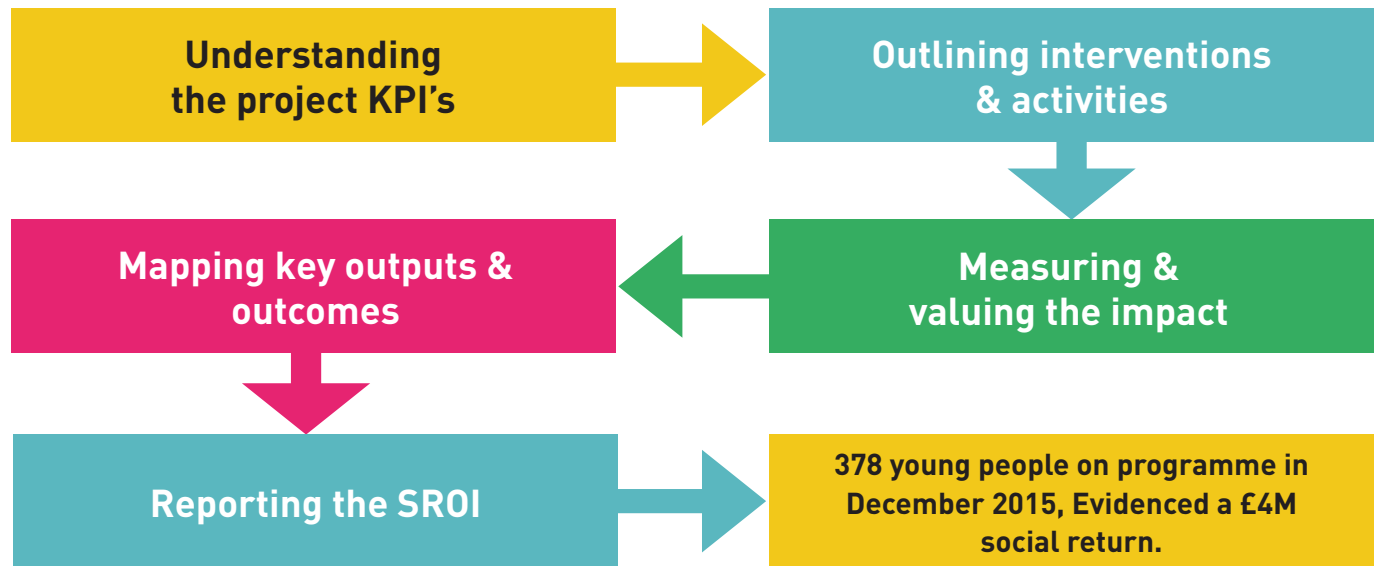
6%

completed an
apprenticeship – gaining the
technical work experience
and maths/English
qualifications

WE'RE MEASURING OUR IMPACT

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI) IS A METHOD FOR CALCULATING THE **IMPACT** AND **SOCIAL VALUE** CREATED BY THE PROJECT, AND ASSISTS IN GAINING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF VALUE FOR MONEY.

WE DO THIS BY:



TALENT MATCH BLACK COUNTRY MEASURE THE SROI OUTCOMES ACHIEVED THROUGH A RANGE OF OUTCOMES:



"We are privileged to be working in partnership with Talent Match Black Country, supporting young people with multiple barriers into training and employment. The individual journeys highlight, the complex issues endured, and barriers overcome by participants to gain new skills, and increase their self-esteem and confidence levels. Ark's role, has involved measuring the social return on investment achieved as a direct result of support and interventions provided by TM, and it is pleasing to see such a high level of return and the positive impact made to people's lives".

Helen Scurr
Partner & Managing Director
Ark People and Communities LLP



SROI £57,000

"Young man aged 20 who had been NEET for 24 months. When he joined TM he was unemployed, had a former conviction and was engaged in gangs, constantly on the edge of re-offending and was the main carer for a parent. TM has helped change his life, he has regularly volunteered, undertaken employment training and completed level 1 and level 2 BTEC qualifications. He has secured full time employment with a local business and has not re-offended."

SROI £12,558

"Young women aged 23 NEET for over 12 months, she has been on the programme for 9 months. When joining the programme the baseline information confirmed that she was a young disabled person, homeless and in receipt of JSA. Since engaging with TM, she has undertaken some voluntary activities setting up a charity event for a children's hospital. She has participated in work experience at a post office and secured part time employment. TM have supported the client in submitting a homelessness application and she is awaiting an offer of suitable accommodation."

SROI £41,674

"Young man aged 24, NEET for 36 months, on programme for 12 months. He is an ex-offender and has experienced some mental health issues. He has 5 children none of whom live with him. There would appear to be limited interaction with the programme, with the exception of one-to-one advice and employability information and guidance. Limited outcomes related to training or employment, however since joining TM he has been signed off by his probation officer."

SROI £21,185

"Young women aged 19, NEET for 36 months, she has been on the programme for 7 months. The baseline information confirmed that she was a carer for her father and had severe chronic mental health issues. She is in receipt of ESA and Carers Allowance. Since joining the programme she has taken part in the Princes Trust Enterprise Award vocational training, and is now in the process of setting up her own business."

SROI £55,440

"Young man aged 20, hidden NEET for 22 months, on the programme for over 12 months, he is an ex-offender, he attends a voluntary group at least once a month, he is studying for a Business HND, he has begun work experience and secured part-time employment at a hotel. He has aspirations to become a restaurant owner and has developed a future business plan. This young man has radically changed his life moving from a life of crime and associations with people who impacted negatively on his life, to identifying and maximising personal opportunities."

SROI £7,318

"Young women aged 18, hidden NEET for 18 months, she has been on the programme for over 12 months. Experienced mental health issues in her early teens and was referred to CAHMS, she experiences bouts of depression and aggressive behaviour. Severe barriers to employment. Previously been in trouble with the police, and was unclear if this had led to prosecution. She has not engaged effectively with the programme and there are no quantitative outcomes which can be measured. She has engaged in social and group activities. She has recently left the programme."

OMARI'S STORY

What attracted you to talent match?

The prospect of being helped to get into work and the assignment of a personal mentor attracted me to Talent Match. The relaxed, less formal approach of the company let me be myself throughout - this definitely aided the process!

What positive change has Talent Match brought about?

I think that Talent Match has helped me to gain the confidence to do what I am doing now. The help my mentor gave, when creating my step-by-step path towards my goals, gave me the guidance and opportunities to travel within talent match. Whilst the continued assistance for me generated confidence and determination to join the working world.

What are you doing now?

I am working to be a social entrepreneur and have my mind set on creating multiple incomes.

What are your future aspirations?

My future aspirations are to become a social entrepreneur and ultimately help those who have a similar background to me.

**“BEFORE
TALENT
MATCH I HAD
JUST SPENT
A 22 MONTH
SENTENCE IN
PRISON.”**

WE'RE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

“After being introduced to yourself and Talent Match it became very apparent to me that your colleagues were very passionate about what you do, helping young people who haven't had a great start in life and enabling opportunities to start a career in a workplace.

With this in mind we were introduced to a few candidates of which we gave an opportunity to a young gentleman called Omari who after our first meeting was passionate about food, cooking and starting his own business in the future. We took Omari on and what a breath of fresh air he was, passionate, punctual, hardworking, well-mannered and he became such a great team member we actually took him on full time.

Omari used this opportunity as a stepping stone which again was fantastic to see to go on to a better future.”

Carlo Petza - The Mount Hotel & Conference Centre



WE'RE WORKING WITH GREAT EMPLOYERS

The Talent Match project focuses on enabling young people aged 18-29 who are hardest to reach to get the qualifications and experience they need to get into sustainable employment. The Black Country area has historically suffered from a fall in major industries, for example manufacturing, as well as having a large percentage of the workforce without any qualifications. The recession had a further significant impact on this and young people were particularly affected. Youth unemployment has been an issue in the region for a while – at June 2015 Wolverhampton had the third highest youth unemployment claimant rate out of all 326 English local authorities.

There is a critical need to strengthen workforce skills at all levels and address the skills gaps. Up-skilling is vital to enable local young people to take a first step into industry. Work experience is becoming ever more important in helping young people get on the ladder to employment but businesses must also play their part by accepting that they need to start recruiting fresh young talent in order for their businesses to survive. 'Doing something different' is key to the ethos of Talent Match and it is important to experiment and trial new ways of working to ensure that we are helping this generation to achieve their potential and access sustainable employment and education.

Businesses are vital to Talent Match in both an employer involvement and employer engagement capacity. Employer involvement requires the strategic involvement of employers in guiding the project forward, thus the importance of ensuring we have good business representation on the steering group. Employer engagement focuses on the practical issues of making contact with employers to ensure a pool of work experience, volunteering or job opportunities are available for the cohort. This also allows a 'meeting of minds' between employers and young people so that young people's aspirations, once developed, can lead to employment and this in turn can lead to growth.

Employers need staff that have basic employability skills as well as other softer skills such as commitment, the right attitude and enthusiasm for the role. Talent Match responds to this need by providing both the basic skills required where they are not present, and through mentoring, the support to allow the young person to focus on their work-based tasks. The uniqueness of Talent Match is that the young person is supported through the project until they feel confident enough to reduce their reliance on support.

WE'RE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

In our dealings with Talent Match we have obtained a worker in Adrian Fisher who has achieved great things with the support of Talent Match.

Previously we would not have entertained the idea of employing staff who were deaf, especially due to the Health & Safety issues we have in our industry. However, Adrian now fully supports our fully trained staff and also independently runs our stores area and can build all our stock gearboxes up in the space of seven months. Adrian is a success story and this is fully down to Talent Match. He is supported with sign writing interpreters and training and he will now be undertaking critical courses which include Welding, IOSH and engineering.

Talent Match have been fantastic to work with and give an employer confidence to work with employees that they would otherwise disregard.

Anthony Chisholm AlphaDrive Engineering Services Ltd

OUR EMPLOYERS INCLUDE:

Our local employers are key to achieving our outcomes. Talent Match works with a range of employers who support the project through work experience, volunteering, jobs, company visits and talks. Some of the employers we work with include:



In partnership with



Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals **NHS**
NHS Trust



Wolverhampton Homes



THE Mount Hotel
& CONFERENCE CENTRE



As of 24th August 2016, 177 young people have gone into work, 71 of which have worked for these for six months or longer. 175 have completed work experience and 148 completed volunteering, 13 have gone into apprenticeships.

We always welcome conversations with like-minded organisations who have opportunities to offer or who feel they can support us in some way. We also have an employer forum which helps to guide the delivery of the project and receive feedback from businesses to help us prepare potential candidates accordingly. For further info or to get involved, please contact Kim Babb on **Kbabb@bctalentmatch.com** or visit our website **www.bctalentmatch.com**.



“AUCTUS TRAINING SOLUTIONS LIMITED HAVE WORKED WITH TALENT MATCH FOR THE LAST NINE MONTHS AND HAVE FOUND

THE ORGANISATION VERY PROFESSIONAL AND EFFICIENT; ALL PERSONNEL ARE CARING AND COMMITTED TO PROVIDING EXEMPLARY SUPPORT TO YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR PROGRAMMES. WE PROVIDE RAIL TRAINING AND THE TALENT MATCH TEAM PUT MAXIMUM EFFORT INTO OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES INTO A CAREER IN THE RAIL SECTOR THAT THE MAJORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE WILL NOT HAVE CONSIDERED. THE RAIL SECTOR HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON DRUGS AND TALENT MATCH WORK COACHES AND MENTORS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR LIFESTYLES TO ENABLE THEM TO START ON THE FIRST RUNG OF THE LADDER TO A SUSTAINABLE CAREER.”



*Rose Rees, Operations Manager,
Auctus Training Solutions Ltd*



WILLIAM'S STORY

What attracted you to talent match?

I had never really succeeded in education and disliked the school environment type of learning. This is what attracted me to Talent Match! It was a path to my success in life not the way others thought you ought to do it.

What positive change has Talent Match brought about?

I had regular mentoring sessions with my mentor and I was happy to do or attend anything I was put forward for to help build my confidence. One of the early activities I engaged in was a new program run by YMCA alongside Talent Match which was called "Engage Grow and Achieve" this was the beginning of my journey with Talent Match. I was able to show off my talents within sports and use this as a strength to aid my pathway on the programme. My mentor found me a placement at HMP Oakwood prison visitor centre where I worked for a whole year and really enjoyed it.

What are you doing now?

I've been trained-up and matched with a young individual to be an Independent visitor with the children society. I've also applied for a position as a PCSO with Staffordshire Police and attended open days with the force. I've also undertaken some youth offending mentoring training and a security course that Talent Match organised.

What are your future aspirations?

I have been working on core skills such as teamwork, Maths, English, problem solving and resilience to help me achieve my career goals. I'm currently taking a course at Coventry University which I'm hoping will help me to become a Police officer. "I feel like I've progressed and achieved a lot since been with Talent Match. I have grown in confidence, become more sociable, as well as more decisive and assertive. Various opportunities have come my way which have opened new pathways towards my end goal".

**"I FEEL LIKE I'VE
PROGRESSED AND
ACHIEVED A LOT
SINCE BEEN WITH
TALENT MATCH."**

WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT WE DO

GERMAINE – MENTOR, WALSALL HUB

What difference has Talent Match made to your young people in your area?

The young people that we've seen at the Walsall Hub have improved significantly. I think that it's made a big difference in their community, such as the young parents on the programme that may be 2nd or 3rd generation raised on benefits. Many of which came from a culture that was hardly encouraged to seek opportunities of employment, and self-development, are now enjoying the benefits and exploring different career paths. For example a client of mine, was dependent on a substance background for his income, whilst involved within a friendship group of the wrong influence. Since beginning the programme he has removed himself from the troubled group and successfully become employed. He sometimes says how difficult it is with living on a wage but feels better not looking over his shoulder's because of the negative life he was involved in.

Why become a Talent Match Mentor?

There are so many reasons why someone should be a Talent Match mentor, But one I would say is that, it's good that you're working with an ethos and mind-set that just wants to help young people to achieve and become the better version of themselves. Talent Match has a great ethos of helping and supporting young people break their barriers. As a mentor, you are given permission from the young adults to be involved in their lives and trusted to walk a journey with them to identify this and achieve it too.

What's your favourite aspect of being a Talent Match Mentor?

I enjoy the freedom to be creative in supporting my young adults to achieve their goals or dreams. I enjoy the team we have in Walsall that works as a family, all pulling together to help young adults to achieve.

What are your future aspirations for your young people?

My aspiration for my case load is that they never settle for the easier options and that they realise their potential. I've seen many young adults on the programme that have so much potential to be great mentors and support workers, because of their background and experience.





Meet the team at Walsall

MELISSA'S STORY



Melissa was referred to Talent Match through her JCP Advisor, she was NEET and had never had any paid work. She left school at an early age due to difficulties/being

affected by epileptic episodes during her time at school. As a result of this Melissa was sent home often and largely missed out on her education, being home schooled for approximately 4-5 hours per week; until the age of 16 years old she had no formal qualifications. Melissa wasn't involved in any activities and at the age of 24 was literally staying home all day every day.

What attracted you to talent match?

Talent Match offered me the opportunity to try something different, alongside having someone to listen, understand me and help me in the way I wanted to be helped.

What positive change has Talent Match brought about?

As a result of engaging with Talent Match I was referred to Walsall Adult Community to be assessed for learning needs, that enabled me to find an appropriate course for my learning requirements and I have just completed my first year hospitality & catering level 1 course.

What are you doing now?

I have been volunteering in a restaurant to increase my experience in hospitality & catering and I'm hoping to find full-time paid employment in this area when I've completed the next level.

What are your future aspirations?

I am now very assertive, clear about where I want to be and what I want for my own future. I'm very happy with my life now and have never been so busy.

I still believe it is one of the most crucial services out there for teenagers and young adults of my generation, people who are in trouble or unsure of what to do with their future. Talent Match has given these people and myself a goal, short or long term and something for them to look forward to and stay active on the right path.

I think it is a great organisation, well worth it! I was so low before I started and now I'm a completely different person & Talent Match has helped me with moving forward.



Talent match have been very helpful for me! The counselling has helped me overcome most of the problems I suffer because of my anxiety. The one-to-one support from my mentors have really helped to improve my self-esteem. I am very grateful for the support and can't wait to see how much further I can progress myself by working with Talent Match.

Since being with Talent Match my life has improved in everyway. This programme has put a smile on my face that I never thought I had. I feel more free and stress free and loved since being here. I have an excellent mentor with a lot of goals set to keep me busy for my future dream.

The Talent Match Programme is a real good programme for young people. You can gain experience and obtain significant help and support. I have my support worker (MW) they are great and I am happy to be on the programme.

The Talent Match program has allowed me to take my life into perspective in a far more relaxed manner. Thanks to this I have been able to find myself again and follow the path that suits me best. I no longer feel the pressures of how others suggest I should lead my life, and I have no doubt that I'm doing it right.



It's been a great experience being with people whilst learning from them and gaining new skills. This would not have occurred without the support of Talent Match. Whilst learning to have confidence in myself and the right people around me.

Since Talent Match helped me get onto the rail network, I have gained a work van and I am currently training for the role of signal watch and will be leading my own team. Talent match has helped me achieve and continue to achieve my career goals.

WE'RE COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Black Country Talent Match, its funders, partners, employers and delivery teams are focused on supporting young people facing disadvantage to realise their potential.

The uniqueness of Talent Match is that it is led by the aspirations, needs and wishes of the young people it has been positioned to support. This is a project for young people by young people and one that fully recognises that "if you carry on doing what you have always done you will always get what you've always got".

Black Country Talent Match remains committed to the participation of those young people who decide to take up the Talent Match offer, thus ensuring young people are at the heart of the decision making process at all levels. We will continue to strive to create opportunities and environments for young people to influence, shape, design and contribute to policy and the development of services and programmes that are best equipped to support them.

Capturing what works and what doesn't is crucial to the project's success and development. Learning to-date includes:

- ▶ A model of mentoring is emerging that can be described as engaging and transformational.
- ▶ Information advice and guidance is being delivered in a manner that might come from a trusted friend or family member.
- ▶ The environment that Talent Match has created and operates in, has contributed to supporting young people's ability to develop and maintain new friendships and relationships.
- ▶ The holistic approach to working with young people is helping them to put some structure into their lives.
- ▶ The opportunity for young people to meet and develop new friendships is impacting positively on their wellbeing and helping them to learn the social skills required for the workplace.
- ▶ Even though young people on the Talent Match program are facing a plethora of barriers that are debilitating and demotivating they still dare to dream of the normality of having a home, a job and being happy.
- ▶ The relationship with their mentor is what young people value the most.
- ▶ Once engaged young people are progressing and making life changes.

The Talent Match team are clearly demonstrating that this way of working truly supports young people to realise their potential as well as providing a positive return on investment. Now we have been awarded additional European Social Funds through the Youth Employment Initiative as part of the Black Country Impact project we will be able to support even more young people and adults up to the age of 29 who are furthest from the labour market.

We look forward to sharing with you even more successes in the forth-coming 12 months.



**Ian Darch -CEO Wolverhampton
Voluntary Sector Council, accountable
body for Black County Talent Match**



European Union
European
Social Fund

This project is receiving up to £34 million of funding made up of £17 million European Social Fund and £17 million Youth Employment Initiative, plus match funding of up to £8m from the Big Lottery Fund and funding from partners

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

3d Native
Access to Business
Advance
Alphadrive
Alpine Gymnasium
Aspiring Futures
Ark People and Communities
Atlantic House
Autism West Midlands
Baby People
Bangladeshi Women's Association
Base 25
Barnardos Family Support Dudley
Barnardos Family Support Sandwell
BCTG
Beacon for the Blind
Beatsabar
BID Services
Bilston Resource Centre
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Black Country Consortium
Building Bridge Training
Bullock Construction
Business Development Centre
Business in the Community
C3
Carol Davies Consultancy
Catch 22
Centre Point
Centre Spot CIC
CHADD
Change Counselling
Changing Lives
Child and Family Support - Bilston
Child and Family Support Team -
Wolverhampton
Citizens Advice Service Wolverhampton
Complete Kidz
Connexions Dudley
Create a Future`
Creative Academies
CRS North
Dame Kelly Holmes Trust
Department for Work and Pensions
Digital Native Academy
Disabled Children & Young Persons Team
Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service HMP
Brinsford
Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust
Dudley Central Cluster Children's Centre
Dudley College
Dudley CVS
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Youth Hub
Early Help 0-19 Area 4
Engagement Youth Empowerment Services
Enhanced Primary Care Service
Employment Plus
ESS Team
Family Nurse Partnership
Fizzog Productions
Front Row Storage
Gateshead Council

Gazebo Theatre in Education
Gloucester Street Community Centre
Groundwork West Midlands
GTG Training
Happy Times UK Ltd
Heanton Housing
Heart and Soul Community
Higher Level
HMP Oak Wood Prison
HMYOI Brinsford Prison
Ideal for All
Integrity Construction
J&D Training
J10 Counselling
Job Centre Plus
Jobchange 2007
Junction 10 Counselling
Just Straight Talk
Kids in Communication (KIC FM)
Krunch
Landau
Leaps and Bounds
LearnPlay Foundation
Livewell Care and Support Ltd
Looked After Children
Mediation Services DMBC
Mentoring West Midlands
Mecure
Mercury Training
Multi-media Arts Project (MAP)
MyWorkSearch
Nehemiah UCHA
Neighbourhood Employment Skills Service
New Path of Life
Nova Training
Opening Doors & Venues
Options for Life
O. S. Training
Pegasus Community Housing Trust
Pertemps People Development Group
Phase Trust
Place of Refuge Community Church
Prospects
Recovery Near You
Rethink Mental Illness
Saltbrook Place
Sandwell Advocacy
Sandwell College
Sandwell Community Caring Trust
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Police
Sandwell Transition Team
Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospitals
SCVO
Secure Pro Security and Training
Shaw Trust
SIPS Education
Smethwick CAN
Snow Camp Midlands
Social Care Wolverhampton
Sport Structures Education
Spurgeons
Staffordshire and West Midlands Community

Rehabilitation Company
Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation
Trust
St Basil's
Steps to Work
Stones Throw Media
Stonewater
SUIT
SWEDA
Targetted Youth Support 18+ Team
Tarmac
The Albion Foundation
The Beacon Young People's Integrated
Recovery Service
The Gap Project
The Hope Centre
The Kaleidoscope Plus Group
The Prince's Trust
The Unicorn Day Centre
The Vine Trust
The Way Youth Zone
The What Centre
The Y Project
Think Project
Tibby's Resident Association
Top Church Training
Topps
Transition and Leaving Care Team
Troubled Families
University of Wolverhampton
Walsall Adult and Community College
Walsall College
Walsall Council
Walsall Housing Group
Walsall Initial Response Team
Walsall Voluntary Action
Walsall Works
Walsall Youth Offending Team
Walsall Youth Support
Wates Living Space
West Bromwich Police Station
West Bromwich Probation Services
West Midlands Police
Wolverhampton 360
Wolverhampton Adult Education Service
Wolverhampton Area Early Help
Wolverhampton City College
Wolverhampton City Council
Wolverhampton Homes
Wolves Community Trust
Wolverhampton Police Station
Wolverhampton Probation Services
Wolverhampton Youth Offending Team
Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
YMCA BCG
Youth Offending team
Young Parents Children's Centre
Young Person's Housing Support Team
Zebra Access
ZF
SainTs Training
Grow and Glow Youth Coaching



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