

# Melton Borough Council

## **About Melton Borough Council**

Melton Borough Council is the 9th smallest borough in England and Wales and is largely rural with a population of around 50,800. Around three out of five of residents in Melton are currently of working age, however the borough has an increasing proportion of people aged 65 or over.

Melton Borough has lower levels of social deprivation and unemployment than many other parts of the country, although there are some pockets of deprivation in priority neighbourhoods in Melton Mowbray. The majority of people in the Borough who are dependent on benefits are from these areas. These parts of the Borough are provided with three Sure Start / community centres staffed by multi-skilled customer service advisers.

## **Previous UC Work**

Melton Borough Council was a UC LA-led pilot site from 2012/3 and focussed on digital access and coordinated support for customers furthest away from the job market. Melton Borough Council had already embraced a co-location approach in its main council offices and used this to help cement partnerships.

The learning from this experience, and from working closely with partners on employment issues when Sainsbury's opened a new store in summer 2013 helped shape the development of the 'Me and My Learning approach'. The chance to bid for ESF funding provided an ideal opportunity to develop this early thinking into a full-scale programme.

## **Objectives of the ESF project**

Me and My Learning

- supports people to become digitally, financially and socially independent
- wherever possible, helps people to move into sustainable employment
- uses a triage/assessment process to identify the barriers individuals face in becoming digitally, financially and socially independent
- provides an individual, agreed, holistic and co-ordinated journey to independence
- brings partner organisations together under a single coordinated scheme
- builds on local community involvement and ownership.

## **ESF project details and what has been delivered**

The ESF funding enabled the establishment of a separate 'Me and My Learning' centralised hub which built on the co-location approach that had already been established in the Melton Borough Council offices. The Me and My Learning project now provides the residents of Melton Mowbray with access support services, training, skills and courses. Referrals to Me and My Learning primarily come from within Melton Borough Council, although they can also come from partners, or from individuals who refer themselves to the programme.

A structured person-centred triage/assessment stage helps identify an individual's real needs, after which they can be referred to partner organisations within the same building. The ethos is very much about providing a tailored service to maximise a person's chances of becoming digitally, financially and socially independent, and then if possible seeking employment.

Melton has engaged a wide range of delivery partners, and more continue to be added as Me and My Learning develops. Some of these are an extension of existing relationships while

others are new. Some partners provide services on a voluntary basis while others such as drug and alcohol services are contracted.

Partners who provide services include the County Council, national providers and the voluntary and community sector. Me and My Learning builds on existing cross-Leicestershire data-sharing arrangements and principles which rely on informed consent. Partners must sign up to these principles as a condition of being part of the Me and My Learning programme.

There is a strong relationship with DWP, and Jobcentre Plus staff are co-located in the main council offices. Importantly the DWP has seconded a project manager to help implement Me and My Learning. They are actively involved in the on-going development of the project. As at 30 October referrals to Me and My Learning had reached 369, and these had resulted in 233 people accessing services with 69 people accessing more than one service; 22 people had moved into work and five people had taken up full-time college courses. Independent evaluation is being carried out by a local university, the costs of which were included as part of the bid.

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