

# Talent Match Black Country - February 2018 Newsletter



The 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

**Find out what we have been getting up to.  
We have definitely been busy!**

## Project Update - Social Return on Investment

ARK was appointed by Black Country Talent Match (BCTM) to develop a social return on investment framework for their innovative Big Lottery funded programme designed to address the problems of high levels of unemployment amongst 18-24 year olds.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a method of calculating the wider social impact of a project, providing a financial measure of the wider social and economic benefits the project is delivering. We measure a number of outcomes including training, education and skills, volunteering, apprenticeships and employment and calculate savings to the public purse. These outcomes are then compared against the final cost of delivering the programme.

Our consultants worked with BCTM to develop a framework of measures to calculate the effective delivery of the projects aims and objectives. As of November 2016 a total of 592 young people who participated in the programme have delivered a fantastic £7.7m in social return, this equates to every £1 spent delivering £1.31 of wider social and economic benefits. The 2016 return demonstrates the increasing impact BCTM; the 2015 return showed a return ratio of £1.20 SROI for every £1 spent so this year demonstrates a 10% increase in SROI.

ARK's Director Helen Scurr said "We are delighted to be working with Talent Match Black Country who are making a real difference to the lives of young people in the local area, helping them overcome the barriers to accessing training and employment. It is great to see young people developing new skills and increasing their confidence levels.

"The social return on investment ratio of £1.31 for every £1 spent highlights the real impact these projects deliver, not just to the young people involved but to the wider community and economy. We are currently completing the evaluation for 2018 and reporting even higher levels of return".

Kim Babb, Project Manager BCTM said "At Talent Match, we strongly believe that all young people are talented and can reach their full potential if only given the right opportunities in life. We are proud of young people's successes and value the support of all our delivery partners and key stakeholders. Working alongside ARK Consultancy has allowed us to effectively demonstrate and communicate the social value and impact of the work we do and the progress our young people make".

# **WE ARE TALENT MATCH, THIS IS OUR STORY**

**Have you seen our latest Annual Report yet?**

More case studies, more updates and more successes!

[Click here to read!](#)

## **Leadership and Participation Update**





The APPG Youth Employment Report is out, the [full report](#) has been released and is now publicly available.

At Black Country Talent Match, our young people have been involved heavily in the process of providing evidence and experience to the all-party parliamentary group. Attending the meetings in London and being involved and heard at the highest level of decision making and influence in the Country. I thought it would an idea to share some extracts from the report.

**Michael Tomlinson MP who is the Chairperson of the group quoted;**

*'As an all party group we remain unrelentingly positive about the promise and potential that our young people have. We believe that with hard work there should be no limits to their aims and ambitions. Our bold aim, our moral mission even, should be to eradicate long term youth unemployment.'*

*'We are an aspirational nation, and this is highlighted most by the energy and vigour of our young people. Their drive and potential is huge. They rightly want the opportunity to build a brighter future and it is our job as Parliamentarians to enable them fulfil that promise. This is why we must redouble our efforts to eradicate long term youth unemployment and give young people the opportunity to pursue a fulfilling career and build a better future for themselves and their families.'*

**The executive summary found that:**

- too many young people still face barriers to employment.
- there is also a concerning number of young people 'hidden' from the official statistics. These are young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) and not claiming welfare support.
- new policy and funding models can create perverse implications for social mobility.
- young people furthest from the labour market face a number of barriers meaning it can be a struggle to complete programmes with pre-determined markers for achievements.

Personalised support for young people who are hidden or furthest away from the labour market can mean they are more likely to make progress. This support may include a key worker, non-formal training, supported work experience.

A one-size fits all approach does not work. Education, employment and welfare services must begin to recognise the unique potential of each young person and that what works for one does not necessarily work for all.

- Investment must be put into identifying young people NEET and hidden at a local level.
- Include young people and experienced organisations in the design of national and local approaches to youth employment.
- Provide financial and information support for employers to work with young people who are furthest from the labour market including better information on Access to Work, recognition of the national employer kite mark – the Talent Match Mark could support this.
- Better coordination of responsibilities and services across government departments that support young people.
- Those young people furthest from the labour market who enter on to an employment or employability scheme without first tackling these barriers means that they do not pass the necessary milestones and often they fail or fall off the course.

**Here is some of the evidence that the Big Lottery Fund submitted;**

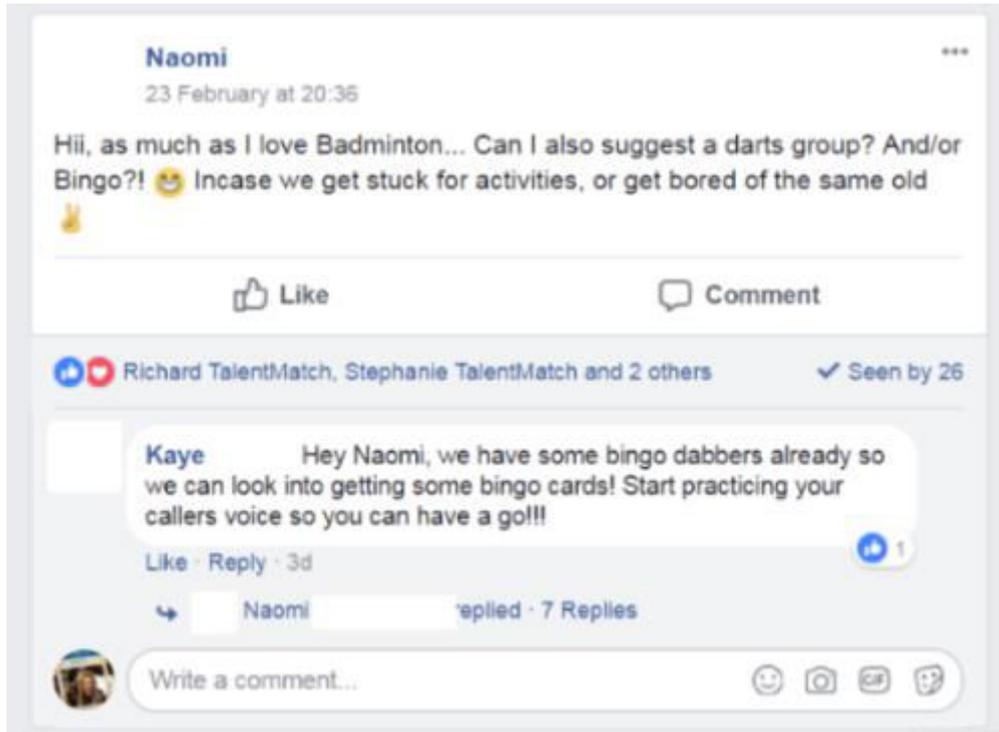
At the Fund, we follow a 'People in the Lead' approach which puts communities and service users at the heart of social change. In Talent Match, this has meant involving young people in the programme's design and delivery. This approach has effectively engaged large numbers of young people in the programme, and kept them engaged, supporting more than 23,000 young people since 2014.

Our conclusions from the Talent Match programme are that:

- Mental health support could be better integrated with employment support to ensure young people do not fall into the gaps between the two when seeking work.
- Government and local authorities could consider gathering greater insight into 'hidden' young people to track their progress, improve understanding and ensure all young people can access the support they need to thrive.
- Involving young people in the design and delivery of employment services could help achieve greater ownership among key audiences.
- The role of in-work support could be considered by employment programmes in their offer.

- Richard Beard

## Social Media Progression



Talent Match Social Media has come a long way in the past few months. The main Facebook and Twitter pages are now aimed towards audiences that are businesses and organisations. The type of content going forward on these pages will mainly be about project updates, corporate events and further information that interests this audience.

The previous aim of engaging Mentees on these platforms has shifted, and a new innovative approach has been used to converse with this audience online. There are now 5 closed Facebook pages (1 page per Hub) as requested by the Mentees who engage with the Steering Group. The pages are run by Social Media Leads within each Hub supported by other Hub staff or the Project team. In some cases, Mentees are even helping to support the running of these pages and encouraging others to join in.

Mentees and Talent Match Staff are encouraged to share ideas, photos and other content regarding their hub within the page and engage in conversation. These pages also allow the Project Team to promote training and job opportunities that may interest Mentees, as well as share other information/updates. The pages have been growing at a steady pace with daily content from both staff and Mentees. It has brought together a sense of community between the Mentees and staff online. It has also allowed members of the Project team, who otherwise may not interact with Mentees on a daily or weekly basis, to share information with them quickly.

It has also proved to be an effective tool for opportunity sign ups and posting out important information, such as hub closures due to poor weather conditions or activity updates. Further feedback regarding the benefits of the pages-

- Facebook Messenger has been a great tool to communicate quickly amongst staff and between staff and Mentees (particularly Mentees with no mobile credit).
- Promotions regarding the Steering Group, training and job opportunities have led to sign ups from Mentees interested in taking up these opportunities.
- Allows staff/Mentees to see hub updates and information they otherwise may not know, such as videos and photos of activities within the hub and also updates on recent Mentee achievements.

So far, this tool has been an overall success. There is room for further engagement and Mentees leading on content, but the positive feedback speaks for itself with space for improvement.

- Alison Finch

**John TalentMatch** is 😊 feeling excited with Jo B Talentmatch and 10 others.  
19 February at 15:42

Hey everyone

So as you all know we have the start of badminton and football club this week. You will meet up at the hub and will be taken over to the premises. Any problems or queries please notify your mentor. All relevant information will be posted below.

Badminton Club - Thursday 22nd February 2018, 4pm - 5pm, Dudley HUB...  
See more



**Richard TalentMatch**  
19 February at 08:53



## Walsall Employability Workshop



Diana, our Walsall Hub's Job and In Work Support Coach earlier this year ran an 'Explore your Options' workshop. It was open for all Talent Match Mentees to come along and take part in if they wished.

She had a group of Mentees turn up for the 2 hour workshop where they took part in a variety of employability related activities.

She had great feedback from the attendees including the following -  
"I have refocused what I need to do!" "I have a starting point!"



## How from 4 of our Work and Support Coaches

### **Dudley Update - Nathan**

Massive well done to a new member of the hub called Mani. The commitment he has shown in such a short amount of time has been fantastic and this has led him to having three interviews in his first month of interacting with the hub.

He has also taken it upon himself to independently job search in the hub and has introduced himself to the regular young people that also come to the hub. I have really enjoyed working with him, our sessions are extremely important as they enable me to learn a lot about him and also help him organise his interviews based on the experience he has and expand on it. I am very excited to see what Mani can achieve on his Talent Match journey. Keep up the good work!

### **Walsall Update - Diana**

We currently have 3 people working at Alphadrive, 2 have been in post since October 2017.

- Felipe is also sustaining his job at Biffa and Michael at the Crown Pub.
- Natalie has been trying very hard to secure work for several weeks. This was proving to be difficult as we struggled to find a job with hours suitable for childcare arrangements. Last week she has secured a place as a Bank Reception Worker and part-time at a baguette store.
- Ruth has secured a volunteering position with a hair dresser to help bring her skills up to date and to build her confidence.

### **Central Hub Update - Maria**

I am delighted to be appointed as the new Job and In Work Support Coach for Central Hub. I started my role in December 2017 amid a flurry of snowflakes or was that a blizzard? I have been enjoying getting to know the team at Central and meeting young adults who are at various stages of their Talent Match journey.

The highlight of my work in recent weeks has been getting involved with the Interview Experience Day which gave Mentees a chance to have several short interviews with major local and national employers. The participants from Central received some extremely positive feedback, proving that they are more than ready to progress into volunteering and employment. This session was followed up with some in-house interviews which again saw some impressive performances.

One person was heading off to a job interview straight after the session - watch this space!

### **Wolverhampton Update - Marie**

A massive WELL DONE to our 4 young people at the Wolverhampton Hub, who have gained full time employment this month. The jobs gained, range from Security, Demolition, Customer Service and Engineering. Our young people have been determined and have worked hard, which has proven to them that hard work does pay off. So once again a Big Cheer to our CUBS and Good Luck in your new employment.

Also Good Luck to the young people who have got interviews coming up throughout the month. Congratulations to another young person who has started her placement working at 'All Seasons Boarding Kennels and Cattery', where it has given her the confidence in doing what she really loves working with animals, and gaining the experience to help with future employment.

Thursday's Job Club 'Careering To Success' has actually been a success. Our young people have been arriving before 9:30am to do either job searches, update CV's, practice interview techniques, or get advice. After spending an hour, the young people would retreat to common room to have breakfast together and socialise, before returning back to IT room to continue with work.

MIGHTY WOLVES HUB, THE MENTEEES ARE ON THEIR WAY!!!!

## Meet Georgina



Georgina for the past year has been volunteering with the Project Team, helping to organise a variety of events. Her time with the Project came to an end late last year but has continued to work with the team on a weekly basis to continue with her personal growth and keep in touch with the project.

Read all about her journey and the positive impact TM has had on her life -

**"Before I came to Talent Match I would lock myself in my bedroom leading a very lonely empty life. But when I came to Talent Match Wolverhampton Hub, it was the first important step to my personal development.**

**When I first arrived, like many others I was very nervous. But over time I started to gradually open up to others and found so many qualities in myself I never thought I possessed. I was lucky to be in a very kind and supportive group of people, it made me want to put all my energy and effort into the many team building exercises and activities we participated in together. They also gave me chance to do work experience with LearnPlay Foundation, where I was given the opportunity to learn filming and editing.**

**By doing the activities and residential, it unlocked a more daring and supportive side to me. When some of the people had a hard time rock climbing I would encourage them to carry on climbing and never give up on reaching the top. According to my mentors by doing the activities and giving it everything I got it helped inspire the others to follow my example and it give it everything they got to accomplish the tasks.**

**I have learnt so many things such as how to be a better friend and person. While at times I can be uptight and not cooperative Talent Match have helped me to be a more social person capable of having a good laugh and bringing a bit of whimsy to others. Thanks to Talent Match I have learnt to be a more open and compassionate person who is willing**

to take challenges and not be afraid to be myself in front of others.

Though my time in Talent Match has concluded I am still able to assist them in the many projects they are involved in.

I have assisted the Talent Match Project team to plan events such as the Training Provider event and the Graduation Party,

One of them is the Spectrum Project, a project dedicated to helping and spreading awareness of individuals living with autism.

I myself am autistic, specifically aspergus syndrome, so I can understand the challenges and difficulties of having it.

Talent Match asked me to become something of a representative to the project and potentially be a voice to those like myself living with autism.

By helping with the project I like to think this will allow people the chance to see that people with autism are human as well, rather than see them as weirdos incapable of leading a normal productive life.

Autistic people can become a valuable friend and colleague to others, it's just giving people the chance and time to see and understand what autism is and how it affects the people living with it.

At the moment I am volunteering in the tea room at Wightwick Manor and participating in an Art course at Adult Education.

Though I have not figured out what I would like to do as a career, I am positive that I myself can lead a good productive life like so many others who have come to Talent Match and many others who have yet to join.

To the people of Talent Match I am forever grateful for everything they have done for me and hope they will inspire many more people to come."

## Business Engagement Update

Lots has been going on for Business Engagement since the last update. There have been information sessions delivered by the RAF, Miss Macaroon, 24/7 Care, Close Tactical training and a group of young people have completed a Bricklaying course.





There was also a Fork Lift Licence information session, with guaranteed interviews and work experience upon completion of the course.

We also have sessions from a STEM ambassador about careers involving Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths coming up.

Kelly group are offering short training placements with a good chance that these will progress into jobs and Sporting Schools will be coming in to talk about the courses that they can offer around animal care, hospitality and personal training.

Five more young people have gained an Animal Care qualification and one young person has started work experience with Midland Metro and another has started their work experience with Signal 107 radio station.

As a result of the Miss Macaroon taster/ info session one young person has started on their kitchen course which also includes a week's work experience placement.



Business Engagement also ran a mock interview day, where employers came in and did short interviews with the young people on programme. These employers included the likes of McDonalds, Midland Metro Alliance, Paycare and Bilston Magazine.

The day was a success and the feedback received from the young people has all been positive.

-Emma Trump & Sophie Walker



## Dudley Hub Update

Since Christmas Dudley hub has welcomed two new members of staff. Andrew joined us as our Business Admin Apprentice and John our new Youth Leader.

January has seen us welcome a new cohort of Mentees into to the Hub. Attendance at the Games/Movie night and Breakfast Club remains constant, and the new weekly activities of badminton, football and flower arranging begin this week. The Arts and Crafts corner is proving popular.

We had a small group taking part in a BMX event at Manchester where they will be trained with Kelvin Batey the 2013 UCI BMX World Champion, and have the opportunity to watch Team GB train. We also have a Mentee led fishing group in the embryonic stage. I'm told the fish are not feeding yet so it is better to begin after Easter when they are more likely to bite?

We are currently developing the Employability Award for all Mentees with the option to complete additional modules such as Personal finance, Interview skills, prepare for and attend an interview, work awareness etc. We are planning to introduce this to Mentees from March.

We have seen a number of our Mentees be successful in sustaining employment over the Christmas period which has motivated them to continue with progressing to their next step or taking up further training or volunteering opportunities. One of our mentees is maintaining his first employment since leaving school eight years ago. We also have a small number who are enrolling on college courses which begin in September, with others already attending short courses such as book keeping. We are about to begin taster courses with the College to introduce Mentees to options they may not have previously considered.

Mentees are continuing to engage with Education within the Hub, and we have seen individuals grow in confidence as they achieve qualifications and improve their Maths and English.

- Wendy Thompson

## Project Manager visits London Youth

- Kim Babb

I had the opportunity to attend the launch of London Youth (London Talent Match) latest piece of research - ***Hidden in Plain Sight*** – which delves into the issues many young people face who are currently ‘hidden’ from the capital’s economy. Many of the issues identified resonate with our ‘hidden’ young people across the Black Country.

The research highlighted a number of key considerations, in response to which London Youth have identified six recommendations to re-engage the ‘hidden’, which I think could be adopted nationally if not nationally some should be considered locally to support our ‘hidden’ young people.

**1. Choose to see the ‘hidden’.** Young people are ‘hidden’ because they fall under the radar of the reporting mechanisms currently in place. Our analysis shows that there are a staggering 480,000 young people who are estimated to be ‘hidden’ in the UK every year. To put this in context, there are 790,000 young people who are NEET. It may not be comfortable to put this information out there. It doesn’t tell as good a story as low unemployment figures. But these young people matter. So we want to see data on the number of ‘hidden’ young people published at a national and local level so that we understand the issue better and so that appropriate interventions can be put in place and tracked over time.

**2. Ensure young people can access meaningful support within the welfare system.** Young people are sometimes unable, and sometimes make a proactive choice, not to access support through the Job Centre. They may not have the right documentation, or may not be able to navigate their way through the system successfully. One young person told us *“If I go to the Job Centre, it means I’ve lost”*. The current system isn’t working for young people who are ‘hidden’ and requires significant change in order to be an effective vehicle for helping them get into work.

**3. Continue to support specialist employment support for young people.** One of the overriding take-home messages from this research – and from our employability work more broadly – is the need for dedicated employment support for young people. There are many young people who are in precarious work or are technically employed but with no guarantees of work but who are never the less shut out of employability support. With the Work Programme coming to an end and the likely loss of funding from the European Social Fund, it is critical that we continue to prioritise and ring-fence funding for specific employability support for young people.

**4. Support young people to make informed choices.** We found (London Youth) the majority of ‘hidden’ young people achieve academically, but receiving poor or no careers support combined with a changing and challenging job market means that many young people struggle to successfully identify their options. Of those who took part in our research 71% have 5+ GCSEs at A\*-C. Whilst it’s encouraging to see increased attention on this area with the launch of the Government’s new Careers Strategy, we must remember that schools and colleges aren’t the only – or indeed, necessarily the best – places for young people to receive advice. I would strongly argue that youth organisations based in local communities are already in touch with these young people and are trusted by many young people seeking support.

**5. We need to start at home.** London Youth has been struck by the influence of family and friends, and the home and immediate environment on young people’s choices. ‘Hidden’ young people often find ways to manage outside the system, relying on family for support, or earn money through cash-in-hand jobs or illegal activity. Sometimes circumstances at home, beyond their control, contributed to them becoming ‘hidden’. From caring responsibilities preventing young people being able to look for and sustain work; to severe cases of abuse and domestic violence resulting in them becoming homeless, to strict gender norms prevent young women going out to work. Our research highlights the positive role families play in influencing decisions to seek employment support. Parent referrals is one of the most common routes into Talent Match.

**6. Think beyond immediate employment.** We found sub-groups of young people for whom the issues of homelessness and mental ill health were a clear barrier to employment. The need to support young people in a holistic way is often discussed. But we need to make sure that we are adequately resourcing those providing employability support to carry out this critical work.



### Central Update - Will

There have been a lot of things happening within Central Hub, with a few changes which are being welcomed by all mentees.

The monthly User Groups are going really well with a wide range of voices and suggestions to make the hub even better!

The gaming events are still going on, but they are now lead by a young person at Central.

Wednesdays are becoming more active with mentees able to have a game of football for an hour, because not everyone manages to be active for an hour a day!

Youth Ambassadors have welcomed 2 members from Central Hub to their programme, which allows them to attend All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG's). This is a valuable experience as this influences governance for Youth Employment across the UK.

### Dudley Update - John

Arts and crafts club has a great turn out which gave a lot of mentees the opportunity to show off there Creative side. There are a lot of activities in the pipeline such as:-

**Flower Arrangement**

**Badminton Club**

**Football Club**

**Girlz in the HUB**

**Boyz in the HUB**

I've been given an opportunity to extend my role and take on the position of **Satellite Clubs Coordinator** which I am highly enjoying at the moment. The aim is to get people aged between 11-29 years to participate and engage in a sporting activity for 30 minutes or more per week. In the last month I've been working hard to get 5 satellite clubs set up by the end of March. So far I have managed to get two clubs actively up and running. By the end of March I will have the other 3 running. All satellite clubs are open to anyone on or off the TM project.

### **Satellite Clubs**

**1. LIFT (Low Impact Functional Training)**

**2. Mixed Dance**

### Sandwell Update - Rob

Monthly Youth Forums will be commencing in March. Changes will be made to make the Forums more efficient, this will increase the opinions and time scales to be better.

Myself and Tim are planning to set up Youth Employment UK workshops, these workshops will be Monthly Hub activities between Sandwell and Walsall. We have set up these activities for Young people to get involved and sign up to the Youth Employment UK programme. This will help Young people get the following experience and opportunities :

**Volunteering**

**Decision and policing making**

**Influencing politicians**

**Making people more youth employment friendly**

#### Walsall Update - Tim

Down in Walsall hub we have started back at kingdom horse, this is where the mentees get to engage with horses on a physical and mental level, helping build confidence, lower anxiety and depression, enhance leadership skills and make new friends.

We also have had our first user group of the year which went well. This is where our young adults can have a say in what the hub does.

This month wow (women of worth) have been on a pamper session which was enjoyed very much, next week they will be making their own t shirts.

In March our young adults will be embarking on a course called engage grow and achieve, in the days that they will do they will gain transferable skills such as time keeping, team work, social skills and many more.

#### Wolverhampton Update - Jamie

So I've had a change in hubs and moved from the fabulous Dudley Hub to the Wonderful Wolves hub. Still trying to find my feet and get used to how things are run in this hub, but so far so good and I've made some great connections already.

I got some feedback from people off the programme and they wanted a change of sport from Football, so with this information I'm looking at setting up some different sports activities for the hub, such as introducing Basketball, Tennis, Badminton and more.....

I'm also thinking about setting up some arts and crafts sessions for people wanting to get creative.

## **Keep an eye out for the next Talent Match Newsletter!**

Find us online

[www.bctalentmatch.com](http://www.bctalentmatch.com)

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