

# Barking & Dagenham Partnership

## NI 173 – Flows on to incapacity benefits from employment

**Responsible Owner** Alan Lazell – Head of Skills and Learning

### National Indicator Rationale

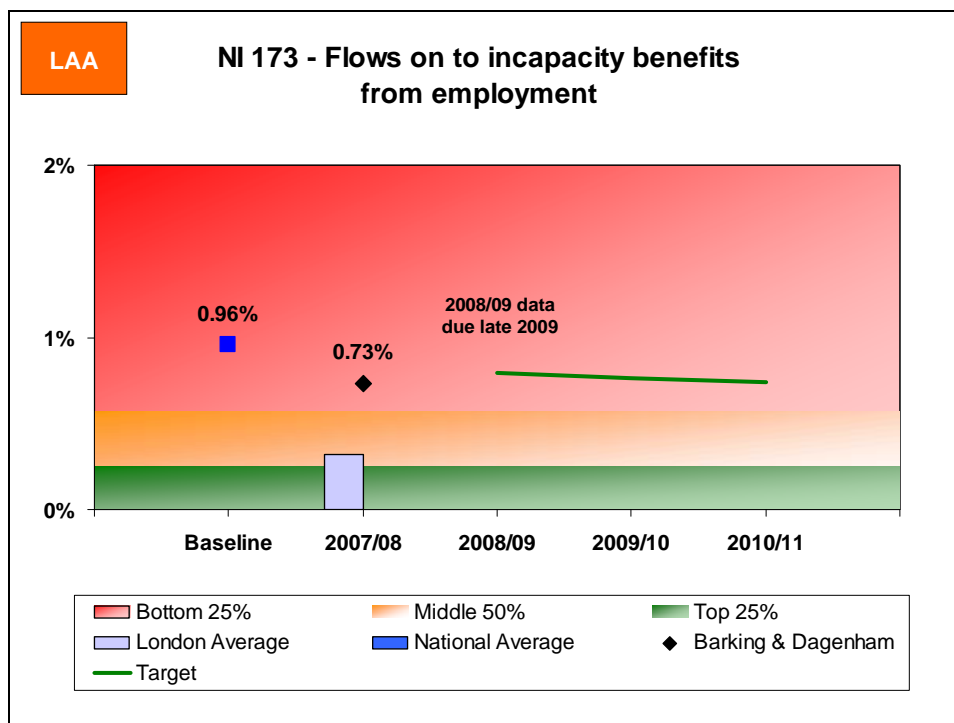
This Indicator measures the proportion of the working population living in a local authority who move directly from employment, including those in receipt of employers sick pay or SSP, to incapacity benefits (IB).

The number in employment – including those in full or part-time employment and the self-employed – will be taken from the Annual Population Survey (APS). APS datasets are produced quarterly with each dataset containing 12 months of data.

### Current Performance

Performance against Target

n/a



### Current Performance Commentary

### Key Issues:

*Specific reasons for underperformance, including equalities / area issues where relevant*

1. The Borough has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest claimant rate in London with 16,250 IB or Severe Disability

	Allowance claimants of working age as at August 2008. Of this figure 1,660 were identified as suffering from diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, and 440 from diseases of the nervous system.
2.	The borough currently exhibits the lowest average household income in London; £25,900 per annum as against the London average of £30,200 (NOMIS/ONS 2008)
3.	The Borough is significantly impacted upon by the economic downturn and latest figures from NOMIS (February 2009) show a rise from 7 <sup>th</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> highest claimant rate in London for Job Seekers Allowance over the last 12 months. From November 2008 – January 2009, the number of unemployed on Job Seekers Allowance rose sharply from 4,094 to 5,587.

### Key Projects:

*Areas of current /planned projects should focus on reasons for underperformance and link to the Key Issues listed above*

Key Issue No.	Project Title	Key Milestones / Date	Project Lead	Project Details
1.	<u>Fit for Work Service:</u> <u>Programme of Piloting</u>		Alan Lazell/ Stephanie May	First part of three-part open, transparent competitive application to become a fit for work Service (FFWS)
?	<u>'Looking Local First'</u>		Alan Lazell	Positively promote the employment of disabled people through Council HR practices, including piloting the 'job carving' of posts for people with learning disabilities
2.	<u>Job brokerage service</u>		Alan Lazell	<p>A significant increase the volume and scope of our job brokerage service. This brings added-value to the provision made by Job Centre Plus as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engages with sections of the community who may not do so through Job Centre Plus, as services are delivered locally (often on a drop-in basis) through Children's Centres and other community venues, and in partnership with the voluntary sector.</li> <li>Offers voluntary engagement without the prospect of benefit sanctions – an important element part of the marketing offer to employers, as residents accessing the service have a real interest in gaining employment.</li> <li>Provides local employers and new companies relocating to the borough with applicants closely matched to their</li> </ul>

				<p>recruitment needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissions employer-led vocational training for residents to help remove barriers to employment.</li> <li>• Ensures that residents are referred onto the most appropriate programmes of support in order to gain employment, or move to a better job.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the services provided in localities, there are currently 2 Job Shops in operation with a third due to open in June 2009.</p>
3.	<u>'Better off in work' service</u>		Alan Lazell	Extensive welfare benefits advice service (including a 'better off in work' service) is delivered at all Children's Centres.

### Key Risks:

*Risks may relate to specific projects or to performance in general*

- Barking & Dagenham sickness figures are significantly higher than the London and National averages.
- Fear of loss of benefits, or being no better off in work

### Actions for Improvement (To be used for Quarterly Reporting):

*Plans for further interventions must be robust and show clear prospects for improving performance*

- Co-ordinated services with both GPs and local employers Small and Medium sized enterprises aims to provide personalised services which are timely by signposting early intervention towards services which deal quickly with barriers to sustain, gain or maintain employment where a person is absent from work through sickness.
- By linking with fitness initiatives based at a Leisure Centre the Fit For Work Service seeks to provide a neutral venue with extended hours whilst encouraging supervised exercise and fitness as an added option which is beneficial for both mental wellbeing and rebuilding physical fitness for work.

The principal focus of the FFWS model proposed by Barking & Dagenham is to provide a personalised service for individuals absent from work through sickness. In aiming both to maximise capacity and tackle the key reasons for sickness absence, focusing on individuals who are absent from work through back or other musculo-skeletal conditions and work related stress signposting them onto the most appropriate source of help and health intervention.

It is proposed that the service takes referrals directly both from GPs (45 practices are located in the Borough) and SMEs as well as those currently referred through the existing service. This will place additional demands on the service and it is estimated that this will potentially allow up to 1000 additional appointments per month, more than doubling current capacity and covering a broader range of associated services.

- The current Occupational Health Service which covers L.B Barking & Dagenham staff will continue as a baseline service and act as a control to try out /add additional services as further need becomes apparent. This service covers 8000 employees, 43% of whom live and work in the Borough.

The service will be relocated to the Goresbrook Leisure Centre which is located towards the south of the Borough between Barking & Dagenham centres. It is easily accessible by public transport with nearby bus routes and tube station. Additionally it will facilitate extended hours for the service as the building is used out of normal working hours.