

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 14 DECEMBER 2017

**Question to Mark Winnington
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

By Maureen Compton

Question

Given General Electric's statement on Thursday, 7th December that they are restructuring their business and that many jobs at Stafford could be lost, what is Staffordshire County Council going to do to assist those who face redundancy at Christmas?

Reply

The County Council, along with partners, will be doing all we can in the coming weeks to support those affected by the GE announcement. We are already working with Stafford Borough Council, DWP Jobcentre Plus and a number of other key agencies to form a 'Task Force' to ensure appropriate timely support is put in place. The Borough Council has agreed to lead the 'Task Force' and the first meeting is scheduled for the 16 January 2018.

DWP Jobcentre Plus has a rapid response service and this will be engaged once GE has submitted the HR1 redundancy notification to DWP. GE has entered a 90 day consultation on the proposed redundancies.

There is a specialist response to redundancy programme commissioned by the LEP and funded via ESF and this service plus others such as the National Careers Service will be used alongside the DWP's rapid response service. These services will help to redeploy, retrain, upskill and signpost people to new employment opportunities ensuring support is available to the individuals affected and their families.

These services will address the effects of job losses on individuals and on the local community by helping people move rapidly into alternative employment without the need to claim welfare benefits.

The support is managed by Jobcentre Plus and delivered with the aforementioned partners. Decisions are made locally about the appropriate support drawing together local partners to deliver support tailored to the needs of the situation.

Rapid Response Service support is available through the notice period and for 13 weeks after, irrespective of whether a claim for benefit is made.

The support offered by Jobcentre Plus and partners can include:

- connecting people to jobs in the labour market;
- matching people facing redundancy to known job vacancies;
- helping people to construct a CV;
- helping people to enhance their job search skills;
- providing general information about benefits;
- helping people to identify their transferable skills and training needs;
- providing job-focused training to help people develop additional vocational skills;
- helping to meet discretionary costs e.g. travel to work expenses; and for large redundancies potential for on-site services to promote jobs or to take benefit claims.

Getting the right information in a timely manner is essential and the above services will provide the appropriate support to individuals by signposting them to sources of help, support and advice. This might be how to find a new job, improve skills, find out about benefits that individuals may be entitled to, to ease money worries, or coping with the emotional pressure of being made redundant.