

To: Economy and Regeneration Board

On: 14 June 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Employability Funding: No-one Left Behind

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Board on the most recent funding allocation from the Scottish Government for Employability Support in Renfrewshire for the 2022-23 period.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the acceptance of grant by the Chief Executive to the Scottish Government for grant support awarded for the 2022-23 period of ££1,944,263.83. Under the banner of No-One Left Behind;
 - b) Note the outline of funding and the proposed use highlighted in section 4.
 - c) Note the new focus and role for the Local Employability Partnership as highlighted in section 3.5 of the report
 - d) Note the attached summary document “Employability Services Plan 2022-25” providing an overview of the Local Employability Partnership approach for employability services for the next 3 years.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Local authorities have a strategic interest in employability because of its relationship to the wellbeing of communities and economic development in their areas. Councils are key players leading local employability partnerships and managing European funded local employability pipelines. Local authority delivery of employability positively impacts on the Fairer Scotland Duty, Equality Duty and Child Poverty Duty as well as the alignment with fair work and inclusive economic growth.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government and COSLA signed a 'No One Left Behind' Employability Partnership Agreement in December 2018. It set out -
- a starting ambition captured in the Scottish Government report 'No One Left Behind' (March 2018) on alignment and integration of employability services in Scotland;
 - a list of guiding principles to support collaborative working; and
 - a governance and leadership infrastructure
- 3.3 The employability focus is on those furthest from the labour market, the key client group for local authority employability support. This coincides with a shift towards addressing in-work poverty and, provoked by renewed action on child poverty, a focus on low income families.
- 3.4 For local government, the Employability Partnership Agreement provided an opportunity to engage more effectively with Scottish Government to positively shape employability provision and to co-fund employability services.
- 3.5 Over the past three years Scottish Government have moved their employability resources away from multiple different teams and agencies to be streamlined to local authorities to meet local needs. The principle of the change was to give decision making on employability resources to the local employability partnerships in the area, so that each area could use employability funding to best effect. Local employability partnerships would then co-commission services required for their own areas and work together to create an integrated and effective local service.
- 3.6 Renfrewshire Council are accountable for the funding received with much of the decision-making being made through the local employability partnership. The Renfrewshire Local Employability partnership reports operationally through the Community Planning Partnership.

4. Scottish Government Funding 2022-23

- 4.1 Renfrewshire Council received a grant offer letter on 23rd March 2022 of up to £1,944,263.83, payable over the financial year 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023 in connection with supporting the delivery of the No One Left Behind All Age Employability Service, which includes funding for:
- 25+ Long Term Unemployed (LTU) Labour Market Opportunities,
 - Parental Employability Support Fund and
 - Young Person's Guarantee.
- The grant offer was accepted by the Chief Executive.

- 4.2 The No One Left Behind All-Age Employability Service continues to provide the opportunity for local employability partnerships (LEPs) to ensure that the co-investment approach achieves Scottish and local government's joint ambitions, delivering transformational change and an employability system that improves outcomes for all users.
- 4.3 One of the conditions of grant was for the Local Employability Partnership to develop a 3 year delivery plan from April 2022 to March 2025, a draft copy of which should be completed, and returned with the grant offer letter.
- 4.4 The funding from Scottish Government will be used as outlined below.

Investment	2022/2023 Grant Allocation	Focus of Funding
No One left Behind All Age Employability services	£502,403.31	Supports Key Worker staff and programmes of support to priority NOLB groups.
25+ LTU Labour Market Opportunities	£750,000.00	Provides funding of £10k per person for 75 paid work placements in the public and third sector.
Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)	£271,508.99	Supports an employability team to work directly with unemployed or low income parents.
Young Person's Guarantee	£420,351.53	Supports youth employability programmes and team.
TOTAL	£1,944,263.83	

- 4.5 A summary of the current delivery plan for Employability services in Renfrewshire is attached as Appendix 1, providing information on current issues, priorities and approaches.

Implications of the Report

- Financial** – No additional finance is sought. Funding of £1,944,263.83 has been allocated to Renfrewshire by the Scottish Government for the 2022-22 period.
- HR & Organisational Development** – The funding continues to support a range of staff within the Councils Employability team. Funding provides security for another year.
- Community/Council Planning** – Partnership working is essential to the success of No-One Left Behind. The Renfrewshire LEP have been significantly involved in the planning for the 2022-23 services and have developed a three year plan.
- Legal** – None.
- Property/Assets** – None.
- Information Technology** – None.

7. Equality & Human Rights

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.

8. Health & Safety – None.

9. Procurement – None.

10. Risk – None.

11. Privacy Impact - None.

12. COSLA Policy Position – Not Applicable.

13. Climate Risk – Not Applicable.

List of Background Papers

None.

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Renfrewshire Employability Services Plan 2022-2025

Introduction to the Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership:

Renfrewshire is recognised nationally for its strong partnership approach in employability with the active involvement of a wide and diverse range of local partners across the voluntary, public, education and private sectors.

The Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership (LEP) consists of:

- a **management group** with strategic and operational partners working together to develop shared objectives, the alignment of efforts and the joint commitment of resources relating to employability. Members are Renfrewshire Council, Skills Development Scotland, Department for Work and Pensions, West College Scotland, University of the West of Scotland, Engage Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, Developing the Young Workforce (West), Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
- A number of **thematic sub-groups** of operational staff from across a very wide range of services meeting regularly to discuss and agree services for priority groups. These groups bring forward new service ideas and discuss key issues of referral and support.

In total over 60 people are involved actively in the Renfrewshire LEP. Additionally, an annual conference is held for all local staff with an interest or remit in employability which attracts around 150 people.

Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership want to improve employability outcomes in Renfrewshire. To support those who want to work to gain skills and experiences to enter work and to progress in the workplace. To open doors to fair work, secure work and to support all those who want help. To make employability support straightforward, easy to access and available to all, with no-one left behind.

Across Scotland the role of the LEPs has become essential to Scottish Government funding and approaches for employability. A key element of securing financial support from the Scottish Government is an active LEP agreeing local priorities and co-commissioning services with the production on a local action plan. A summary of the action plan is provided below.

Employment / Unemployment in Renfrewshire:

For the first time since records began there are “fewer unemployed people than job vacancies,” the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has announced. The rate of employment is at a high level in Renfrewshire (almost at pre-covid levels) but there are around 2,000 less people in employment overall with around 1000 having moved from self employment to paid employment during the past 2 years and around 2,000 moving from being economically active to economically inactive (mostly due to health). Still the figures for the area are very positive with Renfrewshire being better than the Scottish average in all key indicators.

Many people struggle to find their way into employment and there is currently a hidden talent pool of around 10,000 people in Renfrewshire who want to work but are not currently job seeking.

This consists of more than half of the current claimant count (3,850 at April 2022), several hundred young people not claiming benefits but unemployed and over seven thousand economically inactive people who indicate that they want to work.

As an integrated employability service, the Renfrewshire Employability Partnership aims to support the development of opportunities and services that supports more people to move into the world of work.

Employability Support in Renfrewshire:

There are a wide range of employability related services available across Renfrewshire through the various partners. Each partner has a distinct role and range of services to ensure that anyone who wants support in Renfrewshire can get it. Current services include:

1. Statutory employability services providing services to all:
 - The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) provide employability support, guidance and signposting to those claiming benefits who are required to be actively seeking work through work coaches, based in 3 jobcentres.
 - Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provides Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) services to Renfrewshire school pupils in all secondary schools and to post school customers through their SDS centres, and outreach activity.
2. A range of wider discretionary employability provision offering targeted services:
 - Renfrewshire Councils Employability Service (Invest in Renfrewshire) provides a wide range of intensive support to around 1500 people who need it most. Bespoke services and programmes are available to distinct target groups and the service bridges the gaps and augments statutory employability services.
 - Scottish Government Fairstart Scotland Programme (contracted locally to the Wise Group) to provide 12-18 months of tailored, flexible, and person-centred pre-employment support to targeted people in Renfrewshire who want help to find and stay in fair and sustainable work.
 - A wide range of Community, Learning and Development (CLD) and volunteering opportunities are available with Renfrewshire Council's Education Dept (CLD) and Engage Renfrewshire playing key capacity building and support roles, working with local groups and organisations.
 - A range of third sector and private sector training providers offering vocational skills and employment support.
3. Extensive training and further/higher educational opportunities: these are provided locally by West College Scotland and the University of the West of Scotland and offer both academic and vocational skills linked to labour market demands.

All of the above services work together to provide an employability service to meet the needs of people and businesses in the area. The Partnership has developed a broad 3 year plan for the development of employability services which will evolve over time to take account of changing economic circumstances, opportunities and funding requirements.

Renfrewshire Employability Services Plan 2022-25

The Renfrewshire Employability Partnership has identified key priorities for the coming 3 years to respond to the current economic circumstances and support the needs of the area and those looking for work. These are summarised as:

- **To positively promote the benefits of work within the area** and to ensure that people locally are aware of the opportunities open to them and the support to help them find work. We will work with employers to promote Fair Work and consider flexible working arrangements to support more parents to return to work.
- **To engage with, and support, more people:** we need to reach those people who want to work but perhaps don't know where to start and to ensure that they get the right service for them. We will work across, and with, more third sector and public sector services and ensure that outreach provision is situated in areas with highest levels of unemployment.
- **To make our services easier to access and straightforward to understand:** we will continue to work in partnership to streamline communication channels and to simplify the processes for users of the services.
- **We will work collectively to ensure the aims of “No-One Left Behind”** and to continue to assess against a range of indicators to ensure that we have the right services in place for those who need our support most.

No-One Left Behind in Renfrewshire

No-One Left Behind is a key policy objective of the Scottish Government and has directed much of the Renfrewshire approach since 2019.

Across the Renfrewshire LEP around 5000 people each year are supported with employability. Many of those will progress easily into work however others will require a longer, more supported journey. No-One Left Behind is about focussing on those who need more support, and ensuring that services are designed with these groups and address the issues they face. We aim to assist around 1500 people across Renfrewshire this year under the banner of No-One Left Behind.

We recognise that more has to be done to reach those not currently engaging with employability services or with the hardest issues to overcome. In terms of No-One Left Behind the Renfrewshire Employability Partnership have identified a range of priority groups requiring additional support and attention in the next three years.

Key Target Groups	Key Targeted Responses 2022-25
Young people, particularly those 16-18 years and also care experienced young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continuation of the “Kickstart Plus” model to allow an additional 80 young people to be sustained in work for an additional 6 months after the end of Kickstart▪ Wage incentives for care experienced young people struggling to access work (10 places)▪ Continuation of Renfrewshire YPG programme▪ Street League and Barnardos programmes for young people
Unemployed /low-income Parents (in support of the child poverty agenda)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parental employment support team working specifically with unemployed or low-income parents▪ New £1000 transition to employment grant to allow parents to start work

Appendix 1: Employability Funding, No-One Left Behind

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage incentives to create school hour jobs for parents
Communities with higher levels of employment deprivation, particular focus on in the lowest 5% SIMD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach services based in priority areas Commissioned training provision targeting these areas including a 'door knocking' approach targeting disengaged young people and their families
People with criminal convictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist key worker team and programmes Integrated support with social justice team and Scottish Prison Service New support service for those with particular issues of employment due to convictions
People with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An employer recruitment incentive to develop and subsidise new job roles for those with complex disabilities Continuation of the successful Project Search programme based at Renfrewshire Council Work to increase employers and frontline staff awareness and understanding of different disabilities such as autism
People with health issues and conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upskilling front-line health staff to be able to link to appropriate employability services. Provision of mental health and wellbeing interventions where these are not readily available but will help support journey towards employment eg counselling; Provision of the STEPs Programme as a gateway to wider employability support.
Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups including refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employability partners to be supported to use a new Racial Equality toolkit. More support to access modern apprenticeships beyond school age. Clearer path to transfer skills and qualifications acquired outside the UK and build on these.
Long term unemployed adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 month (Scottish Living Wage) fully paid work placements in the Public or Third sector with training and support (75 places)

The model of support for No-One Left Behind in Renfrewshire

For those who require additional support there is a well established 5 stage model of employability support delivered through a key worker model. Each person will receive a key worker to support them through their journey and to access the rights supports and services for them as they progress.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Engagement, Referral and Assessment	Barrier Removal, basic skills, key skills, introduction to employability	Vocational skills, work experience and job search activity	Employer Engagement, work trials, job matching and entering work.	In Work Support, Aftercare and further development
End to End Case Management /Key Worker Support				

The model of support includes the following services for **all** clients:

- Key-worker support.
- "Better off in work" calculation and benefits advice to ensure that the individual is accessing all available benefits and to establish the levels if increased income through work.
- Financial assistance for work clothing and transport to work / training.
- Childcare support during training.

- Transport assistance to those not eligible for the Scottish Governments free bus travel scheme.
- Access to over 700 training and development opportunities commissioned locally for the coming year.
- Flexible Training Fund of up to £3000 per person to purchase specific training (if not already delivered through commissioned services).
- Introductions to key employers looking to recruit.

What will Success Look Like?

A performance framework has been developed to track progress and outcomes. A summary of the Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership ambitions are:

- Unemployment will continue to reduce and economic activity levels will increase over the next 3 years.
- Around 1500 people each year will benefit from the No-One Left Behind approach and services.
- More people in the priority groups will:
 - Engage with Renfrewshire employability services
 - Receive careers/employment related advice and guidance
 - Participate in training and development opportunities provided by Renfrewshire LEP delivery partners
 - Progress towards and into work or self-employment.
- Access to employability support for all residents requiring assistance will be improved and simplified with more access in local communities and clear first points of contact. This will help to tackle significant engagement challenges reported by all partners.
- Services that support residents' wellbeing including employability will be more integrated.
- Employability services will be informed and shaped by lived experience.
- Through the Employability Service Standards and Employability Customer Charter, customers will know what to expect when accessing employment services and what to do if they feel the commitments are not being met.

Funding for Employability

Each partner brings their own funding and resources to the partnership. Different Services have varying amounts of discretion in how to use the funding they have (statutory providers don't have as much discretion) and partners are honest about this. All partners recognise the restrictions other may have and work together to ensure that the funds with most discretion are used to best effect, bridging gaps in service and integrating with other service areas.

Funding for 2022-23 to support discretionary services comes mainly from Renfrewshire Council (£1.8M), ESF (£1.2M) and the Scottish Government (£2M) with a budget of around £5M for 2023.

This will fund:

- The Invest in Renfrewshire Employability Service, including specific key workers, employer liaison, financial support to individuals and support to priority groups (£2M)
- £1.2M commissioned training and support services
- Over £1.3 M of employer recruitment / paid work placement / wage subsidies
- £0.25M transition to employment fund for parents
- £0.25M flexible training fund

Funding for the current year is higher than normal by around £1M due to Renfrewshire Council utilising a Covid recovery fund to support more unemployed people to become economically active. Further Scottish Government funding is anticipated later in the year aligned to the new Child Poverty Delivery Plan linked to increasing parental employment support and supporting more people into work.

Key changes for the year ahead and beyond include the closure of ESF programmes and the introduction of UK Government Funding (UK Shared Prosperity Fund). The Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership are already meeting to discuss key new opportunities such as the “Multiply” programme and how to ensure that employability services remain linked to local needs as ESF closes and UKSPF commences.

Conclusion

The Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership has a strategic interest in employability because of its relationship to the wellbeing of communities and economic development in their areas. The successful delivery of employability positively impacts on the Fairer Scotland Duty, Equality Duty and Child Poverty Duty as well as the alignment with Fair Work and Inclusive Economic Growth.

This plan has been developed through the Local Employability Partnership with each organisation able to contribute and discuss the key issues for employability in Renfrewshire. The plan will continue to evolve over the next few years in line with economic and funding priorities and the needs of Renfrewshire.