

**To: Forum for Empowering Communities Group**

**On: 17 November 2020**

**Report by:**

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**TITLE:**

## **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & KICKSTART**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Improving the opportunities of young people in light of the pandemic will be a priority for recovery planning. Scottish Government are encouraging all employers who are able, to work with to create more opportunities that recognise the valuable contribution young people can make.

### **2 Youth Guarantee**

- 2.1 The Scottish Government have announced their Programme for Scotland 2020/21 - a £60 million Youth Guarantee, so every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed an opportunity at university or college, training or employment. The offer will bring in other aspects of the Programme for Scottish Governments for 2020/21. This will be further supported by additional funding for apprenticeships and the new Job Start Grant; providing £250, or £400 for people with children, supporting around 5,000 young people a year starting a new job after a period of unemployment. Nicola Sturgeon said that the focus has to be on young people, “supporting, retraining and investing” in their futures is key to a smoother economic recovery.
- 2.2 The long-term goal sitting behind the Youth Guarantee will be moving young people into the Green New Deal to help the nation tackle climate change; £100m over the next five years, investing alongside businesses and organisations to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland.
- 2.3 There will other be further investment in the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) that began in 2012, with £10 million in DYW Regional Groups to support more young people to access the labour market, strengthen their links with employers, and create more opportunities to employ young people.

- 2.4 Covid-19 has exposed the need for investment to tackle the attainment gap and the Scottish Government are investing £135 million in extra resources. They will support educational catch up, and recruit 1,400 additional teachers and 200 support staff and help close the poverty related attainment gaps. Digital learning opportunities for young people will also increase, supported by the provision of Chromebooks and internet access. The hope is that this will build resilience in the face of COVID-19 and create new opportunities for young people to learn.

### **3 Kickstart – in Renfrewshire**

- 3.1 The Governments' Kickstart Scheme aims to provide hundreds of thousands of paid 6-month work placements for young people on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.
- 3.2 The job placements should support the participants to develop the skills and experience they need to find work after completing the scheme.
- 3.3 The job placements created with Kickstart funding must be new jobs. They must not:
- replace existing or planned vacancies
  - cause existing employees or contractors to lose or reduce their employment

The roles must be:

- a minimum of 25 hours per week, for 6 months
  - paid at least the National Minimum Wage for their age group
  - and should not require people to undertake extensive training before they begin the job placement
- 3.4 The placements will commence between November 2020 and December 2021 (although the timescales could be extended). An initial bid from Renfrewshire Council, in partnership with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce and Engage Renfrewshire, for 400 places in Renfrewshire is being created. The final guidance on the Kickstart programme has not been issued yet but posts will be funded at 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.
- 3.5 A set fee £1500 is also paid to the employer for the wraparound support to the young person. This fee should cover any IT or equipment required, some management support, training and employability support required by the young person.
- 3.6 The Intermediary Body for Kickstart in Renfrewshire will be Renfrewshire Council (in partnership with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce and Engage Renfrewshire). The Intermediary body is effectively the co-ordinator of the placements and the support. The UK Government will deal directly with the Intermediary Body (rather than the many employers) and all of the funding will be directed to the Intermediary to distribute to the employers. The Intermediary will work with the employer to detail the job on offer and will pass this to DWP (local jobcentre) for advertising and recruitment.

- 3.7 In terms of recruitment to the roles, the employer (with the support of the Intermediary) provides a job description for the role and the Intermediary (with DWP) confirms that the post is eligible for Kickstart support. The post is advertised through the local job centre and up to 6 candidates (less if required) will be put forward for interview to the employer by DWP. Those put forward should be ready and able for the role.

## **4 Going forward**

- 4.1 Following the impact of the present crisis, some researchers (including the Resolution foundation <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/>) are suggesting that Youth unemployment in Britain is on course to more than triple; unemployment among economically active 18- to 29-year-olds could hit 17% by late 2020. Youth unemployment – which does not include people in education and currently stands at a record low of 5.5%.
- 4.2 It will be important that were possible locally the Forum supports initiatives that support young people towards employment, and we will look to provide reports as delivery around this agenda develops.