

FINANCE COMMITTEE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SUBMISSION FROM DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

1. Many thanks for the opportunity to feed into your evidence gathering on employment opportunities for the most vulnerable young people in our community. I have provided detail below on the types of opportunities that the Council are taking a lead role in delivering on behalf of partners in the region. Taking previous experiences, for example from our 'Key to Work' Corporate Parenting programme in the Council we learned that we cannot expect our most vulnerable young people to be 'job ready' but we need to offer more employability support to enable their progression. Within the developing activity, partners have a clear understanding of where employability provision for our most vulnerable young people needs to begin. Using the strategic skills pipeline approach to support the development of our activities, we have a clear understanding that the focus of our attention needs to be in the early stages (stages 1-3) of our pipeline. Whilst we fully accept that entering employment is the ultimate aim for all our young people, we have focused attention on intensive mentoring support for the most disadvantaged young people. This is provided on an individualised basis via a key worker service and Activity Agreement work and is further supported by specific activity such as the work placement in the public sector initiative.

Developing Work Placements in the Public Sector

2. The initiative has been designed to develop public sector work placements in support of young people's employability at a time when they face particular challenges to gaining employment and when resources available in the further education sector are reducing.

3. It aims to enhance both the number and type of work placements that are available in the Council and the NHS as well as developing the opportunities available in the Fire and Police departments. This will require the public sector to be more aware of where opportunities to offer a work placement opportunity may be created and also requires efficient coordination of all activity. Once an enhanced number of opportunities have been identified, it is planned that access to them will be facilitated through a web based portal. This initiative maximises the impact of available resources by sharing and improving coordination in a number of ways and provides young people with a much needed live work setting in which to develop their practical employability skills.

Sanquhar Academy Pilot

4. This pilots an employer / community / school programme in one school where the central aspect of the initiative is the development of relationships between the school and its pupils, the community and local employers culminating with a paid 6

month work placement. It is intended that the pilot will be rolled out in summer to a further two schools and extended further if successful.

5. The programme will fit with existing school activity around preparation for the world of work with added value being provided by guest speakers coming into the school to offer additional perspectives. To develop community links and partnership local employers will be involved in delivering a session on their expectations, participating in the recruitment process and sessions will also benefit from input from other agencies including Youth Business Scotland, YPSS and Rathbone.

Other Employability Support for vulnerable young people

6. Further support for young people's employability is available locally at earlier stages of the employability pipeline and partners have agreed the ambitious target of ensuring that 100% of our young people achieve a positive destination on leaving school. This vision has been supported by the Director for Education and has been encouraged by the Scottish Government.

7. Via the Council, one to one support is available for young people aged 16-19 (and over) who are not ready or able to access formal learning. They may face multiple barriers to participation; need support to build their confidence and social skills, or need opportunities to develop team-working skills and self-esteem. A programme of learning and activity which helps them to become ready for formal learning or employment is developed by the young person with advisor support.

8. The Council also delivers on Activity Agreements on behalf of partners. The basis of an Activity Agreement should be an assessment of a young person's needs and interests which identifies their current skills and experience and identifies what will be needed to help them engage in and sustain learning moving towards more former engagement and ultimately employment. Expectations on progress should be set with young person through the Agreement.

9. Dumfries and Galloway Council is also delivering on a partnership pilot programme called Workforce 18 whereby Jobcentre Plus, SDS and the Council work together to support all 18 year olds who make a new claim for Jobseekers Allowance. Originally piloted in the Dumfries area, it is now at the point of being rolled out across D & G and South Ayrshire Council has taken the model and is implementing it there.