

FINANCE COMMITTEE

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SUBMISSION FROM SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

1. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request for information for the Finance Committee's consideration of Employment Opportunities in the Public Sector.
2. South Lanarkshire is committed to developing sustainable economic growth here and regards employment as a key factor in making that progress.
3. Recent labour market statistics show that in South Lanarkshire, young people under 25 years have been more adversely affected by the economic downturn than those aged 50 plus. In particular, the young people aged 20 – 24 have shown a greater deterioration in employment rates than those in the 16 – 19 age group. Both groups have unemployment rates which are higher than the Scottish average. These factors shape Council policy in this area.
4. In terms of the Council's activity in relation to employment opportunities for individuals who are farthest from the labour market, there are a range of activities in which we are involved.
5. Since 2009 the Council has implemented a Youth Jobs Fund programme which has benefitted over 600 local young people. To date, 95% of those completing the 50 week subsidy period have continued in sustained employment. This scheme involves offering wage subsidy to provide financial support to employers, thus contributing to the cost of employing an additional young person for a period of time.
6. In addition, this Council offers national programmes such as Get Ready for Work and Modern Apprenticeships. In 2012 / 2013 the Council will employ 62 Modern Apprentices in a range of occupational areas and our aim is to ensure sustainability of employment for this group.
7. The Council engages in specific employment programmes for young people with additional support needs. Our Work it Out programme identifies young people prior to leaving school, works with them on vocational profiling and work tasters and then moves to supported placements. Young people receive specific job coaching and mentoring to develop skills and confidence whilst in placement with the Council and then employment support in terms of interview skills and CV preparation.
8. Recently South Lanarkshire Council has become the second local authority in Scotland to adopt the Project SEARCH model of internships in conjunction with NHS Lanarkshire and private sector organisations. This will enable 8 young adults with additional support needs to be immersed in job roles in a local hospital with support which will allow them to fulfil their potential. Our Social Work team also works with

adults with learning disabilities at the Coalyard project to promote and sustain employability for his group.

9. Equally, we take our corporate parenting responsibilities to our Looked After Young People and Care Leavers very seriously. Post school outcomes for this group are not always positive, and where they are positive, this outcome is not sustained. Although 88% of South Lanarkshire's looked after and accommodated young people did have positive leaver destinations last year, this can reduce to 50% within a short time, therefore sustainability is a concern. The 16 plus Learning Choices and Risk matrix pilot have both assisted with tracking and improved interventions for young people at critical transition stages.

10. Employability support can take many different forms and the Council also offers:

- Work experience placement for schoolchildren
- Vocational training and work taster placement for secondary school pupils
- Student and graduate work placements
- Volunteering opportunities

11. Since 1998, Routes to Work South (RTWS) has provided valuable support services to unemployed and disadvantaged client groups in South Lanarkshire. RTWS is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status which is mainly funded by the Council although it also delivers services under contract to Skills Development Scotland.

12. Routes to Work South deliver the following South Lanarkshire Works for You (SLW4U) services to eligible persons on behalf of the Council:

- SLW4U Freephone information advice guidance and sign- posting service
- SLW4Me employability training for those who need additional support to find employment
- Job Brokerage matching job ready individuals to current vacancies service
- Employer Engagement dedicated employer engagement team source local vacancies and help local business find suitable employees
- South Lanarkshire Jobs Fund subsidised employment scheme for local young people aged 18-24
- Rebuilding construction sector training programme
- Provide project support to Youth Connect and Connect 2

13. The following services are also delivered through RTWS:

- Co-ordinating Opportunities if Left is Right (COLIR) Project – a project funded through the European Social Fund which provides support to people with learning difficulties / disabilities
- Up-skilling Local Employment Partnership Enterprises (ULEPE) – provides in-work support to local partnership clients to progress in the workplace

14. South Lanarkshire Council offers a wide range of tailored employability and employment activities for people in this area, however, this should be seen in the context of reductions in the public sector and the short term nature of external funding and grants.

I hope that you find this helpful and would be happy to discuss any aspect of our activities further.