

# **Social Justice and Social Security Committee – Inquiry into Child Poverty and Parental employment Additional information provided by Fedcap Scotland following evidence session on 15 June 2023**

**Received 25 June 2023**

## **Fedcap Scotland evidence at inquiry addressing child poverty through parental employment**

I wanted to thank you all for the opportunity to give evidence at the recent hearing on Employability Programmes, as part of your inquiry addressing child poverty through parental employment.

It was a pleasure to showcase to you the work our 130-strong team do across our eight offices in Scotland to support people into sustainable employment, through Scottish Government's Fair Start Scotland (FSS) devolved employability service.

As a leading FSS provider working across multiple local authority areas from Aberdeen to Ayr and covering Edinburgh, Fife and the Borders, Fedcap Scotland has supported 8,000 people into sustainable work since 2018, accounting for almost 40% of total job starts under FSS.

Historically, work has been the best route out of poverty and still is, if it's the right job. People and parents experience so many barriers and need the right support.

With nearly a quarter of a million children in Scotland living in poverty, we believe a big investment is needed to address this. Significant progress will not be done on a small scale.

As a not for profit organisation that has invested £12m in Scotland in the last four years, we're committed to working with Scottish Government and partners, including within local government, under the Scottish Government's 'Fresh Start' agenda to co-design solutions that can work across the industry and deliver excellent services for local people.

We have been particularly successful in engaging with and supporting those classed as 'economically inactive' with more than half of them finding sustainable employment in under 12 weeks. This particular group of people came to Fedcap Scotland voluntarily and we have built some very smart methods of getting feedback and data to learn what worked for them, what didn't and how some of them have engaged or not engaged with a range of services around them, including Jobcentre services. We have also recently launched a pilot project in Fife to provide more in-depth analysis and insight into how to engage with and motivate economically inactive individuals in the community.

Last week's report by the Office for Budget Responsibility laid bare the scale of the challenge of economic inactivity and how it has been driven by the rise of long-term sickness/health related inactivity since the start of the pandemic. We believe that 'good work' is part of a healthy life: finding and staying in sustainable employment improves health outcomes, helps people and their families out of poverty and improves their quality of life and life expectancy. Our health and wellbeing teams are already playing a key role in supporting people into sustainable employment, working on individually tailored assessments, plans and coaching to improve their physical capabilities, psychological state and social circumstances/needs.

Meanwhile, we're working on new health-related ideas and initiatives, including a "Healthy Minds, Inspiring People" pilot programme through the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership. This supports young people with learning disabilities and difficulties with their mental health to build confidence and resilience. We have also launched two of Fedcap's four "International Clubhouses" in the UK this summer. The clubhouses provide a safe space for people with mental health issues, giving them their own 'agency' and independence, providing the conditions and social interactions that can help build up their confidence, self-efficacy and ability to work with others – and improve their readiness for employment.

We would welcome the opportunity for further discussions with the Committee on how we can bring our knowledge and experience to a national conversation about the best way forward to improve people's economic wellbeing in Scotland.