

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

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Views and comments can be made to EmployabilityinScotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk by 9th October 2015.

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Fife Voluntary Action (and the following partners):

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

/ Group/Organisation



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CONSULTATION PAPER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

What types of employment support services work best in Scotland, reflecting the very different needs of individuals who are unemployed?

Comment

1. This response (and all following answers) has been pulled together from a working group of third sector partners. This includes former Work Programme and Work Choice staff as well as those who have been involved in delivering local third sector employability and welfare support. In total over 50 years of experience working in the employability and welfare arena were represented in the discussion group. This response has also been developed in conversation with our local employability partnership: the Opportunities Fife Partnership and the wider Fife Employability Forum.
 - 1.1. Our combined opinion is that the most successful approach to getting people back into work includes effective needs analysis, followed by personalised 1-1 keyworker support and appropriate specialist support to address individual needs.
 - 1.2. Specialist support includes for example: Pro-active engagement with groups who are particularly isolated or vulnerable, goal-setting, confidence building activities, housing advice, financial and debt advice, emotional resilience and anxiety management, mental health support, physical health support, volunteering and work experience as well as the more standard interview, presentation and job-search skills.
 - 1.3. Services should be developed and commissioned with input from service users using an asset based model of co-production approach to project development and delivery.
 - 1.4. Services need to be accessible and informal allowing for flexibility, they need to be a safe place where relationships can be built and staff are trusted. They also need to be consistent and sustainable.
 - 1.5. These are best developed, commissioned and delivered at a local authority level to reflect local demographic need and to ensure they are 'additional' and complement rather than duplicate existing provision funded through other channels.

QUESTION 2

How best can we ensure the needs of different businesses and sectors in Scotland, are aligned with employment programme outcomes?

Comment

2. It is critical that employment programmes and educational provision are tailoring their provision and outcomes to reflect the needs of employers in Fife. This requires a combination of evidence-based analysis at local and national level and structural incentives.

Analysis and working in partnership:

- 2.1. In Fife we have piloted the development of a Workforce Modelling Report which identifies key growth sectors in the area. The report analyses the skills these employers need now and in the future, this is mapped against existing Fife College and other vocational skills provision and used to identify gaps in the 'skills pipeline'. A copy of the most recent report (July 2015) can be found at the link below.

<http://www.fifevoluntaryaction.org.uk/downloads/Fife%20Workforce%20Model%202015%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- 2.2. This report is not only informing changes in Fife College provision but has also been shared with employability providers to ensure that smaller-scale vocational training and skills development is developed with an awareness of the jobs and skills gaps we have here in Fife and on their doorstep.
- 2.3. In addition to this locally-led employer engagement is crucial. This is being pioneered through Fife's Developing Young Workforce Initiative and Board. This builds on partnerships with Business Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, Fife Chambers of Commerce and the local Federation of Small Businesses.
- 2.4. In Fife employer engagement also needs to ensure conversations around transport issues as often, even when jobs are available, clients in the most deprived or rural areas are literally unable to get to them.

Incentives and opportunities to work with employers

- 2.5. The development of time limited employer recruitment incentives can be very helpful in ensuring those furthest from the labour market get the opportunity to show their skills in work, *however*, it is critical that these are closely monitored to ensure they are generating sustainable opportunities for those with multiple barriers to work.
- 2.6. Academies and apprenticeships also play a key role in improving pathways to many job roles not addressed by traditional College skills development. These should be built upon and in some cases simplified to enable smaller employers to access them. Again the focus must remain on improving access to those that would not get a job without the additional support.

QUESTION 3

What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing employment support programmes and delivery mechanisms in Scotland?

Comment

3. The response below focuses particularly on the strengths and weaknesses of the Work Programme and Work Choice provision in Scotland. There are also issues with the delivery of the Employability Fund which are outlined at the end.

Strengths:

- 3.1. Performance management is well developed in both Work Programme and Work Choice provision and this should definitely be evolved and built upon in any future programmes.
- 3.2. The length of contracts has allowed for better retention of quality staff and investment in their skills development. Three year contracts are a minimum to enabling this to happen.
- 3.3. The threat of reallocation of resources if targets were not achieved at the 3 year point led to a real focus on ensuring clients got outcomes and that these were well evidenced.

Weaknesses - contract:

- 3.4. The 100% payment by results approach of Work Programme has led at best to a focus on jobs for those who are engaging but to a ‘parking’ of clients who are not – generally those who are more complicated to work with and with most barriers to getting and staying in work. This often most affects the most vulnerable people including those under the 9 ‘protected characteristics’;
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/1>
- 3.5. It has also led to a diversion of resources to focussing on paperwork and the ‘evidence’ trail to ensure outcomes are paid for, often to the detriment of the clients.
- 3.6. The 70% engagement and 30% outcome payment approach of Work Choice initially led to a tendency for budgets to be aligned to achievement of the 70% engagement fee.

Weaknesses - delivery:

- 3.7. When originally bidding for contracts there has been a tendency for providers to either promise they can do it all, or list a range of smaller contractors with whom they will work when the payment system has meant that this was in reality unaffordable – the consequence of both approaches has meant either the removal of funding for local specialist provision, or loss of anticipated payments from WP providers and in some cases this has led to the closure of that service.
- 3.8. In addition to this a number of key funding programmes (e.g. European Funding) saying that Work Programme clients are ineligible for services they fund. This

inability for clients to access additional services whilst on the Work Programme has meant that support which could have helped them has been held back for 2 years – a critical timeframe when someone is unemployed.

- 3.9. In other cases third sector organisations have stopped working with WP clients as they were not being paid by WP providers for their services whilst the perception is that the WP would 'make money' for any outcomes that they had helped them to achieve.
- 3.10. We recognise that this is not always the case. Locally Working Links committed to working with other providers in the area and were willing to pay for that support – this has led to a small number of successful partnerships. Others have not.
- 3.11. The transition when clients are 'mandated on' and 'mandated off' the WP has been badly managed for the individuals with no 'soft' handover at either end of the process to alternative provision and to ensure there is an appropriate continuity of support. The large volume of clients being worked with through WP and the focus on tight payments has meant that handovers become irrelevant as workers did not have sufficient in-depth knowledge of the client to share.
- 3.12. According to Guardian reports Working Links referred the most cases for financial sanctions (11,910) to be taken against welfare recipients amongst Work Programme suppliers between June 2011 and January 2012. Given the Scottish Government approach to the sanctions regime this would appear to directly undermine the culture we are trying to create. <http://www.snp.org/media-centre/news/2015/jul/mhairi-black-calls-urgent-review-sanctions>

Skills Development Scotland - Employability Fund

- 3.13. Whilst the Employability Fund, administered through Skills Development Scotland, has generated a range of valuable projects and programmes it is hampered by two important factors:
 - 3.13.1. The length of contract is only ever for 12 months, and contracts are often not re-let until *after* the formal end of the last round of funding. This leads to significant issues with staff retention and investment in progression for clients as well as significant risk for third sector providers who are often expected to begin delivering services to achieve targets before they have formal confirmation of funding.
 - 3.13.2. The 'pipeline stages' approach to funding provision has at times meant that clients are forced through hoops relevant to the funding, but not relevant to themselves. For example we have heard stories of clients being asked to refuse a job offer until they have completed their work placement as otherwise the provider would not get their payment.
 - 3.13.3. This is reinforced by the fact that the payment structure does not always reflect the actual costs of delivering programmes.

QUESTION 4

Where are the current examples of good practice in relation to alignment of services to most effectively support a seamless transition into employment?

Comment

4. There are always things to learn, and things we can do better. In Fife we have been taking action to improve alignment of services at both a strategic and operational level. This work is already paying dividends with an improvement in job outcomes of from 26% -32 % in the last two years and an increase in 'positive outcomes' from 44%-55% over the same time frame.

Strategically

- 4.1. The local employability partnership in Fife (Opportunities Fife Partnership - OFP) has been refreshed following a review by the Training and Employability Research unit at Glasgow University in 2013. As a result they have evolved several strands of activity to address the issue of good practice and alignment of services:
- 4.2. At a strategic level we now have a strong partnership with input from Fife Chambers of Commerce, NHS Fife, the Fife Health & Social Care Partnership, Fife College, Fife Voluntary Action, Skills Development Scotland and Fife Council.
- 4.3. OFP have evolved an evidence based approach to commissioning services based on demographics, analysis and research.
- 4.4. In winter of 2015 we anticipate a report from the Fairer Fife Commission which will hopefully give renewed focus and energy to the challenges we have ahead.
- 4.5. Fife have funded the creation of a small capacity building function for the third sector, staffed through Fife Voluntary Action (FVA). With support from OFP this has made a significant impact on improving third sector presence, performance and contribution in the area. With a shift in the balance of European and Fairer Scotland Funding allocations from 28% of provision being led by the third sector in 2010-14 to 66% in 2015.

Operationally:

- 4.6. Fife's local CRMS system: FORT (Fife Online Referral Tracking system) tracks performance and encourages cross-referral to specialist providers in the Pathway by ensuring that everyone's input to a client journey is evidenced and reported, not just the agency that 'got the job' at the end. <https://www.fortsupport.co.uk/>
- 4.7. FVA has supported the creation of a Consortium of third sector providers to provide better coordinated provision for unemployed people in Fife. Now funded by OFP the Fife Employability and Training Consortium (Fife-ETC) is one of the largest employment providers in Fife. Their website is in development but more information can be found at <http://fife-etc.org/>

- 4.8. OFP are also funding a partnership between NHS Fife and local employment support providers to deliver Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for clients with mental health problems.
- 4.9. Fife Gingerbread's partnership Making it Work brings together has demonstrated excellent success supporting lone parents into sustained employment. A copy of the most recent evaluation can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1jNIZHr>
- 4.10. Furthermore we are beginning to work with Fife Council's Local Area Managers and Local Area Partnerships to ensure delivery reflects needs at the most local of levels.

QUESTION 5

What are the key improvements you would make to existing employment support services in Scotland to ensure more people secure better work?

Comment

5. Whilst the focus on 'more people' must be inextricable from 'better work' the two issues can be supported by separate strands of activity:

More people

- 5.1. A continued and intensive focus on performance management against job outcomes and sustainability is critical for *all* funded employment provision. There are two key actions against this:
- 5.1.1. Upskilling local authorities and other funding agencies on how to manage this; and
 - 5.1.2. Ensuring local CRM systems for reporting are robust.

- 5.2. Ensuring services are commissioned locally and over relevant timeframes to allow for staff retention and appropriate specialisation.

Better work

- 5.3. Performance management indicators should look beyond 'job outcomes' to progression in-work at a minimum to achieving living wage roles.
- 5.4. We need national *and* local level employer engagement to improve the working culture and environment within identified growth sectors for employment such as the care sector or retail. There are opportunities for partnerships with Healthy Working Lives for example.
- 5.5. We would encourage the creation of locally developed employer mentoring schemes for those entering their first job – this would also build community and social

responsibility within businesses of all sizes.

- 5.6. Further investment should be made to ensure employers continue to focus on staff development and skills.

QUESTION 6

How best can we assess the employment support needs of an individual and then ensure the support they receive is aligned with their requirements?

Comment

6. Needs assessment is a critical part of the journey for an individual and is currently delivered very differently across providers large and small.
 - 6.1. For the first round of commissioning of devolved services we would suggest piloting and testing a selection of shared 'core needs assessment' tools in the first instance. These could be evaluated and reviewed (in partnership with a University?) and the most effective developed as national tools for future commissioned services. This should build on international evidence and models developed elsewhere.
 - 6.2. It appears that significant conversations around developing national tools have been held at European level – anything developed should build on the lessons learned from these pilots. For example see the link here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?offset=0&langId=en&mode=advancedSubmit&advSearchKey=pesprofilingintegration&orderBy=docOrder>

- 6.3. An evidence based 'employment readiness' measure would help providers assess the investment needed in an individual and also help apply real comparisons between the performance of different providers at a national level. In Fife we have been piloting the 'employment readiness scale'. Other popular tools include the 'outcomes star'.

<http://www.employmentreadiness.co.uk/> <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/>

- 6.4. Needs assessment should take into account the aspirations of the individual, and the realities of their skills and the local job market. They must be regularly reviewed and updated as new barriers present themselves and as the client journey evolves.
 - 6.5. Shared CRM systems delivered locally can encourage partners to share information and reduce the number of times clients have to answer the same question repeatedly.

QUESTION 7

How best can the employability pipeline framework help providers best assess and deliver services people need?

Comment

7. The employability pipeline (or pathway in Fife) is a fantastic tool for ensuring that Local Employability Partners commission activity that is spread across the range of stages and that 'gaps' in the pipeline do not occur.
 - 7.1. It can also be used to analyse at what 'stage' clients are entering the pipeline in an area and inform what additional provision might be needed.
 - 7.2. However we feel strongly that the pipeline should not be used as a tool for monitoring clients' progress for a number of reasons:
 - 7.2.1. People's journeys into work do not always follow a nice linear model. A person may be very job ready but need help with drugs and alcohol provision or digital skills typically provided at Stage 2. Similarly someone may be technically considered a long way from work, but the right opportunity could arise and they take a leap that is not expected. The approach used through Individual Placement and Support would place someone typically deemed at 'Stage 2' directly into a work environment which is technically 'Stage 4' provision. This is based on significant evidence that this is the most beneficial approach for clients with health problems and disabilities.
 - 7.2.2. A pipeline approach to monitoring progress can lead to situations where clients are technically not 'eligible' to progress to Stage 3 until they have completed x hours of work placement or volunteering or certain courses – even though they have been offered a job and so are actually moving to Stage 5.

QUESTION 8

How can early intervention best be integrated into employment support and the design of future programmes?

Comment

8. There is always a tension between early intervention for people on benefits where support will have the most cost effective result and ensuring those that need most support (the long-term unemployed) are not left behind. The skills sets involved in these client groups and the services they require are both very different.
 - 8.1. We recommend a small percentage of resources are allocated to early intervention provision and that this is commissioned separately. This would include better off in work calculations, understanding working tax credits, signposting to appropriate advice and support, relevant skills training, initial job search and interview skills

support.

- 8.2. The bulk of funding should be reserved for those with multiple barriers to employment who require intensive support including barrier removal and skills and confidence building such as through volunteering or work placements.
- 8.3. There is also a piece of work to be done raising awareness of employability services and the benefits of being in work with other frontline provision such as the Health, financial advisory services, community learning and development and other community organisations. This will help with early intervention and again is best commissioned locally to improve partner buy-in.
- 8.4. It is also worth making mention here that in Fife we are looking at ways of developing early intervention in schools to raise educational and vocational aspirations from primary school onwards. We see this as critical to improving outcomes in Fife. This is being led through Developing Fife's Young Workforce.

QUESTION 9

What is the optimal duration of employment support, in terms of both moving individuals into work, and then sustaining their employment?

Comment

9. We would be concerned that to set a timeframe on this would be to move away from a client-led needs-based approach to developing services. Identifying appropriate outcomes (employment, sustained employment, progression in employment) would be a more appropriate response.
 - 9.1. The most critical element in ensuring progression is a continued and relentless focus on providers achieve the outcomes they have committed to and that these are appropriate for the client group they are working with.
 - 9.2. The system should recognise that what people 'do' on their journey also changes their identity – they move from the negative value of 'benefit claimant' to peer supporter , mentor, champion, student , volunteer, community activist and actually start to become part of the solution of the local area or community. A clear focus on when we move from a negative base to asset base happens long before entering employment.

QUESTION 10

What are the benefits and challenges of a national contracting strategy for Scotland's future employment support service(s)?

Comment

10. Following discussion at our local Fife Employability Forum, with Opportunities Fife Partnership and the working group developing our response to this paper the overwhelming consensus is that in Fife we would want to see local level commissioning managed through the Opportunities Fife Partnership.
 - 10.1. Local commissioning ensures that provision complements rather than duplicates existing provision funded through other channels and can be tailored to reflect local need.
 - 10.2. Local commissioning ties in with the Scottish Government policy approach to devolving decision-making to community level. See the list of relevant and related policy areas at section 11.
 - 10.3. Local commissioning ensure that we remain accountable and connected to communities that use and need support. This accountability ensures a fresh and honest development and evaluation of service delivery.
 - 10.4. National contracting should create a simple framework with core 'key performance indicators' that local commissioning must achieve and will be monitored against. Funding could be apportioned to local authorities according to demographic data on unemployment and no. of areas of employment deprivation on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
 - 10.5. Contracting solely at a national level limits the 'market' to a small number of providers many of whom are profit-led private companies. This model relies on numbers and data and is far too remote and removed to be able to account for it's performance in local communities.
 - 10.6. Commissioning through local authorities opens up the possibility for other specialist partners or smaller organisations to engage in the process whilst not 'closing the door' on the bigger organisations.
 - 10.7. Contracting locally allows for better alignment of spending and maximisation of resources. For example here in Fife we have ensured that our local authority and European provision is allocated to projects which do not duplicate those already supported through the Employability Fund and internal Fife Council resources.

QUESTION 11

How best can we secure effective regional and local delivery of employment support in future?

Comment

11. There has been an increasing movement towards local based delivery of services to meet local needs. This is reflected in a range of Scottish government legislation and policy including:

- Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>
- Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/9/contents/enacted>
- Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2013/1/contents/enacted>
- Early Years Collaborative - <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/early-years-collaborative>
- The Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services 2011 - <http://www.gov.scot/About/Review/publicservicescommission>

11.1. These approaches emphasise that local solutions are the most effective and having flexibility of delivery at a local level is essential to tackle the multiple and complex issues faced in communities in Scotland.

11.2. Local commissioning with close performance management against both local and national key performance indicators will ensure that provision is effective, does not duplicate, and is tailored to local circumstances.

11.3. Performance management of delivery is critical to the success of any commissioning whether at a local or national level.

11.4. Local employability partnerships should receive support in contract management and administration, either through training or resource. This would not only improve management of the newly devolved provision but also the existing provision already funded through local authorities which accounts for a high proportion of spend.

11.5. We strongly advise that contract decisions are made on the basis of quality and cost as opposed to cost alone.

QUESTION 12

Do national or more localised employment support programmes work better for different client groups? If so, which ones and why?

Comment

12. The considered experience from our Working Group – who have worked for a

combination of national and local providers - is that 'local works best' for all client groups;

12.1. There is an increased ability to network with potential referral agencies, build relationships with specialist providers locally and connect with the local employer market.

12.2. Local issues can be picked up on and addressed – for example public transport is a major issue here in Fife. Locally commissioned provision can access small community based venues for delivery which helps improve access for people who have no access to transport and are not used to moving outwith their local areas. This can then be built upon once confidence is improved to accessing provision and jobs within a reasonable travel area.

12.3. In Fife, we have been working hard to ensure that employment provision is targeted where most needed whilst at the same time ensuring a level of provision across the area. We would welcome support to, where necessary, improve skills at all levels on performance monitoring and contract management.

QUESTION 13

Who should be the contracting authority for devolved employment support provision?

Comment

13. In Fife we would recommend that the local authority act as the contracting authority however there should be a strong requirement that all contracts are approved and monitored by the local employability partnership, in our case the Opportunities Fife Partnership.

13.1. Once again we would reiterate the value in this approach in encouraging the pooling of partner resources and avoiding duplication of provision.

QUESTION 14

Which client groups would benefit most from future employment support in Scotland and why?

Comment

14. As mentioned at Question 8 we would advise that a small proportion of spend be allocated to early intervention with the bulk of funding being allocated to those who are furthest from the labour market.

14.1. We believe local employability partnerships are best placed to analyse and identify the client groups who are not already provided for in their area and therefore who would benefit most from additional funding.

14.2. For those areas that do not have this in place this would require a short period of analysis to include local demographics, current provision available, current service user profile and the employer picture in that area. For example the TERU Review of OFP in 2013 led to re-focussing commissioning on a range of new activity for targeted client groups such as:

- ex-offenders,
- lone parents and families with complex problems, and people with caring responsibilities
- those living in areas of multiple deprivation
- people with health problems or disabilities.

14.3. In Fife the intention is for this review to be refreshed in 2016, which would inform commissioning for 2017 and beyond.

QUESTION 15

What should be our ambitions for these client groups?

Comment

15. Our ambitions for clients accessing our employment services should be that they are supported to access decent, good quality employment.

15.1. Whilst people may move along many milestones along the way to employment such as accessing volunteering to build confidence, experience and skills, if a service is commissioned to help someone get a job, then this should be our ambition.

15.2. Knowing as we do that good work helps to build and maintain good health (both mental and physical) it is crucial that we do not focus on *any* job but that clients access work that is right for their skills and abilities and that is appropriately supported by the employer.

15.3. Forcing individuals into badly paid, badly supported work can end up costing more to the state in terms of health interventions than it saves.

QUESTION 16

How can we maximise the effectiveness of devolved employment support in Scotland, in relation to the broader range of resources and initiatives available in Scotland?

Comment

16. Again we would reinforce the importance of taking a local approach to commissioning to avoid duplication and ensure that services are targeted where most needed.
 - 16.1. Investing in the dissemination of information on services that are available and research around what works is critical. This can be as simple as building on and improving local and national information portals and Forums as well as continuing to build the policy connections between historically diverse areas such as Health and Employment.
 - 16.2. Ensuring local areas commission activity which reflects local need and is commissioned with input from all relevant local partners through the Local employability partnership will make a significant difference to this.
 - 16.3. In Fife the OFP Partnership Manager now sits on the commissioning group for Employability Fund provision whilst the Skills Development Scotland Area Manager sits on the Executive that makes OFP funding decisions. This is a prime example of how local partnership working can ensure resources are spent to best effect and duplication of effort is reduced.
 - 16.4. As the third sector interface in Fife we take our responsibility to support employability seriously. We recommend that employability get added as a 'fifth pillar' to third sector interface's responsibilities and that they should be resourced to build the connections and grow the role of the third sector in this arena.

QUESTION 17

What are the advantages, or disadvantages, of payment by results within employment support? What would form an effective suite of outcomes and over what period for Scotland? What does an effective payment structure look like?

Comment

17. Payment by results has a role to play but must not become the 'tail that wags the dog'.
 - Advantages:*
 - 17.1. Payment by results (PBR) ensures that clients are rigorously tracked into employment.
 - Disadvantages*
 - 17.2. 100% PBR automatically limits potential providers to private sector companies who are able to leverage in private investment. Very few, if any, third sector providers could contract to deliver a service paid in this way.
 - 17.3. PBR leads to both 'parking' and 'cherry-picking', as well as a diversion of resource from clients to paperwork.

17.4. PBR places significant risk on the provider – someone could be supported for months but due to circumstances outwith the provider’s control (e.g. a bereavement or family crisis) be unable to take up employment. PBR doesn’t allow any of that work to be recognised and therefore diverts support from those most likely to be affected by such crises – effectively those most in need of support.

Effective outcomes

- 17.5. Nationally monitored outcomes should focus on jobs, sustainment and progression in-work.
- 17.6. Additional national key performance indicators should be kept simple and record for example engagement, needs assessment, and needs assessment review.
- 17.7. Local employability partnerships may wish to set local ‘milestones’ or progression indicators for activity at Stages 1 and 2 of the pipeline, these should be closely monitored for impact and onward referral to other services or into work, but payments should not be allocated to these.

Effective payment structure

- 17.8. We strongly recommend a payment structure which provides a core ‘management fee’ which would cover the costs of delivering the service, with ‘incentive payments’ on achieving the outcome targets listed at 17.4 and 17.5 above.
- 17.9. Any ‘profit’ made would be required to be reinvested in the service and developing new and additional provision. See section 21 for more detail.
- 17.10. In addition to this a very strict focus on performance management would mean that failure to achieve the agreed KPIs following two years of delivery would mean reallocation of funds to other providers.

QUESTION 18

What are the advantages, or disadvantages, of payment for progression within employment support? What measures of progression and over what period? What does an effective payment structure, which incentivises progression, look like?

Comment

18. Payment for progression also has advantages and disadvantages:
 - 18.1. Whilst it allows for recognition of distance travelled this can too often turn into ‘hoops’ that an individual must evidence before they are deemed ‘work ready’ whether or not they are relevant to that client’s journey. See section 7.2 for further evidence.
 - 18.2. As stated at 17.6 local areas may wish to set relevant milestones for activity

commissioned at stages 1 and 2 however we do not recommend a payment structure which incentivises these as this diverts attention from the ultimate goal which is to support an individual into work.

- 18.3. At the same time we recommend that Scottish Government pilot use of a selection of 'employment readiness' tools as mentioned at section 6.2 – this will in future enable comparison of provision and progression outcomes.

QUESTION 19

What are the key aspects of an effective performance management system, to support the delivery of employment support outcomes in Scotland?

Comment

19. Any nationally developed performance management system should look at a small selection of agreed KPIs to include those listed at 17.4 and 17.5 as well as certain key client demographic information (e.g. age, gender, length unemployed, barriers to employment). This information should be being recorded on local CRM systems already and could simply be 'extracted' from this to a national 'data hub'. This would avoid additional costly development of IT systems and frontline staff having to use multiple systems to report outcomes.
- 19.1. It is fair to say that locally concerns are already raised about data sharing protocols. This would be magnified significantly if information was being shared through a national database.

QUESTION 20

Collectively, how best do we encourage active participation and avoid lack of participation on employment support programmes?

Comment

20. Mandating individuals onto programmes creates a negative experience from the start. We need to promote success and self-referral through this. However we also understand that there will be some individuals who will not engage with support unless there is an element of threat over benefits.
- 20.1. Where mandation is considered necessary then this should be done in person where there is 'friendly handover' to the support provider with a clear introduction and explanation of the support involved. This can be done in groups where larger numbers are involved. WP staff experience has shown that this can make a huge difference in how a client engages with a service and their level of attendance once 'mandated'. Electronic only referrals are not sufficient or helpful.
- 20.2. The interesting and diverse way that third sector providers can engage with clients can really make some headway into moving the harder to help closer to the

job market.

20.3. The key to success depends on identifying the motivation for the participant – building focus on assets is a more positive method of engaging even the most ‘disengaged’ – this relies heavily in investing time into the crucial period of engaging relationships.

QUESTION 21

Do you have any other comments/views in relation to future employment support that have not been covered in the questions above?

Comment

21. Fife Voluntary Action and the partners supporting this submission feel very strongly that the Scottish Government has been given a unique opportunity to change the system.

- Do we want to live in a society where companies are encouraged to make a profit out of unemployment?
- Do we want to create a system which allows the public pound to flow not only into private individuals pockets but out of the country, and even out of Europe?

21.1. It is hard to be sure of how much money leaves our economy annually through the Work Programme: Ingeus UK is owned by an Arizona-based company Providence Service Corporation, Triage (a sub-contractor only in Scotland) appears to have just 3 individual shareholders all based in England whilst 25% of Working Links profits go to an Australian charity, (the other 25% of Working Links shares go to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions UK and 25% each to CapGemini PLC and Manpower PLC respectively).

21.2. We fully recognise that the third sector needs to ‘step up’ to the table but all of this is possible with sufficient resource and support from our statutory sector partners.

21.3. Those companies mentioned at 21.1 (and others) that may wish to compete for the Scottish Government contracts would be able to establish Community Interest Companies, or charitable arms to bid for this work should they wish. Thus ensuring we do not lose expertise, *and* we do not lose public money.

This response has been prepared by Fife Voluntary Action with input and support from the Opportunities Fife Partnership and the following partners:

Fife Employability and Training Consortium, including: BRAG Enterprises Ltd, Clued Up, Scottish Christian Alliance, West Fife Enterprise, and Fife Employment Access Trust,

Apex Scotland – Fife Team

Community Growing Solutions CiC Ltd

Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife

Fife Centre for Equalities (currently being supported by Fife Voluntary Action)

Fife Gingerbread

And of course Fife Voluntary Action

End of Questionnaire

Thank you for participating