

Working for Fife:

A Survey of Third Sector Employability Services in Fife, 2013



Summary of Findings

This is a summary of the full report, which presents the findings from data gathered from 28 employability projects delivered by 17 third sector organisations in Fife. It also includes findings from interviews with service providers and desk-based research.

Key findings

The Fife economy is recovering. Manufacturing remains the top generator of economic output whilst the public sector employs the largest proportion of the workforce. Of the nearly 9,000 business operating in Fife only 5% employ over 250 people with 92% employing less than 50.

A significant proportion of the population remains unemployed with 9,080 people claiming JSA and 17,200 claiming ESA/IB in February 2013.

The 28 projects included in this report covered a range of client groups, stages of the Fife Employability Pathway and delivery models. Between them they employed a total of 62 full-time and 34 part-time staff. Figures 1 and 2 below show the spread of services against the pathway and the range of target client groups.

In 2012/13, 21 (75%) of these projects served over 1,620 clients and supported 535 people (33%) into employment. A further 191 clients (12%) were supported into further education or training and 397 (25%) into other unwaged opportunity/apprenticeships. These rates are significantly higher than those achieved by the DWP's Work Programme to date.

There is a predominance (50%) of services targeting young people, and much less provision for people with disabilities; unemployed people over 25 or lone parents. No projects specifically targeted the needs of carers and ex-offenders although a number indicated that their client group might have these as secondary 'characteristics'.

Although Fife's local employability partnership Opportunities Fife wishes to target resources on clients from the 20% most deprived areas in Fife this is not reflected through the geographical spread of services or through the percentage of clients from these areas registered on the Fife Online Referral and Tracking system (FORT). This issue is not limited to third sector provision.

Fig. 1 Projects mapped against stages of the Fife Employability Pathway and colour coded according to their target client group. Information in brackets shows the total number of spaces each project offers.

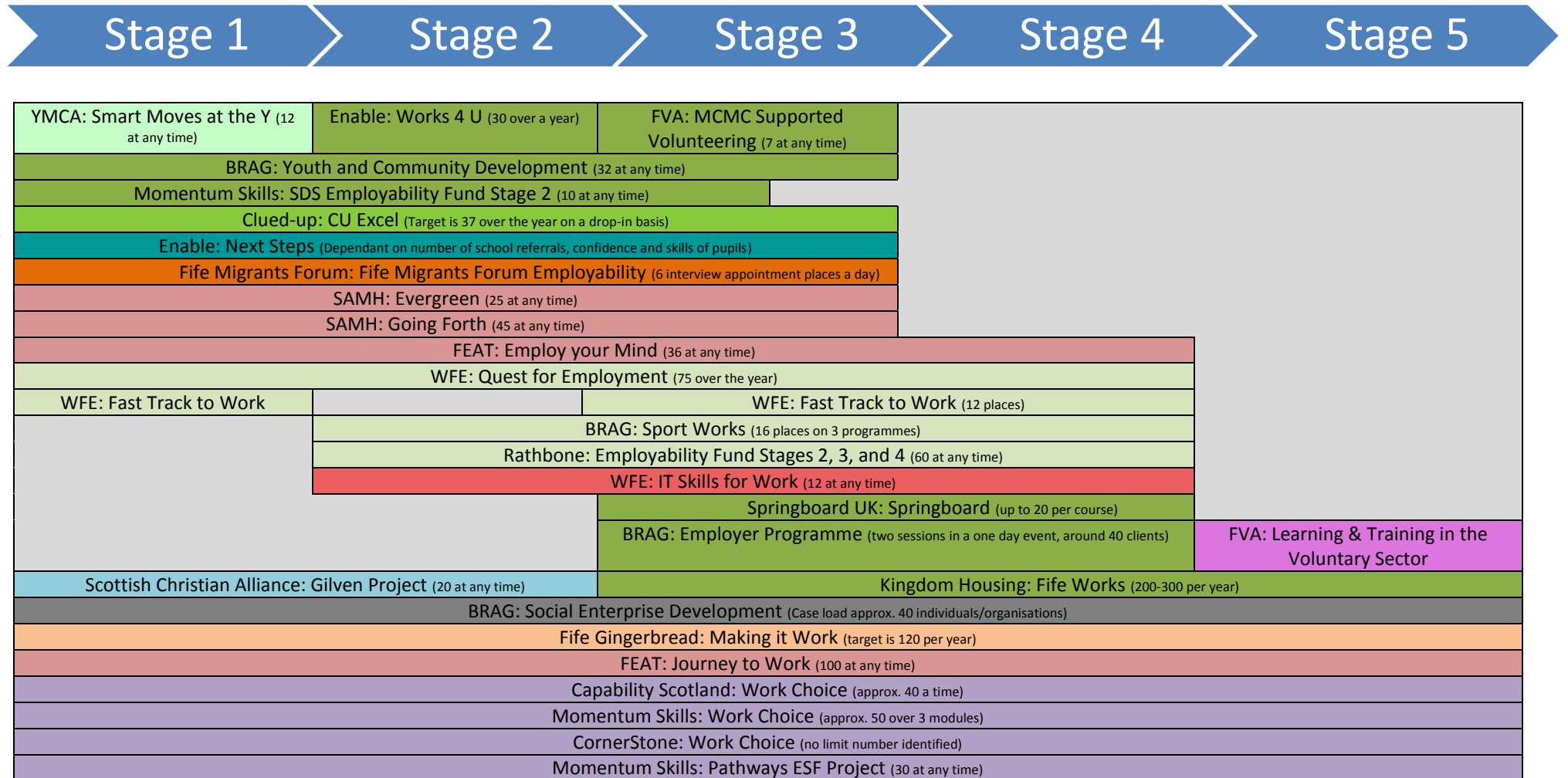


Fig. 2 Colour code key to Target Client Groups in Fig. 1 (above) with total projects in each group.

Client Group	Projects	Client Group	Projects	Client Group	Projects
Young People (under 25 years)	4	Lone Parents	1	Voluntary Sector Organisations	1
Young People who are homeless and overcoming addictions	1	Homelessness	1	All Unemployed	1
Young People who are Overcoming Addictions	1	People with Mental Health Problems and Physical and Learning Disabilities	4	Any person wishing to start a social enterprise	1
Young People who are NEET	7	People with Mental Health Problems	4		
Young People who are NEET with Learning Disabilities	1	Ethnic Minorities	1		

FORT is increasingly being used as a tool for strategic planning by the Opportunities Fife Partnership. At the moment it is under-utilised by most projects. There is a need for further support to enable projects, and the Partnership, to make the most of this resource.

Third sector employability projects bring in significant, additional funding to Fife through charitable sources and contracts with national public bodies. Despite this, funding is insecure with over half of reported funding strands (28) due to end in the summer of 2014.

Projects, their staff and most importantly their clients suffer due to the short-term nature of much of the funding and the short notice given for many grants and contracts.

There is patchy knowledge of the range of employability services and financial support that is available in Fife. This is exacerbated by short-term funding which means that projects and initiatives come and go in relatively short time periods. This makes it harder for potential clients to know which services exist and are best placed to meet their particular needs.

In addition to a more co-ordinated and long-term approach to funding we recommend better awareness raising of the range of services through regular e-bulletins, development of a cross-sectoral employability forum and improved use of the Opportunities Fife website as being key steps towards improving service delivery and employment outcomes for the people of Fife.

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