



Employability

Working for Fife 2021

A review of third sector employability pathway services in Fife



supporting, developing and representing community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and volunteering



Employability





Working for Fife 2021



Employability

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Background

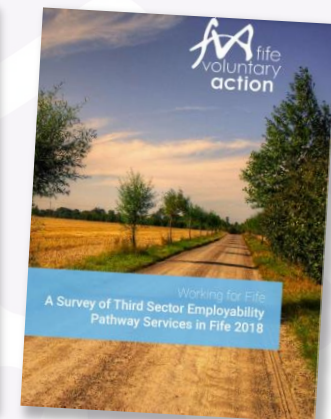
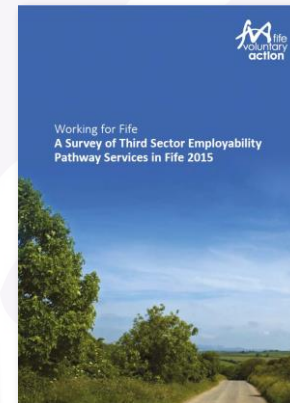
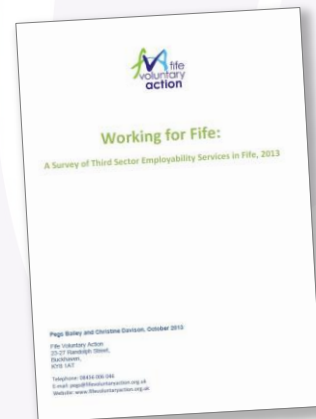
Working for Fife is produced by [Fife Voluntary Action \(FVA\)](#), the Third Sector Interface for Fife. FVA is funded by the Opportunities Fife Partnership to provide capacity building support to third sector employability services in the area.

Working for Fife 2021 maps the range and scope of third sector employability services in Fife, capturing the economic and policy landscape within which they deliver services. The report puts forward a range of recommendations to help inform FVA support for the sector as well as guiding employability strategy in Fife, the region and beyond.

Working for Fife is funded by the Opportunities Fife Partnership.

This is our fourth Working for Fife Report.

You can find copies of reports for 2013, 2015 & 2018 at the [Fife Voluntary Action employability page](#).



Methodology



Working for Fife 2021 is based on a combination of:

- desk-based research
- an online survey circulated to 40 partners and published in the FVA employability e-bulletin, May 2021
- targeted follow up with known partners, June 2021
- reflective discussions at Fife Third Sector Employability Conversation, August 2021

It is important to note that whilst Working for Fife focuses on the role of third sector as a provider of employability services, many third sector organisations play an important role in employability through engaging with harder to reach communities, supporting volunteering and acting as a significant employer in their own right.

Economic, Social & Policy Context

Working for Fife took place in a context of significant social, economic and policy change.



Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic was still heavily impacting the global economy and people's ability to work in spring 2021, with Scotland just emerging from a second three month lockdown. Significant government funds were being used to sustain employment and support young people into work.



Europe

The UK officially left Europe in 2020. 2021/22 was the last year of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESiF) in Fife. Impacts on migration and labour market were anticipated but unknown.



UK Government

Focussed on pandemic, young people and short-term unemployed ([JETS](#)). [Community Renewal Fund](#) announced but [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) unclear. Committed to regional approaches through [City Region Deals](#). [DWP Dynamic Purchasing System](#) refreshed in 2020.



Scottish Government

Launched [Young Person's Guarantee](#) in response to pandemic. Primary delivery still through [Fair Start Scotland](#), [Skills Development Scotland](#), [Employability Fund](#), and [Apprenticeships](#). [No One Left Behind](#) partnership with local authorities launched in 2020. Committed to fair work, [community wealth building](#) & equalities approaches.

City Region Deals



City Region Deals bring together private and public investment to support projects that drive regional economic growth and create jobs.

Fife is part of two City Region Deals:

The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal is worth over £1.3billion and includes a £25million investment in an Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) Programme. In Fife this includes investment in an Intensive Family Support Service and two Skills Gateway projects for Data Driven Innovation and Housing, Construction and Infrastructure.

Tay Cities is worth £700 million and will include a skills programme. This will most impact communities in North-East Fife, closest to Dundee and the Tay. The proposed 'Targeted Pockets of Need' project will target support at those people who are most isolated, particularly due to the impact of the pandemic, but who have not engaged with mainstream employability activity.

Fife Employability Strategy

Employability strategy in Fife is coordinated through the Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP) and supports the ambitions of the [Plan for Fife: Recovery & Renewal 2021-24](#).

In 2021 the OFP was chaired by Skills Development Scotland and included representation from Department for Work & Pensions, Developing Young Workforce, Fife Chamber of Commerce, Fife College, Fife Council, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership, Fife Voluntary Action and NHS Fife.



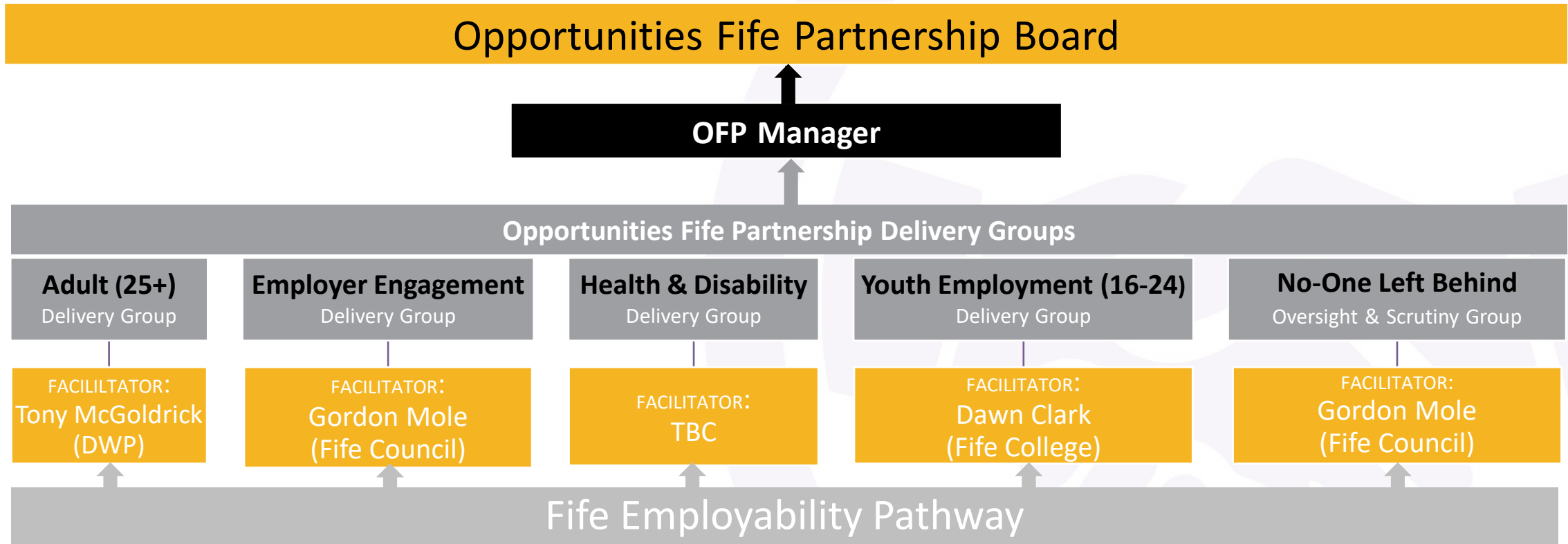
Opportunities Fife
connecting learning, skills and jobs

The OFP's mission is to:

influence and drive innovative approaches to skills and employability services that reflect the current and future needs of individuals and employers.

Fife Employability Strategy

The OFP Board meets quarterly and is supported by an Executive which advises on funding allocations and themed Delivery Groups:



No One Left Behind Fife

In 2020 the OFP adopted a co-production approach to commissioning services for 2021/22 under the banner of [No One Left Behind Fife](#).

For 2021/22 No One Left Behind (NOLB) Fife commissioning was for 11 months and included former Activity Agreements, Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF), PESF Boost, Young Person's Guarantee and Fife Council Third Sector Employability Service Level Agreement monies.

Building on recommendations in Working for Fife 2018, NOLB Fife commissioning 2021/22 took a human rights approach and considered local demographics on protected characteristics.

NOLB Fife services and commissioning are guided by a set of co-produced NOLB Fife Principles:

Equal & Fair

Collaborative

Strengths-based

Time Unlimited & Progressive

Non-judgemental

Continuously Improving

Discreet

Hopeful

Employability Spend

No One Left Behind Fife:

Commissioning budget £1.9m of which £1.5m had been committed in 2020/21.

Six services commissioned, five led and delivered by third sector providers, accounting for approximately 63% of funding.

ESiF:

In 2021 ESiF funded over £2.2 million of employability provision in Fife with £1.5m (68%) going to third sector providers.

Employer Recruitment Incentives:

Fife Council managed Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive, Kickstart and Young Person's Guarantee monies alongside local spend, coordinated under the banner of Fife Job Contract.

Total spend for 2021/22 was expected to reach £1.9m of which approximately 15% (£296,828) has supported jobs with third sector employers.

Employability Fund (EF):

EF provision has been extended to existing suppliers by Skills Development Scotland since 2019.

Approximate EF spend in Fife for 2021/22 was >£1.2m of which an estimated 33% funded third sector organisations².

Employability Spend

Skills Development Scotland:

Data on apprenticeship spend for 2020/21 was not available.

However SDS has supported:

- **Graduate Apprenticeships:**
78 individuals from Fife registered in 2020³
- **Modern Apprenticeships:**
2,683 'in training' at December 2021, 1,313 new starts.
- **Foundation Apprenticeships:**
315 young people were 'in training' as at July 2021⁴

Fair Start Scotland:

Fair Start delivery in Fife is estimated as worth approximately £1.18m⁵ and is delivered by Fedcap and Triage.

Fedcap UK is a registered charity in England and Wales.

Department for Work & Pensions:

DWP does not publish information on local level spend for the Dynamic Purchasing System, JETs or Kickstart.

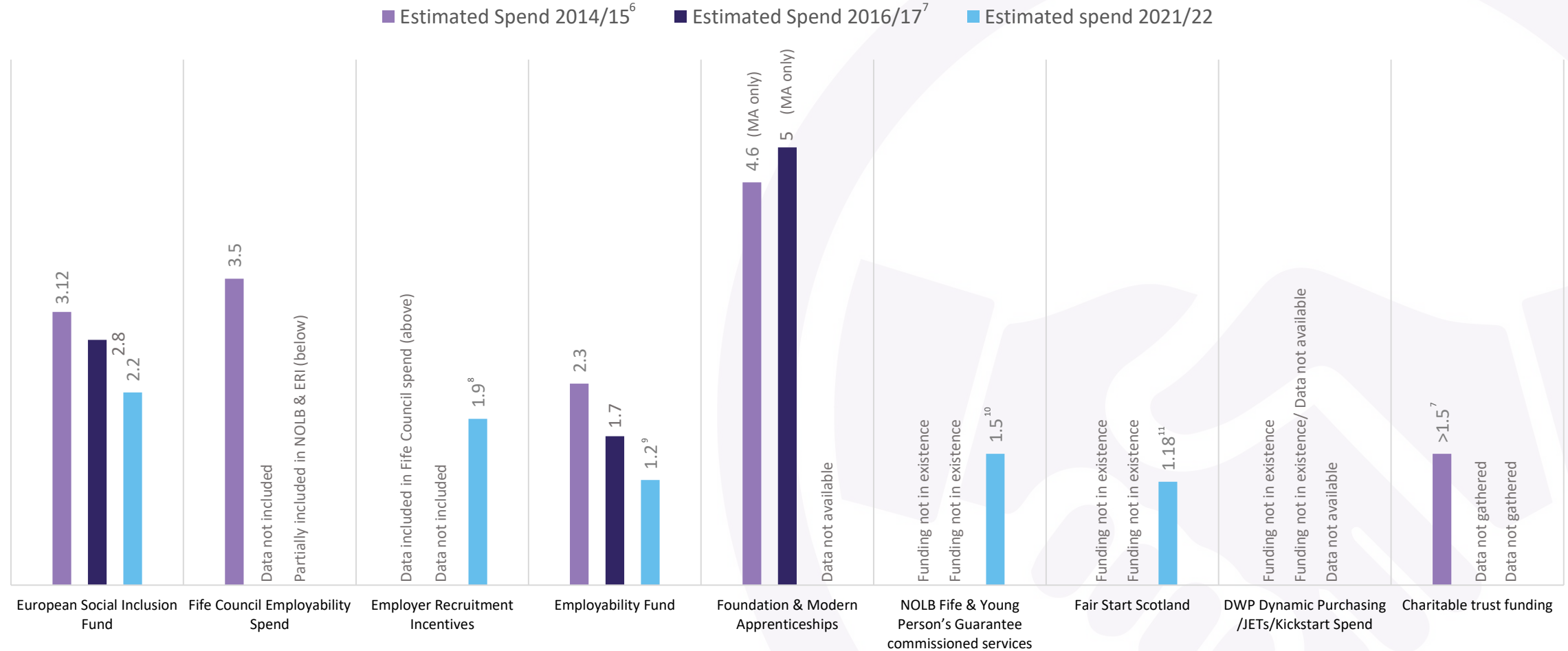
³ [SDS Graduate Apprenticeship Progress Report June 2021](#)

⁴ [SDS Foundation Apprenticeship Progress report July 2021](#)

⁵ This is an estimation based on calculations of cost/job outcome for East Lothian and job outcomes in Fife for 2021: [Cost-benefit analysis - Fair Start Scotland: economic evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) & [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Employability Spend

FIGURE 1: THE CHANGING PICTURE OF EMPLOYABILITY SPEND IN FIFE IN MILLIONS 2014-2021*



*Figures given in millions. Data availability as well as funding streams have changed significantly over time, and therefore 'total spend' comparisons are not possible.

Employability Spend

This report estimates that annually anywhere between £8 - 12million is spent on employability support in Fife not including Fife Council, DWP and SDS core spend.

R Recommendations

Future Working for Fife reports would benefit from capturing data on charitable trust funding for third sector employability services in Fife

DWP spend via Dynamic Purchasing, JETS and other services active in Fife be publicly available

OFP partners work together to establish a system for understanding full employability spend in Fife, including services commissioned by partners and public sector delivery

⁶ Based on figures presented in Working for Fife 2015

⁷ Based on figures presented in Working for Fife 2018

⁸ Includes: Young Person's Guarantee, No One Left Behind, Fife Job Contract, PACE, Longterm Unemployed funding, DWP Kickstart, confirmed by email 02/03/2022

⁹ EF Contracts published 2021/22

⁹ NOLB & YPG spend includes partial funds from Young Person's Guarantee, Parental Employment Support Fund, former Activity Agreements & Fife Council third sector employability spend)

¹⁰ This is a rough estimation based on calculations of cost/job outcome for East Lothian and job outcomes in Fife for 2021: [Cost-benefit analysis - Fair Start Scotland: economic evaluation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) & [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services:](#)

¹¹ [statistical summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹² Five projects funded from Big Lottery in 2015. Big Lottery no longer fund employability projects

Support for Third Sector Employability

The OFP Board understand the value of third sector in delivering employability services. Since 2013 Fife Council has funded Fife Voluntary Action to support and grow this work.

The FVA Employability Team has four key aims:

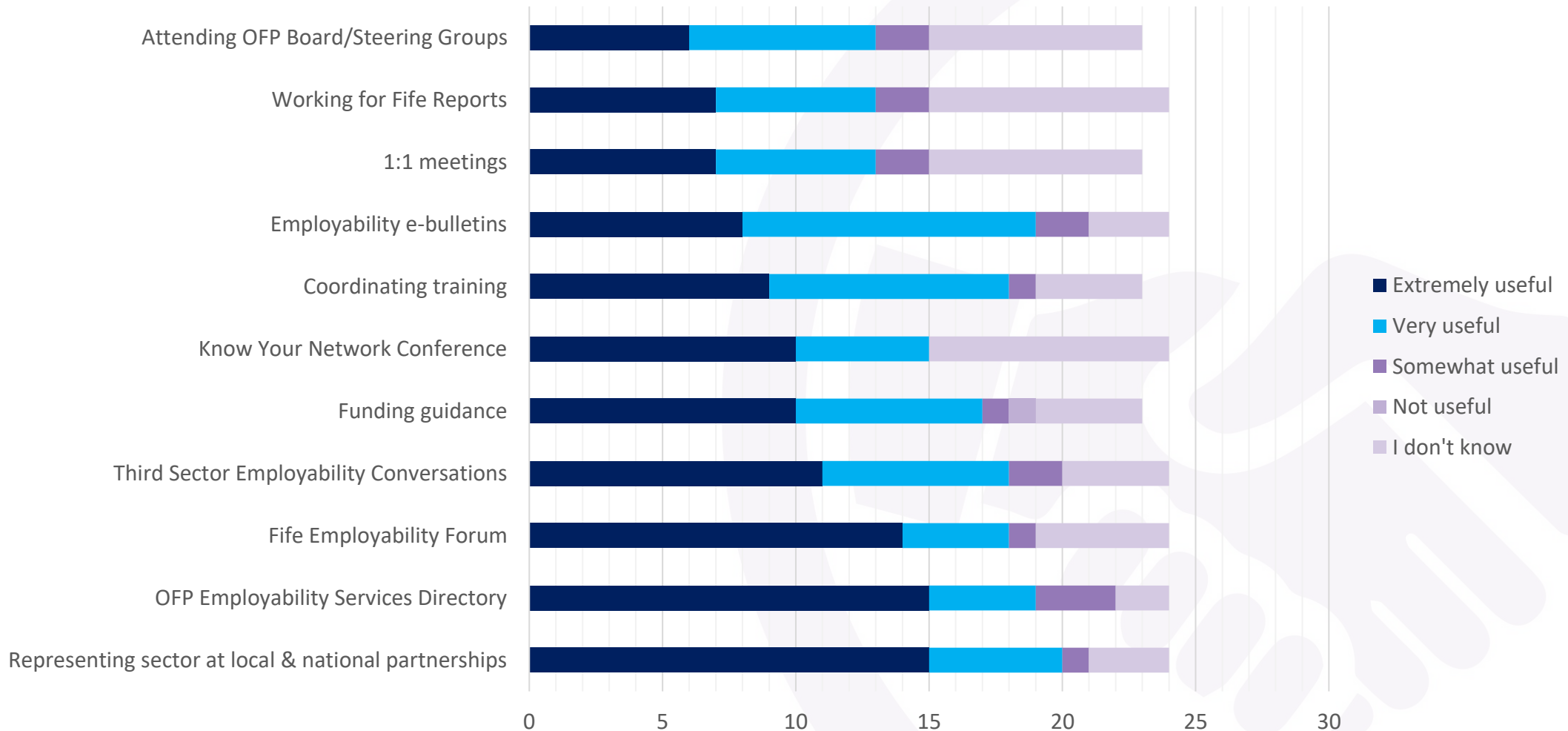
1. Improving the quality and scope of third sector employability services in Fife
2. Raising the profile of the third sector as a key partner in delivering employment outcomes
3. Increasing third sector influence and understanding of policy development at national, regional and local levels; and
4. Improving awareness of the role volunteering can play in helping people build employability

We asked third sector organisations to rate the usefulness of the different activities that the Employability Team undertake in this regard.

70% of respondents found *all activities* either useful or very useful. This rose to 83% for our work representing the sector on local and national partnerships

Support for Third Sector Employability

FIGURE 2: FVA THIRD SECTOR EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES – RANKED BY USEFULNESS



Support for Third Sector Employability

What people said...



'I think the work done has been really useful and organisations have a responsibility to act on opportunities provided.'

"Continuing the excellent job that you are doing"

"as an organisation [we] are now getting vital support on helping us to have a voice and promote our services and guide us in the right right way."

Support for Third Sector Employability

Grew and established the Lived Experience Team



Created Fife Mental Health Peer Support Network



Designed and implemented Lunchtime Learning programme



Coordinated co-production of No One Left Behind Fife commissioning services



Delivered Venture into Volunteering sessions (through volunteer development team)



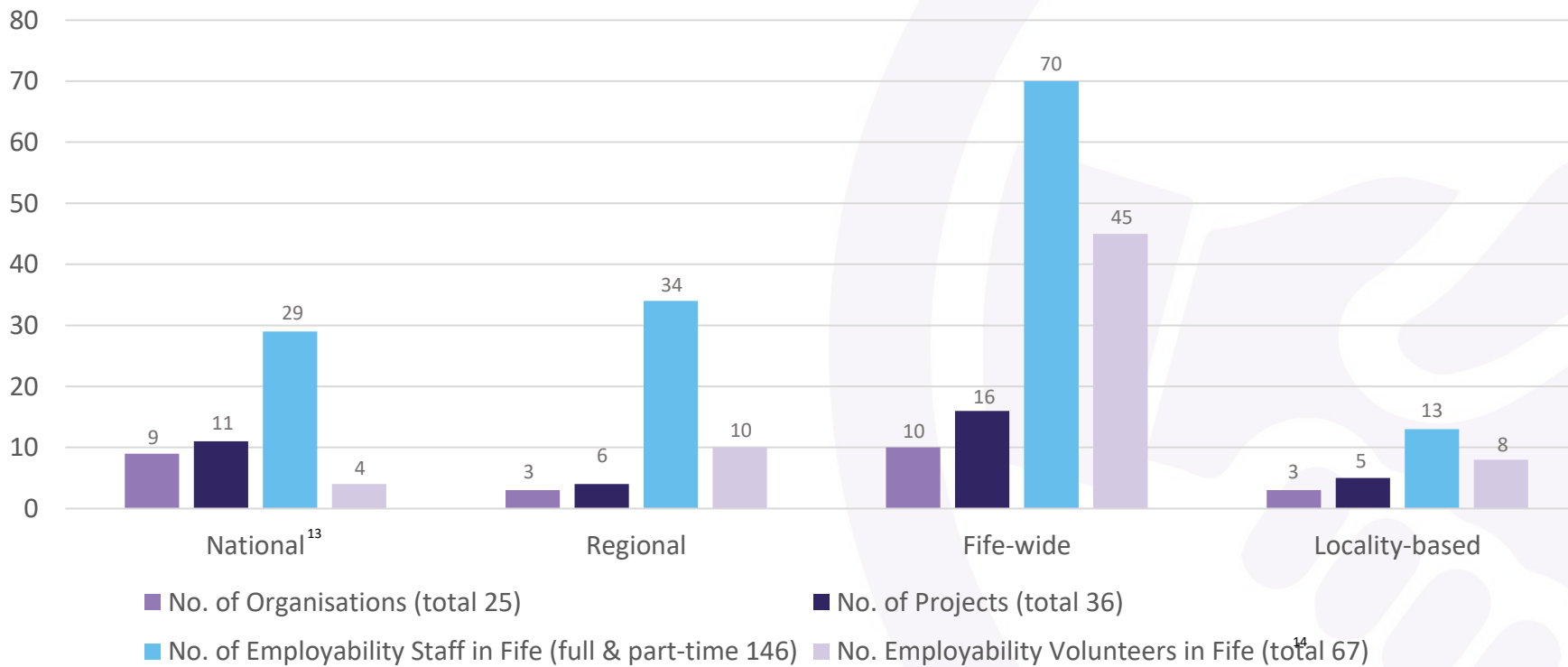
OFP Governance Checks



Employability Organisations

In total 25 organisations responded to our survey. They provided information on 36 projects.

FIGURE 3: SUMMARY OF WORKING FOR FIFE 2021 RESPONDENTS



Regional, Fife-wide and locality-based organisations are more likely to deliver multiple projects and/or be involved in formal partnerships.

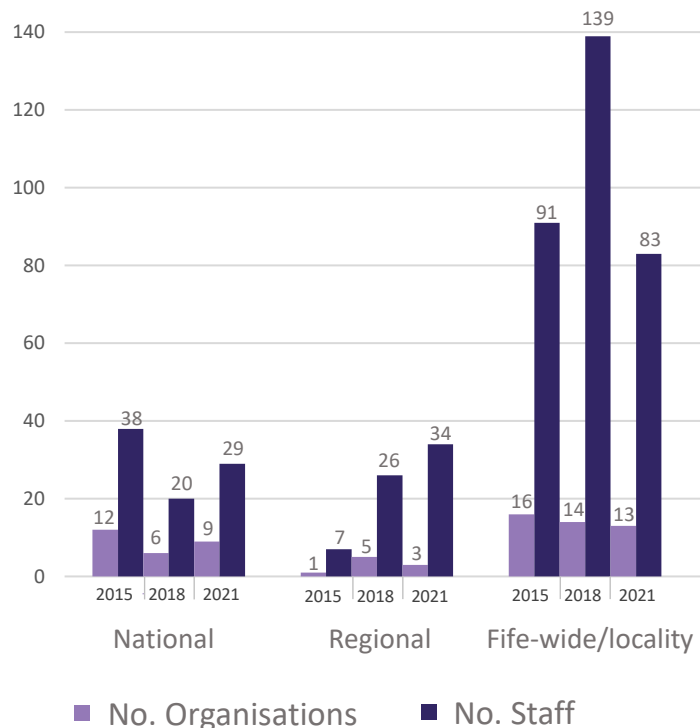
They are also significantly more likely to support employability volunteers.

¹³ Regional - operating in two or more local authority areas

¹⁴ Of the 67 employability volunteers supported in Fife, 30 are based with one organisation.

Employability Organisations

FIGURE 4: COMPARATIVE DATA ON THIRD SECTOR EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE PROVIDERS, 2015 – 2021



The total number of third sector organisations active in Fife has dropped by one since 2018. This conceals significant flux.

Eight organisations stopped employability projects or ceasing trading entirely since 2018: West Fife Enterprise, Fife Rural Skills Partnership, RNIB Scotland, Deaf Action, Capability Scotland, Momentum Skills, One Stop Shop for Autism, and IDTC.

Six organisations did not respond to our 2021 survey but asked to be included in the OFP Employability Services Directory in 2022: The Ecology Centre, Falkland Stewardship Trust, CLEAR Buckhaven, YMCA Glenrothes, Castle Furniture and DEAP.

New respondents in 2021 are not all new to employability and include: Citizens Advice and Rights Fife, Frontline Fife, SCVO, Youth 1st, Furniture Plus, Community Trade Hub, Fife Migrants Forum, Career Ready, Re-Employ, Tayport Community Trust & Community Enterprises, The Salvation Army, Rural Skills Scotland and Venture Trust.

Employability Partnerships

Of the 36 projects discussed in this report 14 identify themselves as being part of larger Partnership projects.

The six main partnerships in Fife are outlined here, five of these are third sector led:



Supporting collaboration between services and partnership delivery is a key priority of both Fife and Scottish Government employability policy.

Brighter Futures

A Brag enterprises-led partnership working with young people aged 19 to 24, unemployed and with barriers into work. In 2021 it was delivered alongside Apex and Clued Up and included workshops from CARF and Greener Kirkcaldy. The partnership changed and expanded in 2022.

Fife Employment & Training Consortium (Fife-ETC)

The largest consortium of third sector partners in Fife. In 2021 it led on both European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and No-One Left Behind (NOLB) funded projects targeting the long-term unemployed and those with multiple barriers to employment. Fife-ETC is delivered by Brag Enterprises, CARF, Clued Up, FVA, Frontline Fife, Kingdom Works and workshops from FEAT.

Employability Partnerships

Making it Work for Lone Parents

A partnership between Fife Gingerbread and Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife (CARF), supporting both out of work and working lone parents in mid-Fife.

Making it Work for Families


An intensive family support service for families affected by substance use with an S1/S2 pupil living at home who is struggling to engage at school. Offers holistic support through a multi-agency team with Fife Gingerbread, Clued Up, CARF and FIRST.

Square Start

A Brag Enterprises-led partnership with contributions from Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT) and Youth 1st, working with families who are socially isolated in Dunfermline, South-West and North-East Fife Areas. Expanded in 2022.

Opportunities for All

Supported young people 16-24 years of age experiencing poor mental health and/or multiple disadvantages and who were disengaged from education, training and employment. Opportunities for All partnership was led by Fife Council Employability Service and Education 16+ Learning Choices Team with input from Fife Voluntary Action (FVA) and Apex.



The number of established partnerships active in Fife has grown since 2018, as well as the number of third sector organisations contributing to partnership projects.

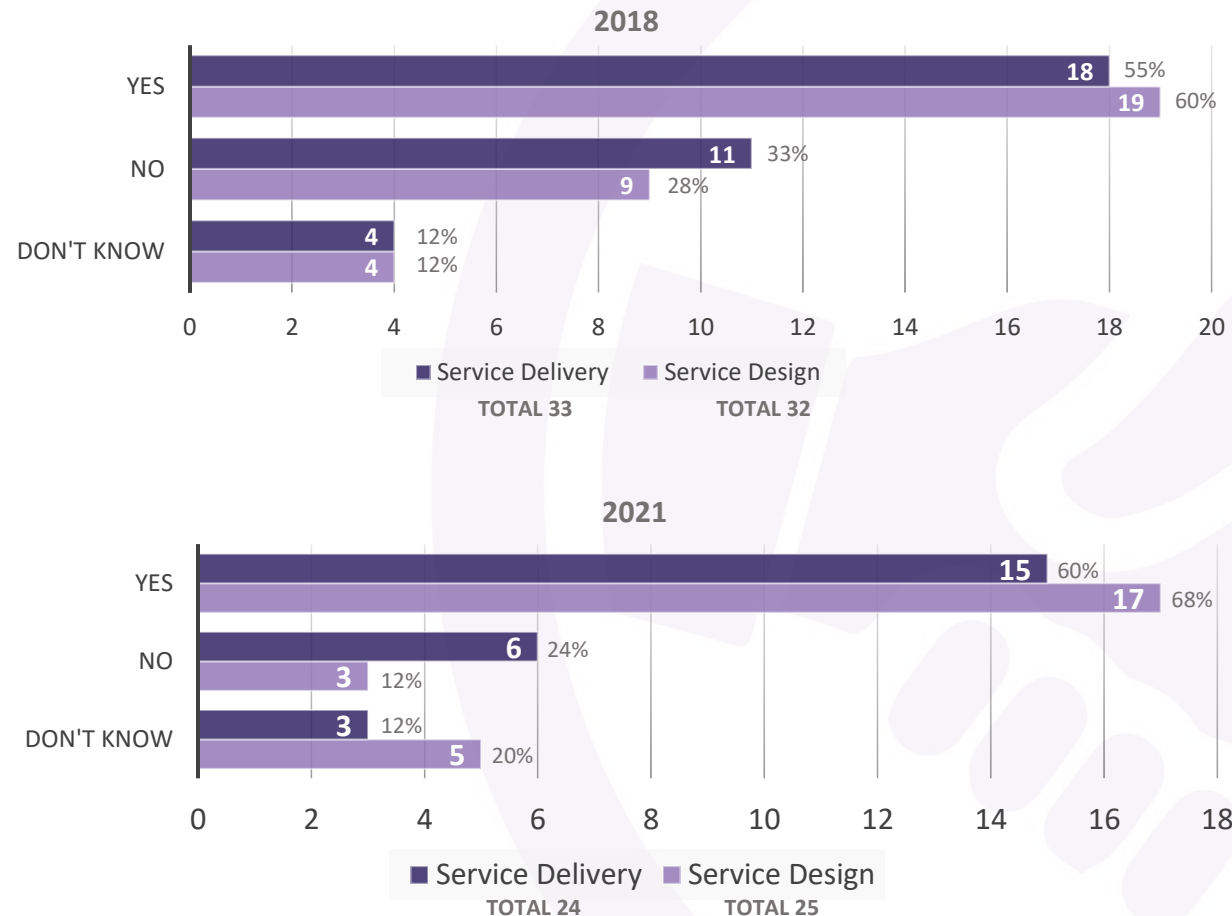
This demonstrates the commitment and willingness of the sector to work collaboratively to the benefit of their clients.

Involving People with Lived Experience

Involving people with lived experience in service design and delivery is a growing expectation of employability policy in Scotland.

Fife has been leading the way through its commitment to co-production in the commissioning of No One Left Behind Fife services.

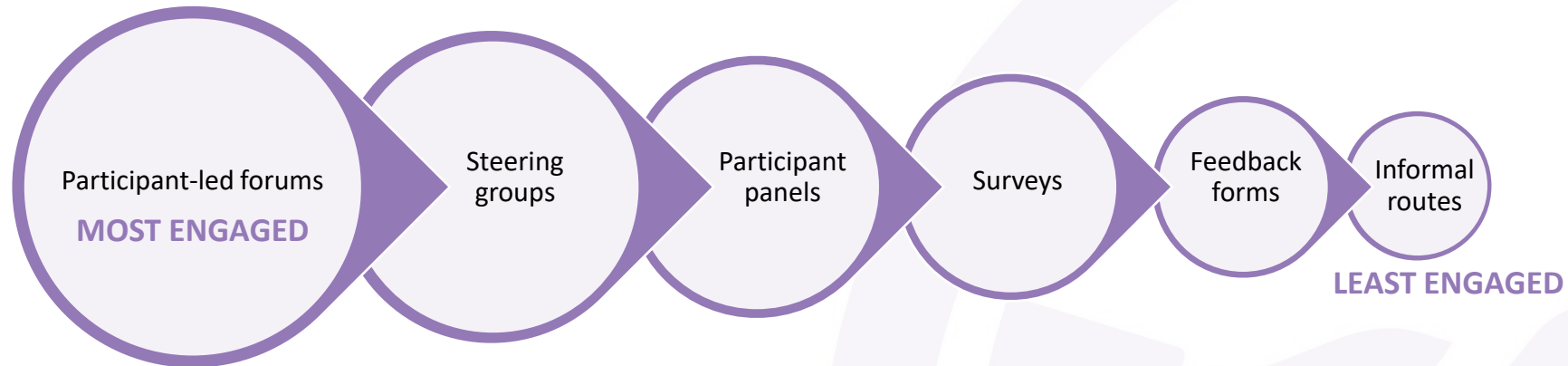
FIGURE 5: INVOLVING LIVED EXPERIENCE IN SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY 2018 & 2021



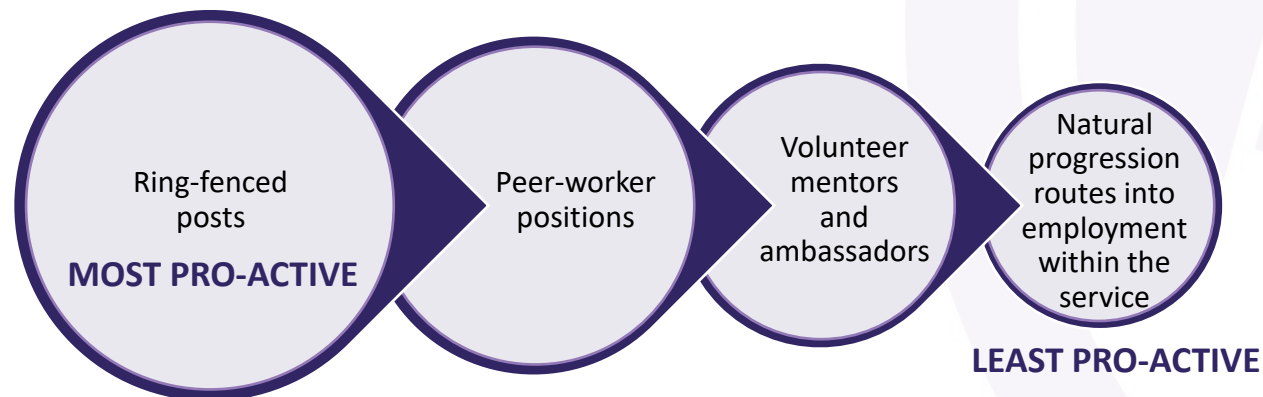
Despite the increased policy and funding focus on engaging the voice of experience, Figure 5 demonstrates little evidence of significant change from 2018 to 2021.

Involving People with Lived Experience

Different forms of engagement in service **design** mentioned by respondents included:



Different forms of involvement in service **delivery** included:



R

Recommendation

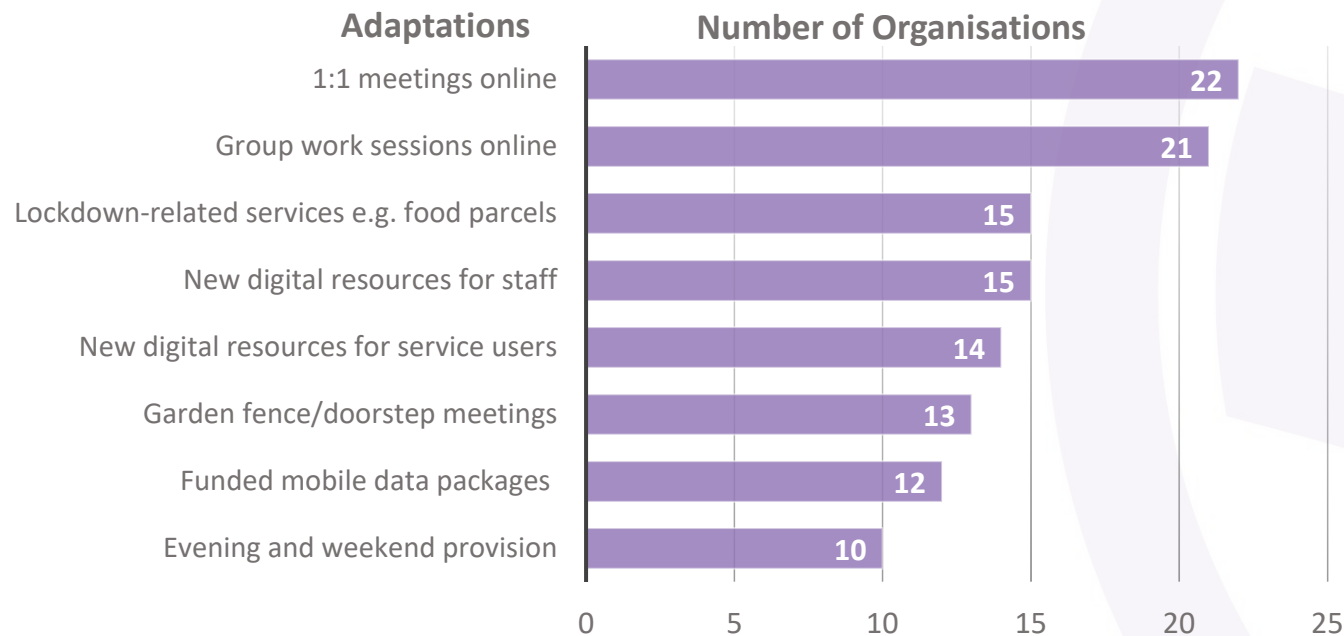
OFP & FVA increase efforts to support third sector providers (and others) to build capacity for meaningful co-production and peer practice in employability.

Pandemic Adaptations

Working for Fife 2021 survey was undertaken as Scotland was emerging from the third full lockdown since the global coronavirus pandemic began in March 2020.

Survey respondents identified several adaptations they made to ensure continuity of support during this time.

FIGURE 6: PANDEMIC ADAPTATIONS



Other adaptations included the creation of a local food pantry and developing online social groups to help people stay connected.

“The commitment, versatility and flexibility of the third sector became evident and critical to how we supported - with our local public partners - the communities and people of Fife during a widespread, long-term public health crisis”.

Kenny Murphy
CEO Fife Voluntary Action

Mental Health Support

Embedding mental health awareness and skills within employability services has been a policy priority in Fife since 2018. The impact of the pandemic increased the importance of this approach.

76% (19)

respondents had increased their mental health and wellbeing provision for staff and service users since 2018.

It is outwith the scope of this report to see if this activity has led to an increase in the numbers of people who experience mental health challenges being successfully supported into sustainable work.

R Recommendation

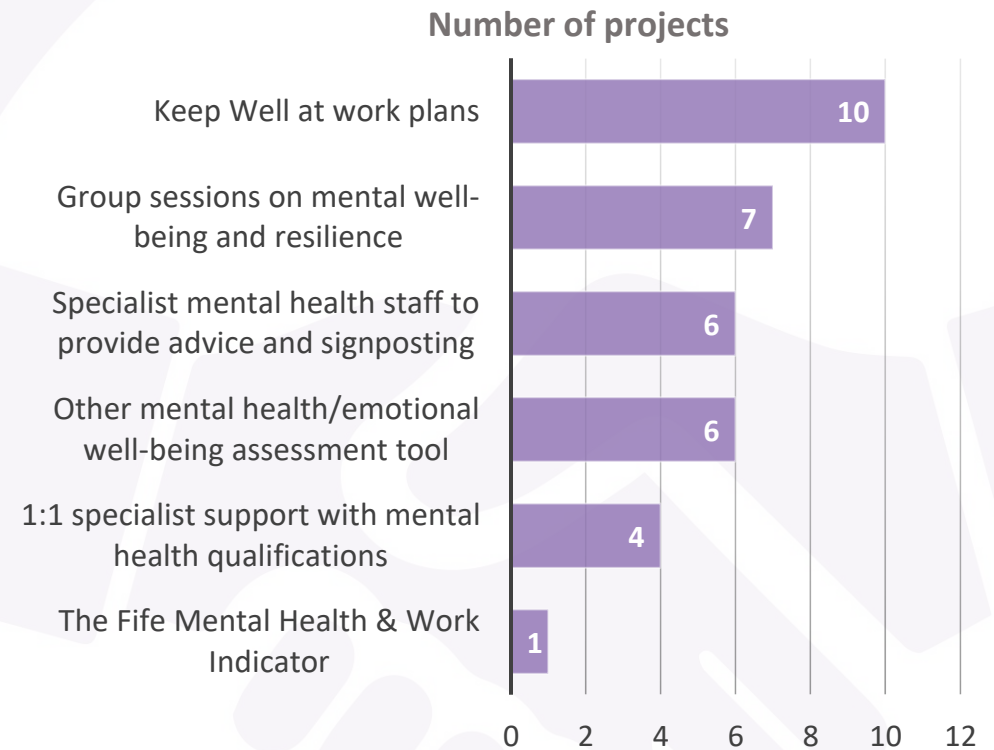
OFP produce an annual review considering registration and employment outcomes for OFP-funded employability service participants affected by mental health challenges.

Mental Health Support

FIGURE 7: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO USE SERVICES



FIGURE 8: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR STAFF



Overview of Projects

There appears to be a doubling of projects working across all 5 stages of the Fife Employability Pathway since 2018. This is positive as the NOLB Fife 2020 findings suggest that people using services prefer continuity of support rather than being moved between different providers at different points in their journey.

FIGURE 9: THIRD SECTOR EMPLOYABILITY PROJECTS IN FIFE 2021, BY PARTNERSHIP AND PATHWAY STAGE

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIP	ORGANISATION	PROJECT(S)	PATHWAY STAGES
Cooperative College	ENABLE Works	Coop (ad)Venture	1 2
Fife-ETC	Brag Enterprises Ltd	Fife-ETC	1 2 3 4 5
Fife-ETC	Citizens Advice and Rights Fife	Transition 2 Employment	4
Fife-ETC	Clued Up Project	Clued Up Project - CU Excel	1 2
Fife-ETC	Fife Voluntary Action	Fife-ETC	1 2 3 4
Fife-ETC	Frontline Fife	Frontline Fife	1 2 3 4
Fife-ETC	Kingdom Works	Kingdom Works - Fife-ETC	3 4 5

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIP	ORGANISATION	PROJECT(S)	PATHWAY STAGES
Making it Work for Families	Citizens Advice and Rights Fife	Making it Work for Families	1
Making it Work for Families	Fife Gingerbread	Making it Work for Families	1 2
Making it Work for Lone Parents	Citizens Advice and Rights Fife	Making it Work for Lone Parents	1
Making it Work for Lone Parents	Fife Gingerbread	Making it Work for Lone Parents	1 2 3 4 5
NOLB Bright Futures	Greener Kirkcaldy	Bright Futures	1 2
NOLB Spring Forward	Kingdom Works	Kingdom Works - Spring Forward	2 3 4 5
NOLB Square Start	Youth 1st (SCIO)	Square Start	1 2 3 4 5
NOLB: Brag Enterprises	Brag Enterprises Ltd	Spring Forward, Bright Futures and Square Start	1 2 3 4 5
Opportunities for All	Apex Scotland	AYE	1 2 3
Opportunities for All	Fife Voluntary Action	Opportunities For All	1 2 3
SCVO	Furniture Plus	Furniture Plus	3
Various	SCVO	Community Jobs Scotland	1 2 3 4 5
	Career Ready	Career Ready	1 2 3
	Community Trade Hub Ltd	Community Trade Hub	1 2 3 4
	ENABLE Works	First Steps (ESF)	1

CONSORTIUM/PARTNERSHIP	ORGANISATION	PROJECT(S)	PATHWAY STAGES
	ENABLE Works	Employability Fund	2 3
	Fife Employment Access Trust	Journey to Work	1 2 3 4 5
	Fife Gingerbread	Fife Gingerbread Volunteers	2 3
	Fife Migrants Forum	Fife Migrants Forum	1 2 3 4 5
	Greener Kirkcaldy	Food Works!	1 2
	Kingdom Works	Kingdom Works Employability Fund Stage 4	3 4 5
	LinkLiving Ltd	Steps to Resilience	1
	Prince's Trust	Prince's Trust	1 2 3 4
	Re-Employ	Re-Employ	3
	Rural Skills Scotland Ltd	Rural Skills Scotland Ltd	3 4
	Springboard UK	Destination Hospitality Programme	3 4
	Tayport Community Trust & Tayport Community Enterprises	Tayport Community Trust & Tayport Community Enterprises	n/a
	The Salvation Army (Employment Plus)	The Salvation Army (Employment Plus)	1 2 3 4 5
	Venture Trust	Venture Trust	1 2

Project Client Groups

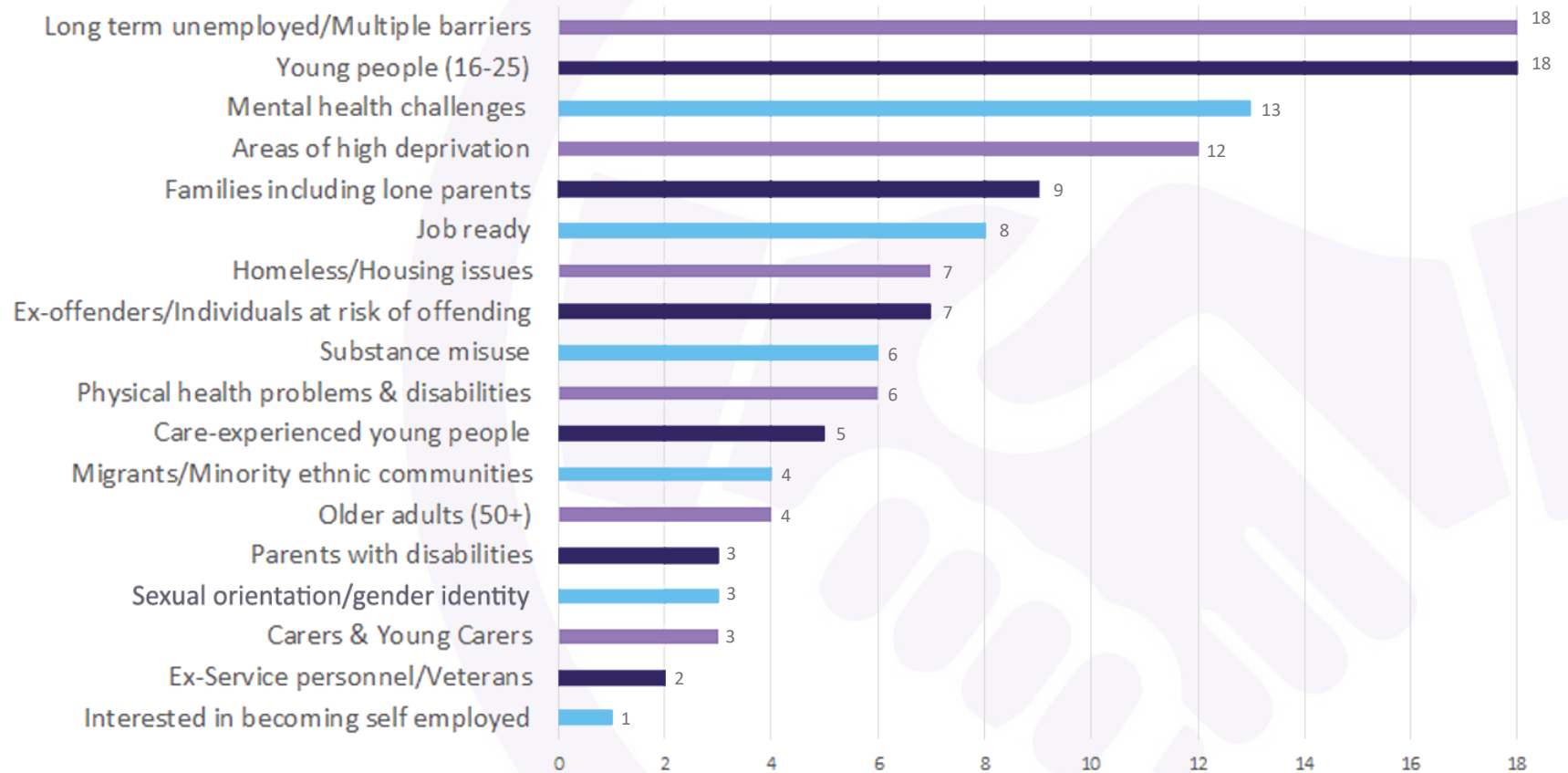
We asked providers to let us know who their services are mainly aiming to support. Providers were able to tick as many categories as they felt were relevant.

Young people age 16-25 and the long-term unemployed continue to be the largest target client groups for third sector employability services.

Respondents were invited to tick as many as relevant

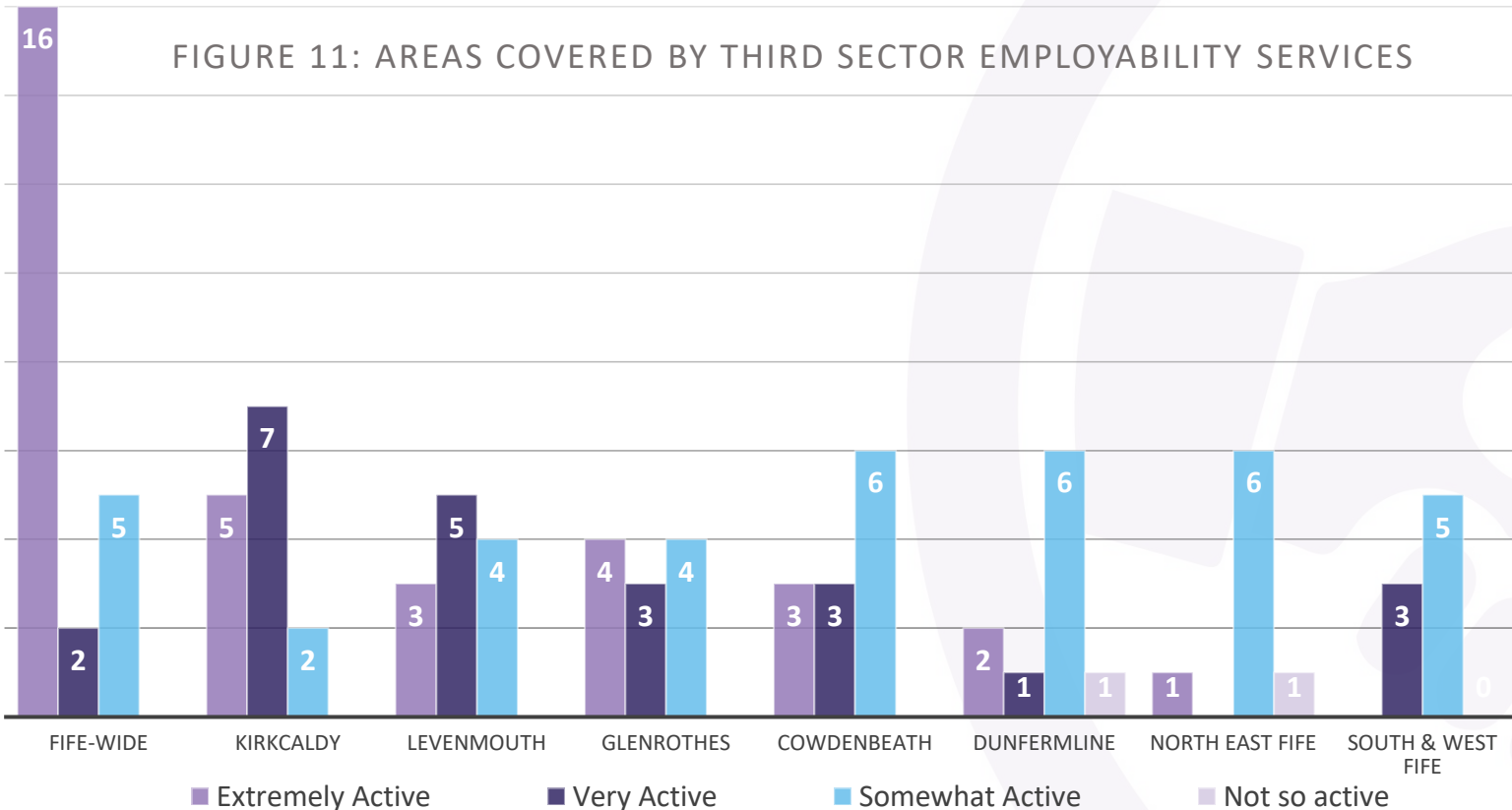
This data does not assess *scale* of provision for each client group.

FIGURE 10: THIRD SECTOR PROJECTS BY CLIENT GROUP



Geographical Coverage

Fife has a varied geography, with particular areas working hard to overcome challenges related to multiple and systemic deprivation, low employment opportunities and issues with transport infrastructure.



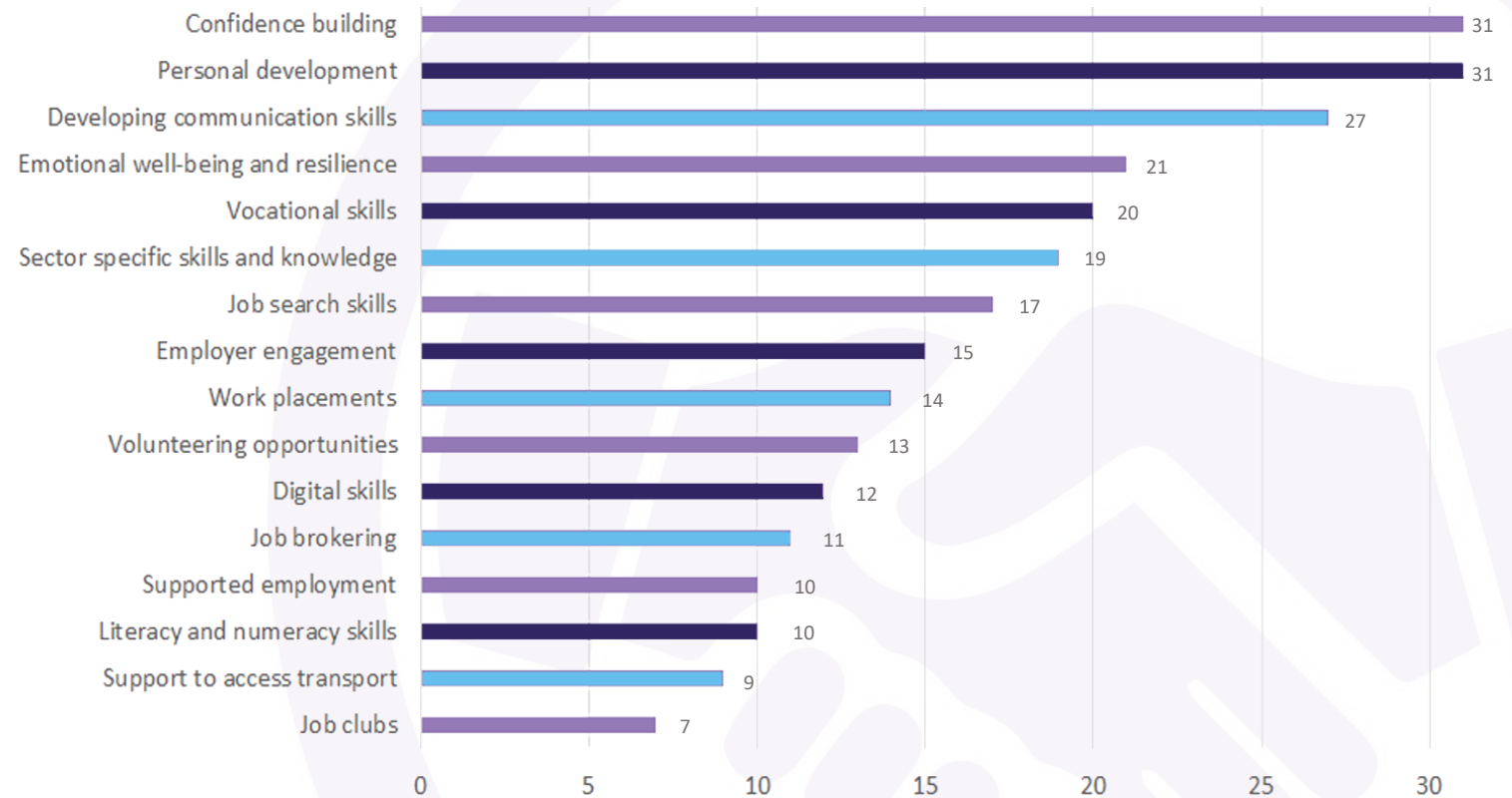
NOLB Fife 2020 findings suggest that to be effective services need to be both locally relevant and locally delivered.

R Recommendation

OFP commissioning ensure a geographically relevant balance of support across Fife considering issues of both rurality and economic deprivation.

Employability Services

FIGURE 12: EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES RANKED BY DELIVERY



Emotional wellbeing and resilience has risen in priority since 2018 and was not even listed in Working for Fife 2015.

Employer engagement support has not changed since 2018.

Other services mentioned by providers included; financial advice, community-based training facility, support with college applications, drop in provision and in-work support.

Employability Outcomes

24 projects provided reliable data on client registrations and outcomes. They worked with 3344 clients in 2020/21.

The size of projects varied greatly with the smallest supporting 7, and the largest 956 people on their journey to work.

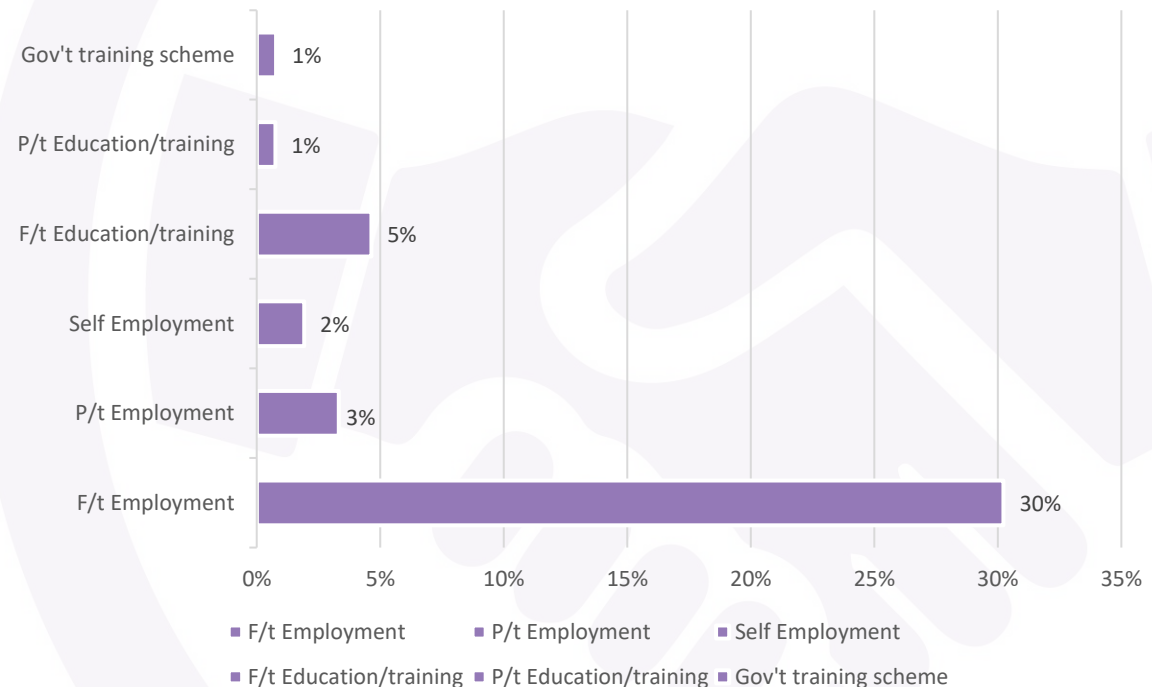
Employment outcome rates (only) dropped from 41% in 2018 to 35% in 2021

Education outcome rates (only) dropped from 14% in 2018 to 6% in 2021

OTHER OUTCOMES INCLUDED:

- ✓ 192 people into volunteering
- ✓ 141 people in work placements
- ✓ 20 people referred elsewhere

FIGURE 13: NO. OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED INTO WORK OR EDUCATION 2020/21



It is a credit to the sector that employment and education outcomes were sustained this well during the pandemic.



Employability Outcomes

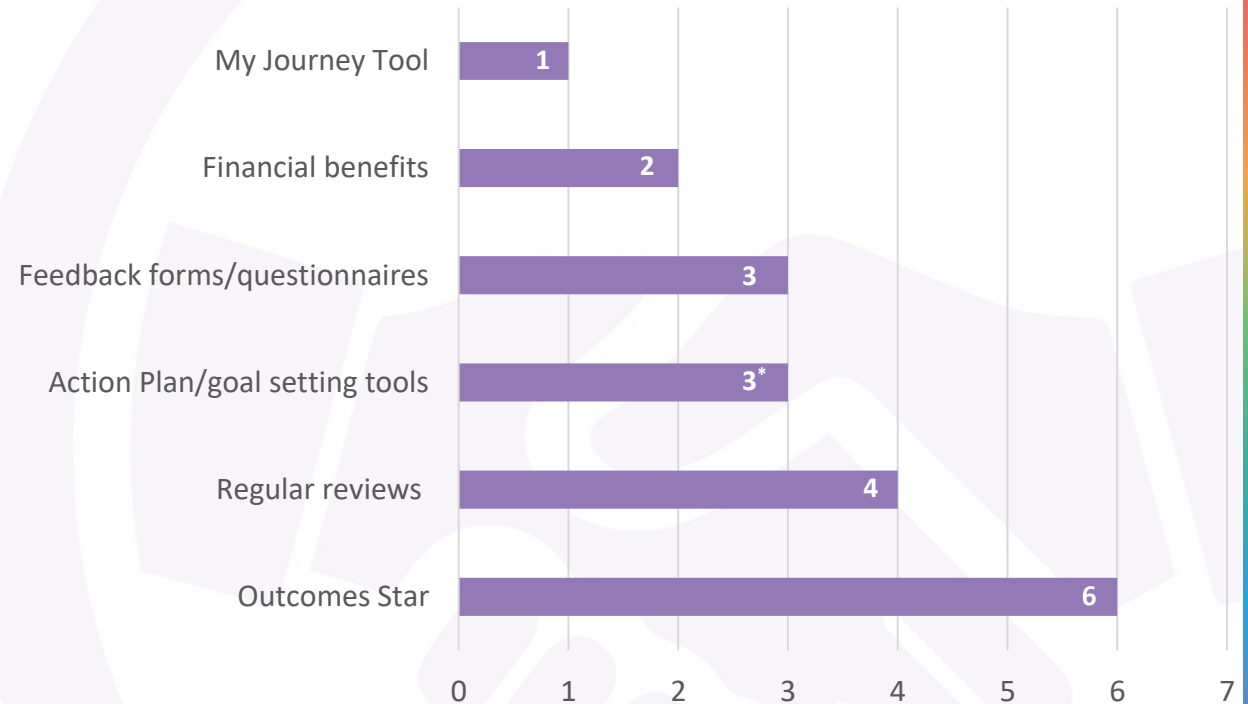
Measuring ‘Distance Travelled’

Seventeen projects used tools for measuring individuals’ perception of their changing employability skills, otherwise known as ‘distance travelled’ or ‘soft outcomes’.

Outcome Star is now the most popular tool for supporting clients to measure their changing employability skills.

No other distance travelled tools mentioned in Working for Fife 2018 (e.g. the Employment Readiness Scale) are mentioned.

FIGURE 14: TOOLS SERVICES USE FOR MEASURING DISTANCE TRAVELLED



* Two of the respondents identified using both action plans and outcomes star

Employability Outcomes

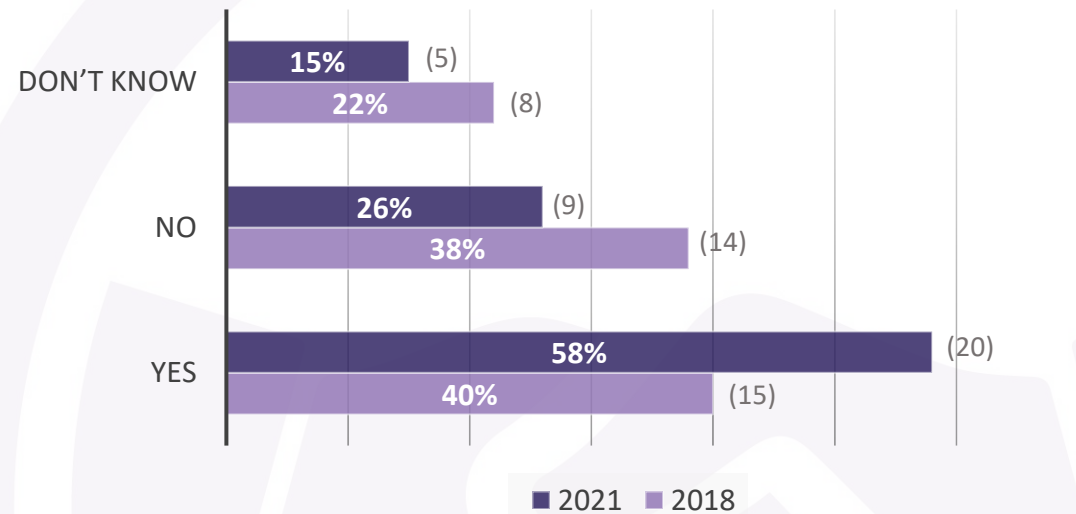
Capturing ‘distance travelled’ for people using employability services in a consistent and meaningful way is a continued challenge for service commissioners. The value of these tools for those using services is entirely personal.

Any attempts to convert the results into data that can assess the impact of a service risks distorting its original value and purpose.

R Recommendation

Third sector services support the OFP and Scottish Government to work alongside people with lived experience to improve understanding of distance travelled data.

FIGURE 15: PROJECTS USING FORT¹⁶ 2018 COMPARED TO 2021



The number of projects actively using FORT¹⁶ has increased since 2018. The majority of those not using FORT are nationally funded projects.

¹⁶ FORT is the CRM used by Opportunities Fife Partnership to support partnership working and to track data relating to employment funded provision and outcomes. It is also used by other Fife Council funded services and to make 'light' referrals between related services active in Fife.

Employability Challenges

Organisations provided open comments on the key challenges affecting their ability to support people into work in Fife, in 2021. Responses were analyzed and grouped to find common themes.

The number **in the circles** shows the number of times a concern was mentioned.

Changing Labour Market **27**

In 2021 significant sectoral restrictions caused by covid, combined with an influx of recently unemployed applicants significantly impacted the available job opportunities in Fife. This was a major concern for third sector providers.

Interestingly, in 2022 this situation has almost reversed with many employers struggling to fill vacancies and actively working with employability providers to address this.

Funding and Finance **25**

Funding issues remain a key concern in terms of application processes, funding models which focus on job outcomes only and length of funding. This affects organisations' ability to both recruit and retain staff, which then impacts the people they are there to support.

Two respondents deliver employment outcomes with no direct employability funding.

“short funding periods prevents us recruiting skilled staff”

survey respondent

Employability Challenges

Digital Infrastructure & Skills 24

Varied issues include:

- problems with internet and 4G connectivity in parts of Fife;
- the cost of mobile data/internet for undertaking job search and interviews
- digital resources as chromebooks and tablets unsuitable for completing online job applications and interviews;
- a lack of appropriate digital skills even amongst young people.

Mental Health Challenges 20

Many respondents described a ‘dramatic increase’ in clients presenting with mental health challenges during covid. This coincided with a decrease in availability of Fife H&SCP and community based mental health services.

Whilst third sector providers had significantly increased staff skills and capacity around mental health and wellbeing since 2018, there is no doubt that there is a need for both improved general and specialist support in this arena.

“lack of ability of treatment and mental health services to sustain people’s engagement in services”

survey respondent

R Recommendations

Fife Digital Infrastructure Partnership link with employability stakeholders to ensure digital plans for Fife are relevant

OFP and Fife H&SCP work collaboratively to improve links between mental health and employability services, and ensure we have an appropriate balance of support for Fife

Employability Challenges

Other challenges mentioned include:

Systems issues

16 such as

- lack of staff skills;
- unclear referral routes;
- lack of locally relevant services;
- unnecessary paperwork;
- CRM difficulties;
- and lack of information sharing agreements

Barriers relating to specific groups **13**

such as

- migrants;
- families in poverty;
- older workers;
- and the insecurely housed

Increased social isolation **8**

- and the difficulty to encourage people to re-engage

Transport issues

5 such as

- lack of available public transport
- and high costs of travel

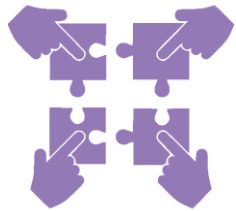
“rurality in Fife can make things difficult”

survey respondent

Employability Enablers

Third sector providers were also invited to comment on what they see as the key enablers and opportunities in Fife. Responses were analyzed and grouped to find common themes.

The number **in the circles** shows the number of times a concern was mentioned.



Increased focus on collaboration **14**

Respondents appreciate the existing Fife infrastructure¹⁸ which supports collaboration between services and felt the different skills and approaches the third sector bring add value and are recognised.

Suggestions for increasing collaboration included:

- joint working
- multi-agency drop ins and co-location as ‘the norm’
- clearer referral pathways between services
- greater links at locality level/geographically focussed services
- better relationships with partners such as Fife College
- engagement with employers/employer engagement services

R Recommendation

OFP consider how to support local level connection and relevance for employability services

Employability Enablers



Employer Engagement and Labour Market Information 14

Fife benefits from significant investment in employer engagement and employer recruitment incentives (ERIs), whilst Skills Development Scotland regional skills assessments provide in-depth analysis of the changing labour market.

Respondents felt there was potential to expand employer engagement networks in Fife so that their projects could be more responsive to sectoral demand and generally have better awareness of where employer skills gaps and recruitment needs are.

Meanwhile ERIs and apprenticeship resources in Fife could be more targeted at those furthest from the labour market.

R Recommendations

Fife-based employer engagement services attend Employability Forums and build active relationships with the employability sector

FVA continue to promote and share labour market content from employer engagement providers in Fife

Employability Enablers



Funding & Finance 13

Whilst cited as a challenge, funding was also seen as an opportunity in Fife.

The OFP commitment to both accessible commissioning and three year in principle funding approaches were all appreciated.

Other suggestions for improving funding for employability in Fife included:

- ensuring repeat funding for projects ‘that work’
- funding to cover the initial costs of employment
- specialist support for groups such as migrants and over 24 yr olds
- increased support for social enterprises

R Recommendation

FVA continue to work collaboratively with OFP and Scottish Government to address challenges created by funding

Conclusion



1. Third Sector services deliver employability outcomes

Despite unprecedented social, economic and funding challenges third sector employability services in Fife have continued to deliver outcomes with an estimated 35% employment rate for 3,344 individuals supported in 2020/21.

2. Third sector employability services are in continual flux

With 13 employability services closing between 2018 and 2021 and an equivalent balance of new services starting, there is significant churn in the sector.

Turnover has been heightened by significant changes in the employability funding landscape between 2020 and 2022, as well as the global pandemic. However short-term funding approaches and job-only funding models also reinforce this.

Change brings new opportunities but also can have a negative impact on collaborative working, staff retention and the people these services are funded to support.

Conclusion



3. Third sector services are responsive to policy and changing social contexts

There has been a 100% increase in third sector partnerships active in Fife since 2018 (from 3 to 6).

The sector has expanded capacity to support mental health and wellbeing, increased engagement of volunteers and adapted delivery significantly so they could continue to meet need during the pandemic.

More work is needed to build skills in engagement of lived experience in service design and delivery.

4. Third Sector services support the Plan 4 Fife and Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

Third sector services are pro-active in identifying challenges that affect their ability to support their clients into work, and keen to work collaboratively with statutory partners to address this.



Finally.... The role of third sector services in civic society is growing.

The more we can do to support and connect services, build capacity and create a thriving system of statutory and third sector provision in Fife, the more likely we are to achieve our common goals of a Fairer Fife for all.

Summary of Recommendations

Following analysis of the economic and policy context alongside the Working for Fife employability survey results, FVA offer the following recommendations to the Opportunities Fife Partnership Board and relevant partners.

Improving data informed strategy and services

1. Future Working for Fife reports would benefit from capturing data on charitable trust funding for third sector employability services in Fife
2. DWP spend via Dynamic Purchasing, JETS and other services active in Fife be publicly available
3. OFP partners work together to establish a system for understanding full employability spend in Fife, including services commissioned by partners and public sector delivery
4. OFP produce an annual review considering registration and employment outcomes for OFP-funded employability service participants affected by mental health challenges
5. Third sector services support the OFP and Scottish Government to work alongside people with lived experience to improve understanding of distance travelled data

Summary of Recommendations

Building skills and capacity in third sector employability services

6. OFP & FVA increase efforts to support third sector providers (and others) to build capacity for meaningful co-production and peer practice in employability
7. FVA continue to work collaboratively with OFP and Scottish Government to address challenges created by funding models and payment
8. Fife-based employer engagement services attend Employability Forums and build active relationships with the employability sector
9. FVA continue to promote and share labour market content from employer engagement providers in Fife

Supporting the Plan 4 Fife through third sector employability

10. OFP consider how to support local level connection and relevance for employability services
11. OFP commissioning ensure a geographically relevant balance of support across Fife considering issues of both rurality and economic deprivation
12. Fife Digital Infrastructure Partnership link with employability stakeholders to ensure digital plans for Fife are relevant
13. OFP and Fife H&SCP work collaboratively to improve links between mental health and employability services, and ensure we have an appropriate balance of support for Fife



Working for Fife 2021

A review of third sector employability support and services in Fife



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