

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 14 January 2021

Edinburgh Project SEARCH

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	7 and 31

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is asked to
 - 1.1.1 approve the recommendation to bring in house Edinburgh Project SEARCH Job Coach support;
 - 1.1.2 note the further complications in the delivery of the programme in 2020/21; and
 - 1.1.3 support the ambition to offer additional capacity in future programmes.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Edinburgh Project SEARCH

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Job Coaching provision for the Edinburgh Project SEARCH (EPS) programme is currently provided by Into Work through a grant with Service Level Agreement (SLA) which has been in place since 2014 and has been extended three times.
- 2.2 Into Work were initially awarded the grant in 2014 as they were part of the Autism Strategy group, which had identified the need of employability provision for this client group. No grant procurement exercise was undertaken at that point or since.
- 2.3 The current grant agreement will end in July 2021 and continued delivery of the Job Coaching service for the EPS programme beyond this point requires a new agreement.
- 2.4 Officers have considered three different methods of securing this support and recommend bringing this service into the Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 DFN Project SEARCH is an international transition to work programmes which supports young people with learning disabilities and autism, providing key work experience before moving into mainstream employment. The City of Edinburgh Council began delivery of EPS under licence from DFN in 2014.
- 3.2 EPS has been funded from a combination of sources since inception. From 2018 until present, it has been jointly funded by the Council and Lothians Health Foundation, with both organisations expecting to reclaim up to 40% of Job Coach staff costs from the European Social Fund (ESF).
- 3.3 Both the Council and NHS Lothian oversee the delivery of the programme and source placements within their organisations, with a joint steering group supervising the management of the programme, in line with the DFN Project SEARCH model.
- 3.4 The programme runs for a full academic year, from August to June. Normally, 26 spaces are provided, with 13 young people based as interns within the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian's Western General hospital respectively. Job

Coaching support (usually two Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts at each site) is provided by Into Work and Edinburgh College provide a full-time Tutor at each site.

- 3.5 The goal of the programme is to prepare the young people participating for mainstream employment, either within NHS Lothian or the Council, or with external employers.
- 3.6 Between 2014 and July 2020, 140 young people started on the programme, with 120 young people successfully completing (Appendix 1).
- 3.7 On [5 November 2020](#) Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee received an update on Edinburgh Project SEARCH – Delivery and Future Development.
- 3.8 Changes to the programme this year have meant that a reduced programme has been running with only 12 of the usual 26 places on offer across the two host organisations. It is hoped to return the programme to full strength next year.

4. Main report

Provision of Job Coaches

- 4.1 The current funding agreement for Job Coach support with Into Work is due to end on 31 July 2021. Options for job coach provision for the next academic year and beyond are currently being reviewed and three options have been explored as below:
 - 4.1.1 Incorporating the requirement for job coaching support into the new procurement specification for contracts of supported employment provision from 2021 onwards:
 - 4.1.1.1 depending on the outcome of the procurement process there is a potential of a new provider taking over which may mean losing existing knowledge and experience and could have a detrimental impact on programme delivery. However; there would be a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) implication for current staff to the successful provider so a degree of consistency would remain;
 - 4.1.1.2 the staff would be managed externally which has an impact on day to day delivery, communication and oversight; and
 - 4.1.1.3 this option would potentially remove or reduce the management fee as delivery would be part of other services provided.
 - 4.1.2 Conducting open grants procurement specifically for the purpose of EPS:
 - 4.1.2.1 depending on the outcome of the grants procurement process there is a potential of a new provider taking over which may mean losing existing knowledge and experience and could have a detrimental impact on programme delivery. However; there would be a TUPE

implication for current staff to the successful provider so a degree of consistency would remain;

- 4.1.2.2 the staff would be managed externally which has an impact on day to day delivery, communication and oversight; and
- 4.1.2.3 this option would carry a management fee in addition to the Job Coach salary.
- 4.1.3 Bringing the provision of job coaching support in house and employing the Job Coaching staff directly with the Council and NHS Lothian:
 - 4.1.3.1 two job coaches are currently under contract with Into Work, funded by the existing grant agreement, and TUPE would apply to them. If the programme were to return to full capacity, two further job coaches would need to be recruited by the Council or NHS Lothian on fixed term contracts, with staff being managed within current structures;
 - 4.1.3.2 this would remove the cost of a management fee and retain the existing knowledge and experience and have least impact on programme delivery; and
 - 4.1.3.3 this option would also allow for greater integration with current Council employability services and better overall management of the programme. It would also provide greater job security for the Coaches.

Programme delivery 2020/21

- 4.2 The programme has operated at a reduced capacity this year due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The interns have followed a college-based timetable since September, working on the SQA Employability Award and DFN Project SEARCH curriculum through a mix of face to face and online learning. Internship placements were scheduled to start at the Council and NHS locations in January 2021.
- 4.3 On 18 November 2020, the Edinburgh College (delivery partner for the college-based elements of the programme) informed partners that face to face teaching would cease as of 4 December 2020. Learning would continue until the end of term but would be fully delivered online. On 19 November 2020, they informed the Council and NHS Lothian that there had been a national decision to cease all non-clinical placements due to an issue with indemnity due to Covid-19.
- 4.4 The EPS steering group investigated and discussed various options, such as delaying placements for three months or each host organisation taking out their own separate insurance but ultimately, these would all be too uncertain, incompatible with the Project SEARCH model or difficult to deliver for the College and/or host organisations.
- 4.5 Advice from the Council's Corporate Health and Safety team was that placement activities should be suspended "until circumstances change and the prevalence (of COVID-19) is at a level that confers greater protection to this vulnerable group".

- 4.6 As a result, programme delivery will end on 18 December 2020 for this cohort. Participants and carers have been informed and are very supportive of this course of action. Some expressed their gratefulness that the programme had been able to operate at all during the circumstances and were not surprised by the decision to suspend the programme.
- 4.7 Edinburgh College are investigating the possibility of delivering alternative online courses for the 12 young people currently on the programme, with the opportunity for them to begin the programme again when it is safe to do so. In addition, the possibility of including a higher level of qualification to this cohort, should they begin the programme again, is being explored.

Future programme delivery

- 4.8 Although the programme has operated at a reduced capacity this year, the intention is that delivery of the programme in 2021 onwards will return to a minimum of 26 interns supported by four job coaches and two tutors across the two host organisations.
- 4.9 On 5 November 2020 Committee asked that officers investigate if additional capacity can be added to the programme next year in line with the Diversity and Inclusion strategy. This will be dependent on a number of factors, including funding, placement availability and Covid-19 restrictions but officers will continue to work with Council departments and other partners to investigate this possibility.
- 4.10 In addition, it is intended to work with external organisations to promote the programme and encourage large private sector organisations to investigate whether they can fund, deliver or further support the expansion of the programme in Edinburgh through the work of the Edinburgh Guarantee for All.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If Committee agrees to bring the provision of Job Coaches in house, officers will engage with Into Work and NHS Lothian on how to support this transition, including TUPE process.
- 5.2 Work will continue to build a bank of suitable placements and will work with partners to ensure there are progression routes into employment for graduates of the programme both within the organisation and externally.
- 5.3 Engagement will continue with external organisations to explore the possibility of increasing the number of places available on the programme, including engaging with external organisations

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Programme costs total approximately £182,000.00 per year across both sites. This provides places for 26 interns and includes funding for four job coaches and operational costs.
- 6.2 The programme is delivered over an academic year and therefore costs are spread across two Council financial years.
- 6.3 The Council and NHS Lothian are jointly funding the programme, contributing approximately £92,000 each.
- 6.4 Currently, these costs are covered by the Council with a contributory grant from NHS Lothian Health Foundation, with a potential cost recovery from ESF. Access to ESF funding is due to end in 2023 and a replacement fund has not yet been approved.
- 6.5 Officers are exploring the possibility of recovering some of the job coaching support through Access to Work funding which has recently been made available for supported internships in Scotland.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Places on the programme have been reduced by almost 40%. This will have an impact on the number of possible outcomes and the ongoing Scottish Government ambition of reducing the Disability Employment Gap.
- 7.2 By increasing the number of placements back to a full complement of 26 young people and exploring the option of increasing the number of places offered, it is hoped to build on the previous success of reducing the disability employment gap.
- 7.3 Under the redevelopment of the Edinburgh Guarantee and the Youth Guarantee, people with additional barriers to employment continue to be an area of focus and remains high on the national agenda.
- 7.4 The continued delivery of the programme will help to deliver against the Council's Diversity and Inclusion strategy and increase employment opportunities within the organisation for those with a disability or long-term health condition.
- 7.5 Each year the interest in the programme exceeds the number of places available. Employability service providers and colleges in Edinburgh use EPS as a progression route into employment for their clients.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Council Commitments – Delivering an Economy for All](#)
- 8.2 [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Employment Action Plan - Progress Report](#)
- 8.3 [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: May 2020](#)

- 8.4 [Update on the Labour Market Status of Disabled People](#)
- 8.5 [The effects of the coronavirus crisis on workers](#)
- 8.6 [Housing and Economy Committee, Thursday, 30th August, 2018](#)

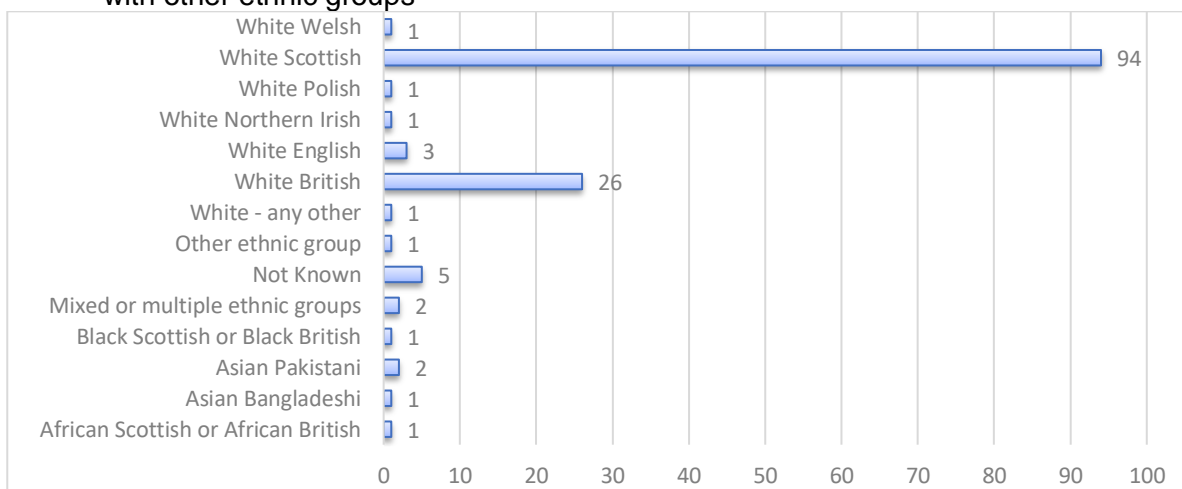
9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Edinburgh Project SEARCH Programme Statistics and Outcomes.

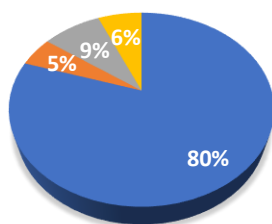
APPENDIX 1

Edinburgh Project SEARCH Programme Demographics and Outcomes

- Between April 2014 – August 2020, 140 young people started on the programme. Of those, 120 young people successfully completed the programme (86%).
- A further 12 young people began the programme in September 2020 and have not been included in any of the figures below.
- The average age of a young person when they begin the programme is 20 years old.
- 73% of interns who started the programme were male (99), 27% were female (41).
- 67% of interns identified as white Scottish, 23% identified as white other and 10% identified with other ethnic groups



- 112 interns lived in Edinburgh, 12 in Midlothian, 9 from West Lothian and 7 within East Lothian

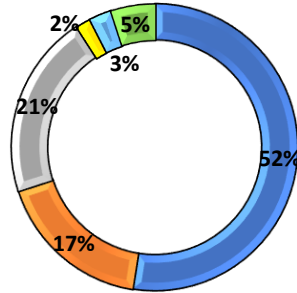


■ Edinburgh ■ East Lothian ■ Midlothian ■ West Lothian

- Reasons given by the 20 young people who withdrew from the programme (13 from the Council site, 7 from NHS Lothian site) were:
 - Course was not as expected
 - Mental health issues
 - Physical health
 - Poor attendance
 - Relationship issues
 - Caring responsibilities

OUTCOMES:

- Of the 120 young people who completed the programme, 63 progressed into full-time employment, 21 secured part-time employment, 3 moved into volunteering opportunities and 2 returned to education. 25 young people continue to receive job searching support.



■ Full time employment ■ Part time employment ■ Job Searching ■ Education ■ Volunteering ■ Not job searching

- Of the 84 interns who completed the programme and moved into employment, 38 were employed by NHS Lothian (45%), 10 were employed by the City of Edinburgh Council (12%), 1 person was employed by Edinburgh College and 35 young people have been employed by external employers (42%).

