

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 24 March 2022

Enhancing Employment Opportunities for People with a Disability

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	7.31

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee note:
 - 1.1.1 The full range of employability services provided or funded by the Council that disabled people can access; and
 - 1.1.2 That the Local Employability Partnership have considered those with a disability when planning services for recommissioning to help mitigate changes to provision from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) or other agencies.

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Report

Enhancing Employment Opportunities for People with a Disability

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to the motion from 16 December 2021 and provides details of the employability support provided by the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

3. Background

- 3.1 On 16 December 2021, the Council approved a motion by Councillor Howie and an Addendum by Councillor Kate Campbell which included a request for a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee which:
1. Considers how the Council can best assist and support people with a disability to find and sustain employment, be it within the Council itself but also with other local employers;
 2. Considers the advantages for both people with a disability as well as wider society of having more people in employment, disabled or otherwise;
 3. Considers how best to replace the service previously provided by the DWP and the benefits and advantages of this for people with a disability and others including elected Councillors;
 4. Also examine any other ways in which the council can facilitate an increase in the employment of people with a disability, be it within the council or, alternatively, with other local employers, and to consider how the council can give a lead and demonstrate to others by example how this can be achieved successfully and to the benefit of all; and
 5. Should set out the full range of employability services provided or funded by the Council that disabled people can access, from in-house services, contracted services and third party grants. The report should consider how these services can be best used to mitigate any changes to provision in place from the DWP or other agencies.”

4. Main report

- 4.1 As set out in the Economy Strategy, the Council recognises the importance of having people employed in fair, sustainable jobs and the Council Commitments specifically focus on improving access to employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities.
- 4.2 As part of this, the Council provides approximately £7m annually for the delivery of employability provision across Edinburgh, to support people into education, training, employment (including self-employment) and sustained employment. This provides support to our most vulnerable citizens who have barriers to employment, including those with disabilities. The Council programme also incorporates engagement and support for employers to create awareness of jobseekers and to provide signpost to information and support available for employers, especially working with people with barriers to employment.
- 4.3 Employability services are provided both in-house and by commissioning local third-sector organisations to deliver core employability contracts and a number of small grants offering speciality provision.
- 4.4 The in-house services which support people with barriers to employment, including those with a disability include: The Edinburgh Guarantee, Edinburgh's Employer Recruitment Incentives (EERI), Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) Paid Placements, Job Creation Scheme and Edinburgh Project Search (EPS).
- 4.5 In addition, the recently commissioned Edinburgh Blended Employability Services, which will commence on 1 April 2022, will include: Targeted Employability Service, Supported Employment Service, Complex Needs Employability Service and In-work Support Service. These will replace the current contracts which are due to end on 31 March 2022.
- 4.6 A summary of each of these services is included at Appendix 1.
- 4.7 This local delivery complements mainstream provision by DWP, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and other national contracts. As all services operate a 'no wrong door' approach, all employability services are accessible to all, but EPS and the Supported Employment Service are specifically designed to support those with a long-term health problem or disability.
- 4.8 The Supported Employment service, delivered by the consortium All in Edinburgh, offer a pan-disability service for anybody with a disability or long-term health condition who is looking to secure, sustain and progress in employment. As part of their work with employers they are educating and supporting them to be Disability Confident. Enable Scotland, the lead for the consortium, hold "Leader" and "Employer" Disability Confident accreditation.
- 4.9 This includes supporting for employers to gain a better understanding of issues affecting disabled people and building their capacity to recruit from all sections of the community is a core part of the service. Enable Scotland also regularly deliver equality and diversity training across the consortium and to Edinburgh businesses

to upskill their teams. This training includes: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disability Awareness, Sensory Awareness and Mental Health Awareness training.

- 4.10 Almost 50% of all individuals accessing employability services identify themselves as having a disability, or suffering from Mental Ill Health, Long Term Physical Illness or Physical Illness. Of those, 45% receive direct support from the two specialist services. The other 55% access the support on offer through the wider employability network in the city. This is illustrated in Appendix 2.
- 4.11 Officers have engaged with DWP and understand that they continue to provide support through Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs), who still work within local employment offices and act as enablers, focusing on supporting Work Coaches and other colleagues to develop their skills to work effectively with disabled claimants. Their role is to help the team understand how an individual's health and disability can be a barrier to employment and assist them to provide more personalised support, tailored to each claimant's individual needs. DEAs will also support customers directly to achieve outcomes of moving someone towards or into work.
- 4.12 DWP also still provide Access to Work funding to disabled employees, and support to complete the application is available from Work Coaches.
- 4.13 Council officers and employability providers work very closely with specialist services, as well as with DWP, to ensure that individuals with a disability or long-term health condition are able to access the relevant advice, support and training to progress into and in fair work. This includes supporting individuals with a referral to DWP to access funding if relevant.
- 4.14 One key issue for many disabled people is a perceived misunderstanding by many employers that it is difficult to employ a disabled person. One of the key focus areas is therefore to support employers to become [Disability Confident](#) and progress through the three levels of this scheme, so disabled people are assured of no issues in disclosing and/or asking for support when applying for jobs or if action is required to retain their job.
- 4.15 Other key initiatives which are supported and promoted include [Purple Tuesday](#) and [Thrive](#), who have piloted mental health initiative work with employers. One of the Council's partners, Intowork, also received funding from the Workplace Equality fund to deliver Disability Awareness and Autism Awareness training to employers, including the Council.
- 4.16 Council officers are part of the Public Social Partnership, [Apt](#), which is funded by the Scottish Government to design and deliver services that will improve and advance the prospects of disabled people who are looking to enter or sustain paid work.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Edinburgh Blended Employability Services will commence in 2022 and existing clients will be transitioned to the new services. All in Edinburgh currently deliver the Supported Employment Service contract and will deliver the new Supported Employment Service contract, so the transition for the clients will be seamless.
- 5.2 EPS is planning to restart delivery in 2022/23. Discussions are currently taking place with two external employers who wish to become host businesses. This has the potential of creating additional places on the programme, however, would mean additional funding would be required to provide job coaches. Officers are currently investigating options for this.
- 5.3 Officers are reviewing the Council's and managers' recruitment practices to make these more inclusive and ensure a smoother pathway from work experience placements to Modern Apprenticeships within the Council. As part of this exercise, officers are working to understand the learnings of a workplace adjustment team within Scottish Government and whether this learning could be used to make recommendations of improvement to Council practices.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Edinburgh Blended Employability Services which will commence in 2022 is fully funded from the Council's existing budgets.
- 6.2 It is anticipated that EPS can recommence this year, following the impacts of the pandemic. A full cohort of 13 placements and two Job Coaches comes at a cost of circa £120,000 for which there is provision in the budget.
- 6.3 Pre-Covid, both the Council and NHS Lothian have delivered one full cohort each. NHS Lothian have indicated that, while they may be able to deliver placements, they do not have the associated funds required.
- 6.4 Officers are exploring the use of alternative funding sources and models to enable delivery across Council, NHS Lothian and private sector partner sites.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Local Employability Partnership are very aware of the need to reduce the disability employment gap and consider Disability a key focus when commissioning projects and services.
- 7.2 Officers are linked in with Communities and Families regarding the services available to young people with a disability who are transitioning from senior phase high school into further education and training.
- 7.3 The work that is currently underway has an impact on the number of possible outcomes of people with a disability moving into employment within CEC and other

organisations and supporting the ongoing Scottish Government ambition of reducing the Disability Employment Gap.

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 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-scottish-government-recruitment-retention-plan-disabled-people-2019/pages/5/>
- 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, 30 August, 2018.](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1: Summary of council funded employability services.
- 9.2 Appendix 2: Statistics on disabled service users and outcomes.

APPENDIX 1

Council funded Employability Provision in Edinburgh

Internally managed and delivered employability activity:

1. **The Edinburgh Guarantee** – Recently redesigned to be an all age service with a focus on those with barriers to employment. It is the leading brand, under which all Council funded employability provision sits.
2. **Edinburgh Project SEARCH** – This is a partnership programme providing work experience placements for disabled young people throughout the Council and other public and private organisations, with the goal of moving into mainstream employment.
3. **Edinburgh's Employer Recruitment Incentives** – Through No One Left Behind (NOLB) and Young Persons Guarantee (YPG) national funding, employers are supported to recruit individuals with barriers to employment.
4. **YPG Paid Placements** – For those aged under 25 with barriers to employment are supported into six month paid work placements within the Council and third-sector organisations.
5. **YPG Post Kickstart Extension funding** – Award of funding to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to extend paid work placements, provided under the government's Kickstart Scheme, for an additional six months.
6. **Job Creation Scheme** – Individual aged over 25 with barriers to employment are supported into six month paid work placements within the Council and third-sector organisations.
7. **No One Left Behind/ Activity Agreements team:** Council officers oversee delivery of the five locality 'Hubs' and manage relationships with 23 mainstream high schools, linking in with other employability provision to ensure referrals are made to relevant organisations and supporting wider NOLB engagement.
8. **Council Apprenticeship Team:** Officers support internal departments to recruit individuals into the Council, aligning delivery of relevant qualifications with training providers and offering ongoing support to workplace mentors and apprentices.

Externally delivered Core Employability Contracts – Edinburgh Blended Employability Services

9. **Targeted Employability Service:** An intensive city-wide service to target gaps in unemployment provision for those without a disability but that still have barriers to employment and are facing poverty.
10. **Supported Employment Service:** Supports those with a long-term health condition or disability to secure and sustain employment. They also play a part in working with organisations who are looking to recruit someone with a disability, enabling them to provide the right support.
11. **Complex Needs:** An intensive employability support service for those in recovery from substance misuse, recent involvement in the criminal justice system and/or experiencing homelessness.
12. **NEW from 01/04/22 - In Work Employment Support Service:** To support those facing in-work poverty to maximise their income and gain more sustainable employment. The In-Work Employment Support Service contract will also be responsible for the co-ordination of the Edinburgh FUSE city centre base.

Externally delivered Core Employability Contracts

13. **Network of Employability Support and Training (NEST):** Third Party Grants commissioned to fund specialist provision that supports identified gaps in local employability services. From 01/04/22 this will also include a Vocational Training element.
14. **No One Left Behind - Stage 1:** Employability 'Hubs' aimed at those aged 15.5-19, but up to age 26 for those with multiple barriers, under the branding of Activity Agreements.
15. **Parental Employability Support Funding:** Four projects funded to address parental barriers to employment, and to provide in-work support to help parents already in employment to remain in the workplace and gain progression through a rewarding career.
16. **Affordable Childcare for Working Parents:** Funded childcare provision in areas of disadvantage and where there is a lack of accessible and affordable childcare to support parents to return to work.

APPENDIX 2

Council Commitment 7 - *Improve access to employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities.*

EMPLOYABILITY OUTCOMES for those using council funded employability provision who identify as having a disability or long-term health condition.

Background

Nearly 50% of all new clients that access the Council's employability services identify themselves as having a disability, or as suffering from Mental Ill Health, Long Term Physical Illness or Physical Illness. The Council has for a long time funded specialist services (such as All in Edinburgh, Edinburgh's Employer Recruitment Incentive and Edinburgh Project Search), which provide employability support focussed on Edinburgh's disabled citizens to progress towards secure and sustained work or learning.

In addition, several small grants have been awarded under our Network of Employability Support and Training programme to other specialist providers working with disabled individuals as well as other barriers to employment and Council officers continuously work with a range of partners to promote inclusive growth.

Key measures	2017/18*	2018/19*	2019/20*	2020/21	2021/22 (to Nov 21)
Number of disabled people who have accessed council funded employability services	1,203	1,101	1,182	866	596
% of all support provided to people with disabilities	46.9%	49.8%	53.9%	53.1%	51.6%

Key Achievements

45% of all employability clients that have a disability, or are suffering from Mental Ill Health, Long Term Physical Illness or Physical Illness get their specialist support, access to training and employment as well as in-work support from either Edinburgh Project Search or All in Edinburgh.

Since 2014, Edinburgh Project Search has supported 152 young people with a recognised disability aged between 16-29 years old to gain over 800 hours of hands on work experience. Of those young people who have graduated from the programme, 70% have moved into meaningful sustainable employment, and 17% have moved into an alternative positive destination.

All in Edinburgh is a supported employment service that helps disabled people or people with a long-term health condition find a suitable paid job, support them to sustain that job and, when appropriate, progress further. The service also assists employers to help them support employees in the workplace.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its impact on the employment market in general as well as service providers' ability to perform face to face meetings, there was a reduction in new registrations across all council funded employability provision in 2020/21.

Over the period April – November 2021, there was an increase in the average number of clients registering with employability services each month and all services were still supporting many existing and new clients, helping citizens retain or even progress in their work, despite the number of redundancies across the country.

The Council's specialist support services for disabled people particularly focussed on this outcome and All in Edinburgh have already recorded more job outcomes in the first 8 months of 2021/22 than in the full year prior.

Between 1 April – 30 November 2021, 419 individuals secured employment with support from council funded employability services, out of which 176 indicated disability as a barrier (42%). Looking at wider outcomes, such as job retention, access to training etc. the services supported 170 disabled individuals out of 519 (32.7%).

Also due to the impact of COVID-19, the Council and its partner organisations NHS Lothian and Edinburgh College were unable to start an Edinburgh Project Search programme in 2021/22. However, paid work placement opportunities have been offered through Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), with a minimum of 8 placements being available specifically for young people with a disability or long-term health condition.