

19 December 2019

Dear Colleague

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

We are writing to you to update on the work that Scottish and Local Government and our partners are undertaking to deliver the reform of employability support in Scotland as set out in No One Left Behind - our action plan for more effective and joined-up employability support across Scotland.

Our shared aim is to support people furthest from the labour market into work. We plan to do this by ensuring that employability support in Scotland is person-centred, flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals and employers.

This supports our shared commitment to the National Performance Framework and our ambitions of eradicating child poverty and sustaining strong national and local labour markets, allowing people to access sustainable fair work, and helping them achieve their full potential in an inclusive and fair economy.

What has happened so far?

Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders signed a first of its kind Partnership Working Agreement for Employability on 5 December 2018. We are pleased to report that progress is being made under this partnership agreement. Our plans for reform are ambitious, but we are working to introduce change gradually and to ensure that existing support mechanisms continue to assist people who need our help most, while we move to a new better aligned approach.

The first phase of delivery of the No One Left Behind action plan commenced in April 2019, combining funding for Activity Agreements and the Scottish Employer Recruitment Initiative in a simpler and more flexible way. Collaboratively managed between Scottish and Local Government, this will evolve over time to include other partners and resources to align and integrate provision locally and nationally. However, funding is only one aspect of the No One Left Behind action plan as the longer term ambition is the transformation of Scotland's employability system.

A Scottish and Local Government alignment group has been formed, reflecting the principles and shared ambitions in the Joint Partnership Working Agreement for Employability. We are directing the work of this group to drive the detail and design of co-operation, integration and alignment between national and local employability services in Scotland. As this work progresses there will be increasing touch points and connectivity with related support services.

We are committed to delivering a true partnership approach to joining up services for the benefit of people who need them, and in doing so to recognise the strengths of the range of stakeholders nationally and locally who can help us to deliver a strong and vibrant employability landscape. To succeed, this must draw on a mixed economy of third, private and public sector suppliers to deliver better outcomes for people who need help to find work, and to stay in work.

An important part of this landscape is the new Employability Stakeholder group, chaired by Anna Fowlie, Chief Executive at SCVO. Membership of the group has been drawn from a range of organisations with a variety of interests in employability in Scotland, primarily aimed at representing the views of those who need support from our services. Part of the group's remit is to provide constructive challenge to us on how government is delivering for those most in need of support.

What's next?

Much has been achieved since December last year. It is important as we move forward that stakeholders are effectively engaged. To help this to happen, we are taking forward a range of actions to underpin our collective commitment to collaboration and partnership:

- Discussions will continue with SDS, SCVO and a range of other stakeholders in the **public, third and private sectors**, over the next few months regarding options for integrating the remaining national programmes, including the Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland into the new model. We will publish a clear implementation timetable by **May 2020**.
- In the meantime, delivery of the Employability Fund, Community Jobs Scotland, Discovering Your Potential and the Inspiring Scotland "Our Future Now" funds will continue for 2020/21 – although the level of funding for these programmes has still to be agreed through the Scottish Government's annual budget process.
- We will publish a joint Scottish and Local Government Employability Action Plan by end **February 2020**, setting out the detailed actions that will deliver the Partnership Working agreement.
- We will continue to deliver **Fair Start Scotland**, and work with providers and other partners to evaluate its impact, implement a continuous improvement plan and improve integration with other local support.
- We will invest £22 million in a package of support to tackle child poverty by increasing parents earned income. This includes: introducing a new £12 million Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), addressing barriers for parents entering work and supporting those in-work to increase their earnings, boosted by a further £4.1 million to ensure alignment with Early Learning and Childcare; and in addition £6 million from April 2020 to support disabled parents towards and into work.
- Utilising the expertise of a wide range of stakeholders, we will develop a national Outcome and Measurement Framework, creating a shared understanding of how well the system is working for all participants. Further information on the framework is included in the attached progress update.
- We will continue to deliver the **Health & Work Support** pilot with partners in Fife and Dundee. This is testing a new health and work access channel to support people with a health condition or a disability stay in or get back into work and will run until summer 2020.
- We will explore the scope and potential for better alignment of health and work activities through Public Health Scotland and the increased focus on inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.
- The Scottish Government will publish evaluations of the Innovation and Integration pilots to share learning and best practice across the employability landscape.

Underpinning this activity, we will recognise and build on existing **national, regional and local partnerships** to form new ways of working together with clear **collective leadership** across the public, private and third sectors.

There is still much to do and collectively we commit to updating you on shared progress in the coming months, commencing with a joint Scottish Employability Summit in early 2020. In this way, we will seek to work with, and draw upon, the varied experience and expertise of partners from across the employability sector.

MR JAMIE HEPBURN, MSP
Minister for Business, Fair Work
and Skills



CLLR. KELLY PARRY
COSLA Spokesperson on
Community and Wellbeing



Developing a Shared Outcome and Measurement Framework Progress to Date:

The Review of Employability services outlined our commitment to develop a national Outcome and Measurement Framework. The framework will establish consistency in how and what is measured, creating a shared understanding of how well the system is working for all participants. This knowledge will be used to inform resourcing, improvement and design of services as well local and national accountability.

This approach should be able to demonstrate the broader impact of employability services in supporting the wider aims of the National Performance Framework. To date, Scottish and Local Government colleagues have been working together to identify the broad themes of the framework: Detailed below are some initial statements of intent which will be further developed as part of the approach to service design.

Framework Theme	Description
<i>Reach</i>	We need to ensure employability services are reaching all those who need support to progress towards, move into and sustain fair work. We will explore how best to understand how well different groups are supported, taking into account equalities characteristics, barriers experienced and variety of needs across localities.
<i>Progression</i>	We need to ensure the employability system is working for those further from the labour market and that different partners are working together to provide coherent support. This means broadening our understanding of success from a single focus on job outcomes to understanding progress towards work. We will explore ways to recognise the individual milestones that enable their progression towards work, such as improving well-being, confidence and motivation, maintaining or re-engaging with support, and developing aspirations and skills.
<i>Skills alignment</i>	We want to ensure participants are being supported to develop skills, knowledge and experience that are needed now, and in the future. We will explore what data will allow us to see what skills, knowledge and experience participants are gaining, and the relevance of these for local job opportunities.
<i>Experience of services</i>	We need to ensure that people accessing services are treated with dignity and respect, and experience support which is accessible, aligned with other services and responsive to their needs. We will seek to define what this looks like, and how we can measure it consistently over time.
<i>Value</i>	For the framework to inform future programme design and funding priorities, we need to understand whether we are making the best use of resources invested, maximising value for participants and contributing to local and national policy ambitions. We will explore how best to define and measure value, taking into account the themes described above.

Next Steps

Commencing in January 2020, a development group will be established, including expertise from across the third and public sectors. This will include:

Amelia Morgan	Venture Trust
Bruce Brodie	SLAED
Hannah Young	Improvement Service
Helen Harper	Scottish Government
Jane Adamson	SLAED
Kirsty MacLean	Scottish Government
Louise Stevenson	Inspiring Scotland
Nick Downes (TBC)	Skills Development Scotland
Pamela Smith	Improvement Service
Pegs Bailey	Fife Voluntary Action
Robert McGregor	COSLA
Ruth Cooper	SLAED
Scott Gray	Scottish Government

The group will collectively lead and inform the development of the framework including outcome statements and related indicators. As far as possible we will base indicators on data already collected as part of service delivery, align to existing frameworks and local and national reporting requirements.

As options are developed, we will communicate and engage more widely with you to test our approach and ideas to ensure maximum benefit for all.

If you require further information on the development of the Shared Measurement Framework, please contact Helen.Harper@gov.scot