



**Briefing 15/39 August 2015**

## **Creating a Fairer Scotland: Employability Support (Discussion Paper and Consultation)**

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland

For information only to England, Wales and Northern Ireland

### **Key Issues:**

From 1 April 2017, the Work Programme and Work Choice schemes will be replaced by new Scottish services, and the Scottish Government is calling on everyone with an interest in employability services in Scotland to contribute to a consultation which will shape these new services; the consultation will run until 9 October 2015, and can be accessed by visiting <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. APSE is encouraging our membership in Scotland to share their opinions. Scottish Government have also released a discussion paper which can be accessed from <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/07/9128>.

### **1.0 Background**

Local government has a strong tradition in creating the conditions for social and economic progress. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 Section 20(1) outlines the power that local authorities have to do anything it considers likely to promote or improve the well-being of its area and persons within that area. Scotland's Economic Strategy (March 2015) considers 'inclusive growth' as one of the four priorities for sustainable growth, and noted that the Scottish Government will "realise opportunities across Scotland's cities, towns and rural areas, capitalising upon local knowledge and resources to deliver more equal growth across the country." To help to focus further on this priority, Scottish Government recently created a new Fair Work, Skills and Training portfolio in November 2014 which is currently held by Roseanna Cunningham MSP.

From 1 April 2017, the current Work Programme (for those at risk of long-term unemployment) and Work Choice scheme (employment support for disabled people) will be replaced by Scottish services under Section 26 of the [Scotland Bill](#) (as currently drafted).

This consultation is to provide the opportunity for Scottish Government to consult with service users to develop new services that focus on meeting the needs of individuals and communities. The Scottish Government considers consultation necessary as only 23.8% of eligible referrals to the Work Programme in Scotland have achieved a job outcome payment as of 31 March 2015, and 68.6% of those completing the 2 year programme remained unemployed at the point of exit. It is also hoped that the consultation will allow Scottish Government to explore how they can solve, what it feels, is a current lack of fit between national and local service delivery.

**Extract from Section 26 of the Scotland Bill (as currently drafted)**

Exception 1

The making by a person of arrangements for, or arrangements for the purposes of or in connection with a scheme for, any of the following purposes –

- (a) assisting disabled persons to select, obtain and retain employment;
- (b) assisting persons claiming reserved benefits who are at risk of long-term unemployment to select, obtain and retain employment, where the assistance is for at least a year
- (c) assisting employers to obtain suitable employees who are persons referred to in paragraph (a) or (b)

The arrangements referred to in this exception include –

- (a) securing that the assistance referred to in this exception is provided by another person;
- (b) providing or arranging for the provision of facilities, support or services to any person;
- (c) the making of payments to any person.

The assistance referred to in this exception includes –

- (a) work search support,
- (b) skills training, and
- (c) work placements for the benefit of the community

In this exception –

- (a) “disabled person” has the same meaning as it has in the Equality Act 2010 as at 28 May 2015 (the date of introduction into Parliament of the Bill for the Scotland Act 2015)

## **2.0 The Consultation**

The Creating a Fairer Scotland: Employability Support consultation will run from 6 June 2015 to 9 October 2015 at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. The main contact for this consultation is Joanne Farrow, Labour Market and Workplace Policy Division who can be reached at 0131 244 1318 or by email at [EmployabilityinScotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EmployabilityinScotland@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

### **3.0 Local authority involvement in employability**

Scotland's local authorities already play a key role in providing employability support to local communities, and have a wealth of knowledge and capacity to meet local employment needs. The Employability Support discussion paper noted that strong networks between Scotland's 32 local authorities already exist through Local cross-sectoral Employability Partnerships with a range of partners from the Community Planning Frameworks (e.g. Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland).

The paper continued, "across these Partnerships a wide range of organisations with local expertise deliver programmes to meet specific training and skills needs in local communities and economies across Scotland. It will be important to build on these to balance national coherence and effectiveness with local services and ownership. The aim should be seamless, effective services across Scotland, capable of reflecting local strengths and encouraging innovation. The aim should also be to meet the varying range of unemployment needs and address the differing degrees of disadvantage among unemployed people in Scotland."

### **4.0 Further Resources**

- Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 asp 1 - [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/1/pdfs/asp\\_20030001\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/1/pdfs/asp_20030001_en.pdf)
- Scotland's Economic Strategy (March 2015) - <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00472389.pdf>
- Scottish Government Fair Work Convention - <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Scotland-a-fair-work-nation-1851.aspx>
- Scottish Employability Forum – <http://www.employabilityinScotland.com/policy-and-partnership/scottish-employability-forum/>
- Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group (SLAED) - <http://www.slaed.org.uk/>

### **5.0 APSE Comment**

The wider purpose and benefits of public employment is apparent to APSE. In our Ensuring change: Building capacity in local government publication, we showed that local authorities have been innovating in times of hardship as well as times of growth for over

140 years. APSE is dedicated to promoting excellence in the delivery of frontline services to local communities, and as such we would support a more active role for local authorities in shaping the delivery of employability services. APSE is encouraging our Scottish members to respond to this consultation to make sure the unique position and expertise of local authorities is accounted for when the Scottish Government decide which direction they should take on any new 'distinctly Scottish' employability services.

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