

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE****NO ONE LEFT BEHIND PHASE 2****REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION****A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind (NOLB) framework document and to seek approval to commence delivery of the NOLB employability support in West Lothian for 2022/23.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the introduction of the Scottish Government's NOLB employability provision and additional resources being provided to support delivery;
2. Approves the partnership approach to delivery of employability support with West Lothian's Local Employability Partnership (LEP) playing a key role in setting strategy and monitoring employability activity locally and;
3. Approves a range of interventions delivered as part of the NOLB to be delivered in 2022/23 as per the LEP delivery Plan (appendix 1) to promote new or improved employment opportunities in West Lothian.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; providing equality of opportunities and; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The revised arrangements were introduced by the Scottish Government in consultation with COSLA in September 2020. The proposals do not raise any strategic environmental assessment issues. Any impacts on equality and health are likely to be positive.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The focus on NOLB activity throughout 2022/23 will be on creating additional opportunities for young people and should have a positive impact on performance indicators linked to supporting

young people to progress into a positive destination.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The creation of opportunities for young people reinforce a number of the aims of the Single Outcome Agreement, specifically: We are better educated and have access to increased and better-quality learning and employment opportunities.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Resources made available by the Scottish Government for 2022/23 delivery of the NOLB programme comprise £451,708 NOLB and £646,861 Young Persons Guarantee funding. This builds on the resources provided by the council and the Young Person's Guarantee funding (YPG) to support the delivery of interventions for young people.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Progress with employability initiatives are reported regularly to Development & Transport PDSP. The specific proposals in this report have not been presented to a PDSP.
VIII	Other consultations	LEP partners - Voluntary Sector Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, West Lothian College, Developing Young Work Force and DWP in addition to stakeholders including local agencies, practitioners and service users.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Since 2018, the Scottish Government has sought to achieve greater alignment of local and national public employability services, transferring a national programme of investment to local governance arrangements. To achieve this, it has sought to further develop effective partnerships and joint working between the Scottish Government and Scottish Local Authorities via their Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs). This resulted in a new model for funding of employability provision and integrating and alignment with other local services.

Future employability provision is to be developed around key local priority groups, geographical and economic needs and will link to funding and services currently available, avoiding duplication of service delivery and maximise the impact of public spend. It is to be a model of collaboration, co-production and co-commissioning. This will enable resources to be deployed to better meet service user needs and those of the local area, whilst also taking cognisance of overall national reach and coherence.

In April 2022, the Scottish Government confirmed a total of £59.3m to be allocated to local authorities for local delivery of employability services as part of its NOLB Phase 2/YPG provision (including some LEP commissioned employability support). West Lothian's allocation is £1,098,569. This does not include employability funding for the Fair Start Scotland (FSS) programme which is expected to come to LA's/LEP's from April 2023 as part of NOLB Phase 3.

The funding has been provided to increase local capacity to deliver a range of employability opportunities and interventions with the focus of this report on 2022/23 activity directed towards 16-24 year olds. The LEP will prepare an annual Employability Plan thereafter, taking cognisance of local needs and priorities.

Delivery in West Lothian

The youth claimant count for West Lothian in March 2022 was 4.6%. This rate is higher than Scotland (4.5%) but lower than the UK (5.0%). The latest rate is lower than February (4.9%) and the youth claimant rate has now returned to pre-pandemic levels last seen around January 2020. SDS data on annual participation has highlighted that in West Lothian, 91.3% of individuals aged 16 to 19-years were participating in either education, employment or other training and development. However West Lothian's participation rate is slightly lower than Scotland's participation rate of 92.2%. The rate of individuals in West Lothian who are not participating is higher than the Scottish rate of 3.2% and is also the joint 3rd highest rate in Scotland. Further, the most deprived areas of West Lothian see the lowest rate of participation, at 86.4%. The greatest rate of participation is for those who are least deprived, at 95.7%, leaving a participation gap of 9.3 percentage points.

The Scottish Government has given Local Employability Partnership's (LEP's) the remit to deliver employability provision locally under the NOLB umbrella. West Lothian LEP operates within the wider Community Planning Partnership (CPP)/Local Economic Forum and has agreed a delivery plan which will address labour market inequalities by supporting those at risk of being left behind to move closer to/into fair, sustainable jobs. The LEP continues to build on the strengths of existing national and local services, to better align funding and to improve the integration of employability services with other support to ensure that services are designed and delivered to meet the needs and aspirations of service users. Co-production has been a feature of its activity over the years: for specific local programmes; in response to situations such as large redundancies or to respond proactively to Scottish Government and funder requirements.

West Lothian's LEP comprises key stakeholder organisations who work collaboratively to support the best possible future for the area. Key partners include: West Lothian Council, West Lothian College, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), third sector representation via their lead body VSGWL and the business community via joint representation from Developing Young Workforce (DYW)/West Lothian Chamber of Commerce. West Lothian Council's LEP representation is via its Economic Development & Employability and Education services with additional input skills and expertise from other service areas when required, including: Criminal Justice, Supported Employment, Housing and Advice Shop.

The NOLB framework creates opportunities to build on and formalise partnership activity and to develop, deliver, monitor and innovative client centric employability support that will address the requirements of the Scottish Government NOLB aspirations. It aims to pull together multiple employability funding streams including NOLB, YPG, Long Term Unemployed and Parental Employment Support funds.

West Lothian Council services and its LEP partners have experience of delivering a range of employability opportunities to young people, aligned to the aims of NOLB. Council services have established interventions and networks that are known to have an impact, specially through programmes such as Steps N2 Work, Skills Training Programme (STP), Helping Young People to Engage (HYPE) and specialist support for more vulnerable young people via its Supported Employment Service. Through its NOLB Transition funding, third sector partners are commencing delivery of targeted employability support, delivered in the heart of communities.

NOLB grant funding will be utilised to continue existing services and interventions that will engage and support young people particularly those that are struggling as a result of Covid-19, in addition to supporting our third sector partners to develop and deliver additional targeted provision. This will build on provision that is known to have an impact and will ensure the maximum benefit from the resources available. The range of interventions will ensure that support is targeted at all ages and at all abilities from key working our more vulnerable young people with additional special needs, disengaged young people to supporting those who have been impacted most by the pandemic.

The activity is aligned to and complements the range of intervention being delivered to support the business community through the Jobs Task Force and range of Business Gateway interventions. This will include the support for:

HYPE

The More Choices More Chances team will continue delivery of its HYPE programme. HYPE identifies, supports and engages/re-engages young people in learning who have left school and are disengaged. The programme uses intensive 1:1 keyworker support, and vocational training linked to the world of work and employability skills to support young people who are not in a positive destination. 97 young people were referred for HYPE provision in 2021/22, of which 41 have progressed/left the programme to date. 34 (83%) have secured a positive destination of either employment, progression to Further Education or training.

Skills Training Programme

The More Choices More Chances team will provide places on the Skills Training programme. The programme supports 16-19-year olds, giving them the opportunity to engage in a pre-employability programme that offers direct work experience and intensive support within a work place and weekly training sessions. Whilst on provision they will also receive a training allowance. Young people in need of additional support to make them work ready are referred to the programme through a range of trusted professional included SDS, school staff and key workers. 2021/22 had 45 participants, 27 who have completed the programme and one who left prior to completion. Positive destinations of either employment, progression to Further Education or training were achieved by 27 of those, some 96%.

Young Person's Employment and Training

Access2Employment will support the recruitment and training of young people via its MA provision, the West Lothian Job Fund and Graduate employability programmes, building on its current provision. During the 2022/23 financial year 10 graduates, 10 Modern Apprenticeship and 15 West Lothian Job Fund positions will be supported. This is in line with 2021/22 provision, however those programmes that saw funding extended to 12 months to compensate for the impact of the pandemic will revert to six months given in person work experience opportunities are now in place.

Third Sector Provision

In April 2022, a six month £200k transition fund was put in place to enable Third Sector employability providers to be commissioned to deliver employability provision for 19-24 year old's in West Lothian. This replaces the previous Scottish Government Employability Fund programme. To date, eight providers have been contracted and have commenced delivery of this provision. Building on this, a further six-month programme of Third Sector employability support will be commissioned to run from October 2022 to March 2023. This provision will create of opportunities for young people and further support the creation of additional capacity within the Third Sector to engage in employability provision.

It is recommended that the Council Executive approves the delivery of the range of interventions, outlined above, to support NOLB provision in 2022/23.

E. CONCLUSION

To support the Scottish Government's aspiration to achieve greater alignment of local and national public employability services and foster effective partnerships and joint working between the Scottish Government and the LEP, thus creating a new model for funding of employability provision and integrating and alignment with other local services.

This will ensure future employability provision is developed around key priority groups, geographical and economic needs, and will enable resources to be deployed to better meet service user needs and those of the local area, whilst also taking cognisance of overall national reach and coherence.

Tacking youth unemployment and inequalities in the labour market remains a key priority for West Lothian Council and LEP partners. The additional resources, being provided to West Lothian from the NOLB programme will provide the ability to target current capacity and provide additional support for young people who have found themselves disengaged, unemployed or underemployed.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: none

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