

Scottish Government – Devolved Employability Services

Update: 04 December 2016

FVA, along with a number of other employability colleagues from Fife, attended an information and consultation session on the newly devolved employability services for Scotland on 01 December. The event was very detailed and Scottish Government seemed genuinely interested to gather feedback on their proposals.

Below are a few of the key pointers, but if you are keen to find out more then either get in touch with us or book onto the next seminar on 09 December in Glasgow by contacting Scot Angus, Scottish Government: Scott.Angus@gov.scot

Geography:

The new provision is going to be let as a series of 'Lots'. The final number of Lots and combination of local authorities is yet to be set but at the moment they are looking at between 5 and 9 groupings. Fife is currently grouped with Edinburgh, East and West Lothian and the Borders.

FVA have suggested that such large Lots discourages bids from smaller organisations and consortia as several layers of partnership are then required. Scottish Government is still deliberating.

Model:

For each Lot the Government will be looking to commission a single package with three tiers of provision:

- 1) 'core support' which will be targeted on those with moderate needs and include basic employability elements such as CV, interview skills and personal development.
- 2) 'advanced support' which will be targeted on those with significant barriers. This will include access to specialist support around issues such as housing, literacy and mental health issues.
- 3) 'intensive support' which will focus on people with disabilities and significant health problems. It will include elements of supported employment and Individual Placement & Support.

They will be looking at the quality of job outcomes as much as the quantity.

There will be no threat of sanctions. It will be entirely voluntary.

People:

Provision will be targeted at the following people:

- Anyone with any kind of disability
- Employment Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group claimants
- Job Seeker's Allowance claimants at any time from the following groups:
 - o Lone parents
 - o Ex-offenders
 - o Care leavers
 - o Refugees
- Job Seeker's Allowance claimants at 24 months+

Scottish Government anticipate around 10,000 people/year accessing these services across Scotland.

Funding:

A total package of approximately £100million is anticipated for the whole of Scotland.

Funding payments will be based on a combination of service fee and rewards for outcomes. The exact parameters are still to be set but could be along the lines of 30% service fee and 70% retained for outcomes. Outcomes will be measured and paid at point of employment, 6 and 12 months sustainment. This may be calibrated to reflect set up costs and the timeframes involved in moving to outcomes.

Payment ratios will be adjusted according to the three bands of provision.

In addition to this all provision will be actively **performance managed**.

Procurement & timeframes:

Scottish Government are very keen to see applications from smaller organisations, the third sector and partnerships. They have put in place support through a number of providers to encourage this: Sencot, Supplier Development Programme and Ready for Business.

Community benefit will be a key assessment criteria. And Quality will be assessed over price. i.e. the job won't be given to the lowest bid.

Timeframes are expected as follows:

January 2017 – announce final Lots for bidding

March 2017 – Issue Invitation to Tender via Public Contracts Scotland

w/c 20 March – Briefing event for interested suppliers

3 May 2017 – Deadline for tenders

October 2017 – Award contracts

02 April 2018 – Services commence

Supported Employment – separate contract?:

Scottish Government are also considering developing a separate commissioning strand/contract for supported businesses interested in tendering for the provision. At this point this seems the least thought through element of the strategy.

That said the definition of supported business is quite broad – and if any organisation is interested in bidding and they fall into this category it is worth registering with Scottish Government soon.

Finally an e-survey will be circulated to all participants shortly seeking feedback on these proposals.

As heard by Pegs Bailey, Employability Development Manager, FVA. 01 Dec 2016