

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

2 June 2009

SUBJECT: WORKING FOR FAMILIES RESULTS

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

<p>Abstract: This report informs the Committee of the results achieved by the Working For Families (WFF) initiative.</p>

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and the accompanying target outcomes report at Appendix 1. The Committee is also asked to agree to a change of name of the Working for Families team to Towards Employment team.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Committee is referred to Article 22 of the Infrastructure Services Committee of March 06 and to the previous Committee Report No 99/07 which records amongst other recommendations, the requirement to provide a half yearly report to the Committee on the progress of the fund.

- 2.2 The purpose of this Report is to report on the outcomes achieved by the Working for Families project over the past three years and to outline proposals to assist those in Angus affected by unemployment, to overcome any barriers towards entering employment, education, volunteering or training.

3 BACKGROUND TO WORKING FOR FAMILIES

- 3.1 On the 9th December 2003, the Scottish Executive announced the allocations for the Working for Families (WFF) Fund and the 10 Local Authorities selected to implement the programme. In 2005, the Scottish Executive announced an expansion of the WFF programme and Angus was included as one of the 10 additional Local Authorities. WFF was developed as part of a programme of initiatives to advance the Social Justice objectives of the Scottish Executive. The Fund was designed to enable Local Authorities, through their economic development channels, to tackle child poverty and worklessness in selected areas by ensuring that childcare was not a barrier to parents entering education, training or employment. The WFF programme required to be targeted towards those in most need - those who are not being helped by other agencies, but who are motivated to move towards employment, or improve their employment position.
- 3.2 The WFF project was established in April 2006. This followed a review by MCM Associates who recommended how the Angus allocation of £350,000 per annum should be utilised. The project comprised the appointment of a Co-ordinator Post to oversee all aspects of the programme.

- The establishment of a team of Key Workers (three) to act as the core support service; and
- The provision of a flexible childcare fund to provide transitional support for clients moving into employment, education or training.

- 3.3 A multi-faceted approach was developed incorporating the recommendations of MCM. WFF offered key worker support, flexible childcare, volunteering opportunities, welfare rights advice and debt counselling, as well as a range of personal development options in order to tackle residual barriers to employment including soft-skills deficits, transportation problems, and personal presentation issues. In addition, in April 2007 a further Key Worker was employed to engage mainly with the growing migrant worker population present in Angus.
- 3.4 The Key Worker project has had considerable success over the three years of the project. The Key Workers have built excellent working relationships with a number of partner agencies across Angus. The referral agencies and the clients have appreciated the holistic approach taken to address the particular barriers to employment presented by the families. The Key Workers have benefited from having access to two flexible support funds to assist families with childcare and/or personal development issues. The table at Appendix 1 sets out the high outcome success rate achieved by the four Key Workers. The team would also like to acknowledge the support given by Training Services who had responsibility for the line management of the Key Workers until September 2008 and also provided excellent administrative support to March 2009.
- 3.5 In addition to the Key Worker project, WFF have two Service Level Agreements (SLA) with the Volunteer Centre Angus and Welfare Rights Service. The VCA provided great assistance with the promotion of the project throughout Angus and provided programmes which clients participate in such as the Volunteer Academy. As the numbers entering volunteering have not been as high as it was hoped, the Service Level Agreement with the VCA has been revisited and the processes now in place should provide for more outcomes under this provision.
- 3.6 The Money Advice project formed a valuable addition to the work of WFF. When a family was registered with WFF the Key Workers checked which barriers to employment families believed they were facing. Where debt or benefit issues were identified a referral was made to the Money Advice worker. In addition the Adviser advised families on a number of complex debt and welfare rights issues in particular the complex regulations applicable to migrant workers. The table at Appendix 1 shows the outcomes from the services provided by the two organisations.

4 WIDENING THE REMIT

- 4.1 Given the success of the team in tackling the barriers to employment for low income families and the worsening economic climate it seems sensible and prudent for the team to look to widen their service to those individuals who may be struggling to find assistance. A mapping exercise which involved consulting with a large number of other employability service providers was undertaken. This was to identify any possible gaps in service and also to prevent double funding. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the additional assistance to be offered to a limited group that have been identified as lacking in support from any other statutory or voluntary group. JobCentre

Plus in Arbroath have agreed to a 4 – 6 week pilot to gauge numbers and provide an opportunity for any problems to be identified and addressed prior to rolling out to the rest of Angus. It is anticipated that families will remain a key client group of the team but given the widened remit it is proposed that the Team name be amended to the “Towards Employment Team”. The support of both the VCA and Welfare Rights are still considered essential to meet the needs of the revised client group and therefore new SLA’s will be entered into with these organisations.

- 4.2 Through the Fairer Scotland Fund approval was received to employ a new temporary Employability Co-ordinator. This officer will have a remit to work with all agencies providing employability services to those people not in employment, to improve co-ordination of services to the benefit of the client Group. The Towards Employment Team will form an integral part of this Employability Framework. It is anticipated that part of this new framework will be the establishment of an umbrella brand, “Working for All”, under which individual partner organisations will deliver employability services. This branding would assist promotion, help to remove client confusion and to cement the partnership approach. This proposal will need to be considered by the Partners as well as the Community Planning Partnership which controls the Fairer Scotland Fund. At the time of writing, the post of Employability Co-ordinator is awaiting Job Evaluation.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no Human Rights Implications associated with this report.

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

8 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
 - We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish Society
 - We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 WFF has proven itself to be a valuable asset to the people of Angus. Although providing assistance to families will remain a core client group of the new team, in the worsening economic climate, it is more important than ever that the strengths of WFF continue to be built upon and where possible extended to other groups who will be facing new challenges. We will continue to work closely with our partner agencies across Angus to provide the best possible employability service in these difficult times. We believe the new name of Towards Employment will assist to promote this new approach.

ERIC S LOWSON
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

ECDEV/DV/SMW/FM
28 May 2009

Targets and Outcomes for Working for Families April 06 to Mar 09

	Actual (April 06 Mar 09)	Target (April 06 Mar 09)
Activities		
Total Number of Registered Clients	921	890
Entry into part-time work having previously been unemployed	124	110
Entry into full-time work having been previously unemployed	83	90
Enter or complete education or training	223	140
Sustained activity – employment or education	136	140
Engaged in other employment skills (eg interview techniques, CV prep) for at least a total of 20 hours.	326	n/a

	Actual (April 06 MAr 09)	Target (Apr 06 Mar 09)
Outcomes		
Benefit checks undertaken	244	250
Tax Credit calculations	83	150
Complex debt cases	83	150
Undertaking Voluntary Activity	45	105

Appendix 2

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**What can the grant fund?**

Any short-term training will be considered for support, with the exception of training that is eligible for funding through national programmes or undergraduate courses.

Eligibility

- Welcomed from those who are unemployed (from 0-6months and for reason other than redundancy or 25+ 12-18months) or in employment
- Applicants must have been left school for more than 6 months
- All applicants must live in Angus and have been living in the area for 3 months or more

What can the grant offer the individual?

The level of funding available is dependant on household income. As a guide this is as follows:

Household income less than £18,000

- 100% of the training costs, up to a maximum grant of £1,000.

NB If the household is in receipt of benefits and has no income a slightly higher level of funding may be possible up to a maximum of £1,500.

Household income more than £18,000

- 50% of training costs, up to a maximum grant of £500.

Additional support

The Towards Employment team may be able to assist some individuals or families with additional support e.g. those who are returning to work may be eligible for travel expenses or assistance towards short-term childcare costs.