

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report provides an update on the Scottish Government's policy Opportunities for All with its key focus of supporting disengaged/disaffected young people secure sustainable positive destinations in employment, training or education.

The Argyll and Bute approach to Opportunities for All needs to be aligned to the work of the Council's Employability Team through its delivery of the UK Government's Work Programme, along with key partner organisations. In addition, the newly established Employability Partnership¹ will contribute to the delivery of the Opportunities for All agenda.

This report will map out the approach to be developed within the Argyll and Bute 16+ Learning Choices Partnership Group, to prepare young people to access positive destinations irrespective of the barriers they face or the level of support they require to take advantage of these opportunities.

The report will further comment on the Rural Action Forum on Youth Employment convened in partnership with the Scottish Government and scheduled for the 18th September 2012 in Oban.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** To note the information and approach to be taken to develop a strategy to meet the Opportunities for All policy in conjunction with the 16+ Learning Choices Partnership Group.

To endorse the focus on preventative work with young

¹ The membership of the Employability Partnership is as follows: Argyll College; Argyll Training; Council (various) including Business Gateway, Community Learning & Development, Education (16+ Learning Choices/Opportunities for All) and Social Enterprise Team representatives; Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); Jobcentre Plus (JCP); Skills Development Scotland. SDS); NHS - Community Health Partnership (CHP); Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network (ABSEN); Argyll Voluntary Action (AVA); Chamber of Commerce/Business Associations/Groups – to be invited to participate in short-life task groups.

people at risk and on looked after children within the strategy and subsequent initiatives to secure positive destinations for young people.

To note the proposed Rural Action Forum on Youth Employment scheduled for 18th September 2012.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The focus of Opportunities for All is to improve Argyll and Bute's young people's participation in post-16 learning, training or employment through appropriate intervention and support between their 16th and 20th birthdays.

The local authority will deliver this focus by implementing the Scottish Government's policy Opportunities for All. This policy is committed to offering a place in learning or training for every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training.

The estimated size of the 16 – 19 year old Argyll and Bute cohort who are currently not in employment, education or training fluctuates according to the availability of seasonal employment.

The long term aim is to enable all our young people to

- access and progress their learning;
- be equipped with the skills to participate and progress into employment;
- improve their life chances through the provision of learning and training opportunities; and
- give them access to the personal support they require to achieve these aims.

Each September the School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) is collated by Skills Development Scotland. The return is based on a follow-up of young people who leave school between the 1st of August and the 31st July in each academic year. The data produced in the return is used by the Scottish Government to report against National Indicator 10 – to increase the proportion of school leavers in positive and sustained destinations.

Overall the percentage of leavers entering a positive destination from the Argyll and Bute local authority area 2010/11 cohort is 88.9%, a rise of 2.1% compared to 86.8% in 2009/10. This is the highest level of positive destinations Argyll and Bute has reported since the new School Leaver

Destination Report came into being 10 years ago and gave us a ranking of 10th place against the other 32 local authority areas.

The percentage of leavers reported as unemployed and seeking has fallen to its lowest level area at 9.6%, a fall of 1.7% since 2009/10.

The Scottish Government has given each local authority additional funding and resources to develop and support the More Choices, More Chances agenda along with the 16+ Learning Choices initiative. The Scottish Government monitors the progress that each local authority has made to implementing and developing local policy and practice to move forward these areas of work. In March 2011, Argyll and Bute Council was ranked in 32nd place. We re-examined how we were working both at a strategic and operational level and appointed a Lead Officer to move this agenda forward. At our recent review meeting with the Scottish Government we were told that we had made significant progress and improvements in our work and were now ranked in 16th place and as a low risk authority continuing its improvement.

However the Council and its Community Planning Partners should not be complacent about these significant positive changes that have been made. Argyll and Bute still has a core group of unemployed young people who are seeking employment but due to a variety of barriers they are unable to find and sustain a job opportunity.

3.2

WORK PROGRAMME

The Council's Employability Team, along with key partner organisations, has successfully embedded its role as a 'super' sub-contractor for the prime contractor Working Links in order to deliver the UK Government's Work Programme across North and West of West Dunbartonshire, Argyll and Bute, the Highlands (presently excluding Inverness city) and the Western Isles. One of the key claimant groups assisted under the Work Programme is for Job Seeker Allowance customers aged 18-24 years.

3.3

The remainder of this paper focuses on the implementation and delivery of Opportunities for All, with reference to the Work Programme as appropriate.

PARTICIPATION

A young person is deemed to be participating in Opportunities for All when they are actively engaged with

an organisation for the purpose of learning, training or work. Participation will include:

- remaining at or returning to school;
 - taking a course in Further or Higher Education;
 - undertaking a National Training Programme – Modern Apprenticeship, Get Ready for Work or Training for Work;
 - engaging in an Activity Agreement;
 - participating in Community Jobs Scotland
 - participating in provision offered by Third Sector Providers;
 - participating in provision offered by Community Learning and Development (CLD)
 - Volunteering Work and some other volunteering activity;
- 3.4**
- Work Experience
 - Participation in the UK Government’s Work Programme
 - Training and support offered by JobCentre Plus; and
 - Being employed or self-employed.

TRACKING, MONITORING AND ENGAGEMENT

The Local Authority has signed an agreement with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) that allows both organisations to share data on our young people. SDS is responsible for administering the Data Hub. Each secondary school enters information onto SEEMIS with regards to the proposed destination a young person has indicated on their school leaver form. This information is then uploaded once a month to the Data Hub and matched to the information held by SDS.

The information that is shared between the local authority and SDS includes:

- Client’s personal details;
- Client’s academic achievements;
- Client’s proposed destination
- Destination information states whether or not this is

an actual firm offer, a conditional offer or the opportunity the client would like to pursue.

The Data Hub allows current data to be shared between partners to allow them to target their support to

- those who need it most;
- when they need it most; and
- in a cohesive and collective manner.

Currently SDS, the Council's Education Services, CLD and the local colleges are all or will shortly be feeding data into the Data Hub.

The information held on the Data Hub forms the basis of the information that is gathered by SDS on behalf of the Scottish Government and collated in the School Leaver Destination Report in September and March each year.

The Data Hub will allow us to track and monitor young people on a monthly basis, along with the monthly youth unemployment report produced in partnership between SDS and JobCentre Plus. By sharing data and the reports we will have access to far more robust and valid information on individual Argyll and Bute young people and the barriers they face to moving into a positive destination. For example: we will be able to track and monitor Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAAC) as they move from secondary school and progress in their initial destination. The Council recognises the additional barriers that can be faced by looked after children and the impact their education can have on their long term life chances and positive intervention for this group of young people is a focus of its approach to Opportunities for All.

3.5

The tracking of data also will allow the identification of young people much earlier in their school career who would ultimately be at greater risk of failing to secure a positive destination on leaving. In turn this will allow for a more positive and preventative intervention rather than addressing the issue after they have left schools education.

LOCAL AUTHORITY MULTI-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP

Education Services, its schools and partner agencies are now systematically planning transitions for young people leaving post-16 compulsory education. This 16+ Learning Choices partnership will be widened to take account of the larger cohort group and the longer time span (16th to 20th birthday).

3.6

Partners involved in this multi-agency approach include Education Services, Community Learning and Development (CLD), Argyll and Bute Employability, Business Gateway and Social Enterprise Teams under the Economic Development Service, SDS, Social Work – Children and Families and Adult Services, training providers, local colleges, JobCentre Plus and the third sector.

All partners will work together to ensure sufficient appropriate, high quality learning/training opportunities and support is available across Argyll and Bute.

This partnership working contributes to the Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement for progressing the National Indicator 10 to "increase the proportion of school leavers (from Scottish publicly funded schools) in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, employment or training)".

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL – LOCAL STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Council will work within the 16+ Learning Choices Partnership group to develop an overarching multi agency strategy that will lead to a suite of opportunities for young people to access and sustain a positive destination. The strategy will map out the range of support services that are available across the partnership, consider how best these can be coordinated, how to share and make use of the improved young person tracking information from the data hub and consider the development of a range of opportunities that can support young people wherever they are in relation to readiness to achieve a sustained destination.

For some young people who are furthest removed from engaging in employment, training or education – at one end of the spectrum this may mean intensive pre vocational support to get them ready to engage and at the other end it may be identifying the right opportunities for them to move into and sustain a destination. There will be a focus on identifying young people at risk earlier in their school careers and providing additional preventative support and on supporting looked after young people overcome the additional barriers they often face.

The strategy to be produced by the group will direct the deployment of the youth employment initiative funding agreed by the Council in the budget 2012-13. This funding will be deployed by Community Services during the 2012-

13 academic term and may be phased over financial years.

The refreshed skills strategy, Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth (Oct 2010), makes clear the Scottish Government's commitment to training and skills and sets out flexible, responsive partnership approach to meeting Scotland's skills needs at a crucial point in our economic recovery.

To achieve this vision local policy on developing young people's skills should focus on four priority themes:

- **Empowering People** to ensure they have the opportunity to access the right advice, support and opportunities to acquire the skills and attributes to both contribute to, and benefit from, future economic success;
- **Supporting Employers** by better understanding and assessing the skills they need for future success, and ensuring that the supply of skills, training and qualifications is responsive to this;
- **Simplifying the skills system** to ensure that it is more coherent and easy to understand for individuals and employers; and
- **Strengthening partnership and collective responsibility** between public, private and third sectors to help improve skills and the contribution they make towards achieving Scotland's social and economic aspirations.

4. **RURAL ACTION FORUM ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

In March 2012 the Scottish Government convened a series of four regional seminars on youth employment to coincide with the release of the Youth Employment Strategy. The event linked to Argyll and Bute was held in Inverness for the wider Highland and Islands area. Subsequent discussion with the Scottish Government led to an agreement to hold a local Rural Action Forum on Youth Employment in Oban on 18th September 2012. The event is currently being planned however it is expected that the keynote speaker will be Angela Constance, Minister for Youth Employment.

The event will be attended by key business representatives within Argyll and Bute, Community Planning Partners –

particularly partners who are members of the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership, further and higher education representatives, training providers, elected members from council and government and a wide selection of young people from across Argyll and Bute. The event will also feature presentations on the Argyll and Bute Employability Partnership and Skills Pipeline along with an outline of the approach covered in this paper.

The key phrase is “action forum” and there will be a focus on the actions arising from the event that will contribute to supporting the development of the local strategy for Argyll and Bute.

In addition, such actions aligned to the *Scottish Government’s Youth Employment Strategy: Actions for Jobs – Supporting Young Scots into Work*, will allow the Employability Partnership to further develop and implement a *Youth Employment Action Plan* for the area, which will include targets and incorporate appropriate success measures.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed approach outlined in this paper will make a difference to our disengaged and unemployed young people in Argyll and Bute. The local authority will be leading our partner agencies in initiatives that will tackle our hardest to place young people. We will be offering these young people opportunities that will make a difference not only now, when they are aged 16 – 19 years of age, but through earlier identification in their schools career of risk and giving them the chance to build a firm foundation we will be helping them to develop life and employability skills. In doing so we will be giving our young people of Argyll and Bute the tools they require to make a difference to their future lifelong employment prospects and allow them to achieve positive and sustained destinations and contribute to their local economy and community.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Policy:

Argyll and Bute Council Community Planning Partnership

ECONOMY

National Outcome 2: We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.

National Outcome 3: We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and

innovation.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

National Outcome 4: Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

National Outcome 8: We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk

ENVIRONMENT

National Outcome 12: Our people have the skills, attitudes and achievements to succeed throughout their lives.

- Financial:** The paper outlines an approach leading to the deployment of the Youth Employment initiative funding agreed by Argyll and Bute Council in February 2012. The proposals will require a phasing over two financial years and approval will be sought for the required carry forward of funding.
- Personnel:** None at this stage.
- Equal Opportunity:** The local Opportunities for All strategy and associated initiatives will directly support the young people who are most disengaged with the employment market and at greatest risk of failing to secure a positive destination. The focus on a positive priority for looked after children is a particularly strong feature of the proposals.
- Legal:** None
- Risk:** There is a range of risks associated with youth unemployment however the greatest risk arises from inaction on this critical agenda and its impact on young people in Argyll and Bute without a positive destination.

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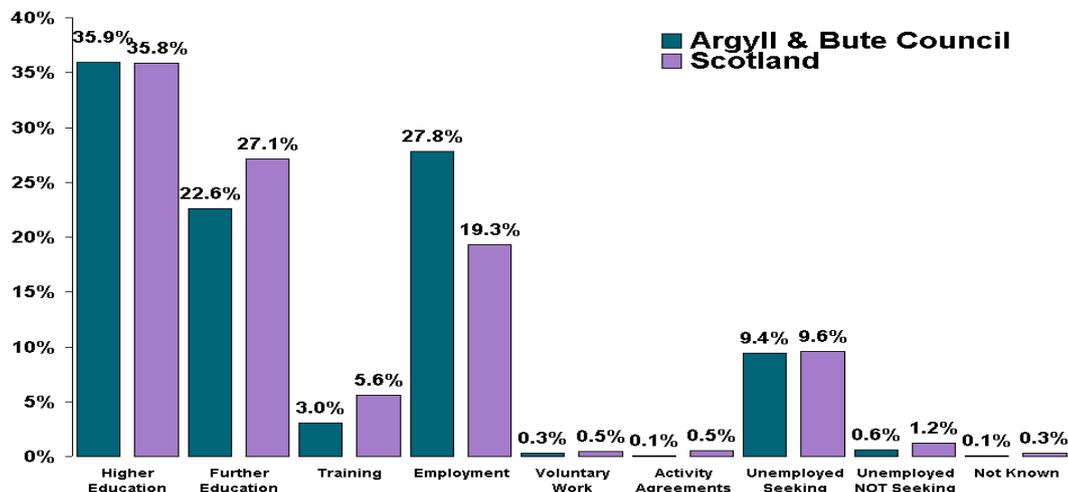
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Scottish Government Opportunities for All policy
School Leaver Destination Report (Feb 2012) extract

SLDR EXTRACT

Argyll and Bute compared to Scotland (2010/11)



DESTINATIONS BY SCHOOL ARGYLL AND BUTE 2010/11

School	Total Leavers	Higher Education	Further Education	Training	Employment	Voluntary Work	Activity Agreements	Unemployed Seeking	Unemployed Not Seeking	Not Known	% Positive
Campbeltown Grammar	84	27.40%	26.20%	2.40%	34.50%	0.00%	0.00%	8.30%	1.20%	0.00%	90.50%
Dunoon Grammar School	185	33.50%	28.60%	4.90%	23.20%	0.00%	0.00%	9.20%	0.00%	0.50%	90.30%
Hermitage Academy	247	43.30%	21.90%	2.80%	17.40%	0.80%	0.40%	13.00%	0.40%	0.00%	86.60%
Islay High School	32	18.80%	9.40%	0.00%	53.10%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	6.30%	0.00%	81.30%
Lochgilphead High School	87	36.80%	13.80%	0.00%	42.50%	0.00%	0.00%	6.90%	0.00%	0.00%	93.10%
Oban High School	202	35.10%	16.80%	4.00%	34.20%	0.50%	0.00%	8.90%	0.50%	0.00%	90.60%
Rothsay Academy	83	36.10%	41.00%	3.60%	9.60%	0.00%	0.00%	8.40%	1.20%	0.00%	90.40%
Tarbert Academy	31	38.70%	12.90%	3.20%	38.70%	0.00%	0.00%	6.50%	0.00%	0.00%	93.50%
Tiree High School	9	33.30%	11.10%	0.00%	55.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Tobermory High School	25	32.00%	24.00%	0.00%	44.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Argyll & Bute Council	985	35.90 %	22.60%	3.00 %	27.80%	0.30 %	0.10%	9.40 %	0.60 %	0.10 %	89.80%