



Community and Enterprise Resources

Lanarkshire LEADER Growing Business Theme Investment Approach: Employability

January 2017

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Background

Currently the South Lanarkshire rural area has 112 young people aged 16-19 unemployed which is 32% of the South Lanarkshire total. Of these only 24 are currently on DWP benefits

Young people aged 16-29- have access to a wide range of employability focussed offers. The vast majority of young people make a positive transition from school into FE/HE/training/work, including Modern Apprenticeships.

Employability support in South Lanarkshire is delivered through South Lanarkshire Works 4 U Programme [SLW4U]. SLW4U is for those who cannot secure employment or are unable to sustain themselves in the opportunity. This is South Lanarkshire wide and rural residents can access all SLW4U pipeline employability services in exactly the same way that residents from elsewhere in South Lanarkshire do.

- There are direct delivery points in Lanark where clients can be referred or walk in for a service
- Freephone number/email/social media
- Outreach services
- Referral partners

In 2015 / 2016, South Lanarkshire rural residents accounted for approximately 9% of all SLW4U employability service provision. If this ratio this was repeated in 2016 / 2017 there would be in the region of 349 (out of a possible maximum South Lanarkshire total of 3875) participants from the SL rural area accessing SLW4U employability services. SL rural area has a total of 747 Jobseekers – a rate of 1.5 which is lower than both the Scottish and wider SLC figure of 1.6. If you calculate the number of opportunities available across the provision, historically the share has been fair. However, going forward this is likely to be more challenging. The roll out of Universal Credit will also pose additional challenges.

The SLW4U service includes:

- **Youth Employment Initiative** – offering wage subsidies, job matching, pre-employability and intensive programme for young people age 16-29.
- **Connect 2** – a sectoral focussed initiative offering a pre-employability programme, 26 week placement with wage subsidy and vocational qualifications
- **Inclusiveness** – individually tailored packages of employability support with access to qualifications and work placements
- **Rebuilding** – a construction sector programme targeting skills deficits
- **Making it Work** – employability focussed support for lone parents
- **Chance to Change** – employability mentoring programme for prolific young offenders
- **Activity Agreements** – intensive support for young people who are unlikely to make a positive first transition from school
- **STEP** – additional employability support for young people who have experienced care/homelessness
- **Employability Fund** – SDS programme which requires providers to deliver in the rural area

- **Working Matters** – City Deal initiative for people aged 16+ in receipt of Employment Support Allowance
- **H2O** – supporting young people through personal social development programmes and signposting to employability progression routes
- **FE provision** – New College & South Lanarkshire have each received additional resources to tackle youth unemployment
- Also access to volunteering opportunities and specialist projects eg Project Search, Work Programme/Work Choice, Challenge Fund.

RTWS delivers services for both SLW4U and SDS [Employability Fund] across South Lanarkshire covering the SL rural area from their permanent office base in Lanark, which they share with SDS.

Employment Enterprise delivers services across South Lanarkshire, but they have an office base in Lanark and use additional rural outreach facilities. They are delivering on Energy Academy/Connect 2/YEI.

Where possible clients are met in their local area and delivery activities are from a range of premises across South Lanarkshire. Every effort is made to encourage a rural delivery presence however other than Employment Enterprise and RTWS, the majority of providers have abandoned the area due to the lack of viability of rural delivery associated to the relatively low number of rural clients.

There are also Activity Agreements – soon to be rebranded Aspire2 –for young people who struggle to make a positive first transition from school – these are managed by SLC Education.

Specific rural provision

There are two projects within the SLW4U employability pipeline that have an **exclusively rural focus** with capacity to support **270 rural participants**, namely:

1. Energy Academy

This project is co-financed by Europe and delivers an end to end holistic employability programme for **120** workless South Lanarkshire **rural residents** who have multiple barriers to accessing quality employment opportunities, including under-represented groups within the sector (eg women), those who have low or no skills, long-term unemployment, and those with limited access to transport and wider services.

The delivery targets the skills gaps cited from employers in disciplines such as engineering, welding and fabrication and the important wider cross-sector opportunities i.e. electricity, gas, water, waste and manufacturing.

The project is reflective of participant and employer need, targeting entry level jobs and also providing support for those wishing to retrain and up-skill to take advantage of opportunities within this and wider cross sectors. The services improve the employment outcomes of unemployed local rural people by delivering a highly flexible and reactive employability programme that links supply and demand.

The delivery includes a mix of employability and sector specific skills training tailored to meet the needs of participants, employers and industry.

Job matching services ensure the best match between the participant and the job opportunity.

A key element of project delivery is to promote wider travel to work opportunities, to capitalise not only on local opportunities (including supply chain developments) but national employment opportunities.

The project is delivered by Employment Enterprise from their Lanark based centre but they also have extensive employer links in and around the area covering a wide range of opportunities including customer care, sales, construction to engineering.

2. Widening Participation

Widening Participation is targeted at unemployed individuals who reside within South Lanarkshire's **rural communities, with priority being given to unemployed people who live within a 15km radius of the Clyde Wind Farm Area.**

The main aim of the Services is to engage with **150** unemployed South Lanarkshire **rural residents** who face significant challenges in terms of their access to quality employment opportunities, and provide them with skills development and employability interventions to enable them to enter, sustain and make progress in the labour market.

The programme delivers employability services in some of the most remote rural communities in South Lanarkshire. Designated Community Link officers actively engage local unemployed rural residents and raise awareness of the service to employers and partners.

The Service delivers a responsive skills and employability training package of support to help meet both participant and employer needs. The delivery covers key employment sectors and provides support to overcome travel to work challenges.

LEADER Investment Approach

Supporting younger age group engagement and employment initiatives was identified as a LDS priority on the basis that there had been a significant fall in employment amongst the younger age groups since the recession. It recognised that the Lanarkshire LAG needed to work with the ESF delivery organisations operating in the area to identify gaps in the employability support pipeline which LEADER can add to or enhance, not duplicate.

It is clear that there has been a significant change in circumstances since the LDS was written. Youth unemployment has fallen and young people aged 16-29- have access to a wide range of offers. The vast majority of young people make a positive transition from school into FE/HE/training/work without support. SLW4U is for those who cannot or are unable to access opportunities. The main youth focussed activity is YEI (Delivered by Employment Enterprise) and will support over 1700 young people from across South Lanarkshire in 12 months.

Challenge Funds, managed by SDS, are coming into the area – including the rural area. Access to employability provision is being made available to an additional 350 young people across South Lanarkshire. Discussions will take place to ensure the providers, national voluntary organisations offer services from rural locations and target rural residents.

However, despite all the available services there is still an issue of **initial client identification and engagement**. This is not only a rural problem however it is exacerbated

in the rural area given issues of the need to travel significant distances to service delivery locations, lack of transport services and lack of a critical mass of clients to make direct rural delivery viable. LEADER could have a role in supporting the provision of delivery infrastructure to enable providers to offer training and employability across the rural areas reducing the need for clients to travel etc.

There are no specific projects targeting the agricultural sector. This is down to the viability of delivery with volumes fluctuating wildly, the broad range of activities and the limited number of positive outcomes ie those securing jobs. Previously the agricultural college had Employability Fund places but there were no takers for their offer. Further Education was the main progression route as few (other than seasonal opportunities only offering 3-4 months of work) were available at the time. Anecdotally employer engagement has found few opportunities – and those identified tended to be for family and linked to wage subsidies over the summer. Whilst this is acceptable the job sustainability tended to be poor.

As the unemployment rate falls the focus of employability will be shifting towards those with health barriers through initiatives such as Working Matters. Any specific rural programmes are always going to struggle given client volumes and the wide geographical spread, however **locally focused projects that have specific client group targets could be valuably supported by LEADER .**

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