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**Renfrewshire Council  
Scrutiny Board**

**Opportunities for Adults with Special Needs**

**Approved by Renfrewshire Council: 26 April 2007**

Convener: Councillor Terry Kelly (Labour)

Depute Convener: Councillor Nan Macgregor (Liberal Democrat)

Board Members:  
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Councillor John Hood (Labour)  
Councillor Sam Mullin (Labour)  
Councillor Vassie (Independent)

Lead Officer: Collette Saez  
Senior Business Executive  
Planning & Economic Development

## Renfrewshire Council

To: **SCRUTINY BOARD**

On: **5TH MARCH, 2007**

**Report by  
Lead Officer**

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 4 December 2006 the Scrutiny Board agreed to carry out a review of employment opportunities for adults with special needs.
- 1.2 The review undertaken by the Scrutiny Board examined the level of need for support to adults with special needs to enter and remain in employment in the Renfrewshire area, the current arrangements to provide employability support programmes and the contributions made by relevant agencies and service providers.
- 1.3 This report details:
  - The scope of the investigation
  - Consideration of evidence submitted to the board
  - Issues arising from the evidence submitted to the board
  - Recommendations arising from the evidence considered by the board for further consideration by the Council.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 Supporting employment opportunities for adults with special needs – namely those with a learning or physical disability, mental health or addiction problems - is a key strategic priority for the Council. The Council has been pro active in developing employment opportunities for adults with special needs since its inception in 1996. Specific support projects have been developed in partnership with voluntary organisations, namely the Open Project (Enable), Workstart (Momentum, previously Rehab Scotland) and more recently West Lane Gardens (Capability Scotland).

- 2.2 The Scottish Executive through its review of services for adults with a learning disability the Same as You (2000), through the introduction of the Mental Health Care & Treatment Act (2004) and through the requirement to produce corporate action plans via local Area Drug and Alcohol Teams, has emphasised the need for Councils to promote the development of real employment opportunities for adults with special needs.
- 2.3 Recent Scottish Executive statistics (May 2006) have shown locally that those claiming Jobseekers Allowance account for only about a fifth 20% (3,130) of the workless population. The majority of the workless population, 64% (11,140), are in receipt of Incapacity Benefits.
- 2.4 The under noted table shows Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance claimants in Renfrewshire at 31st May 2006 by classification

<b>All Persons</b>	<b>11490</b>	<b>%</b>
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<b>4990</b>	<b>43.40%</b>
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	<b>1680</b>	<b>14.60%</b>
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	<b>1620</b>	<b>14.10%</b>
Diseases of the Circulatory System	<b>690</b>	<b>6.00%</b>
Diseases of the Nervous System	<b>660</b>	<b>5.70%</b>
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	<b>580</b>	<b>5.00%</b>
Diseases of the Respiratory System	<b>220</b>	<b>1.90%</b>
Diseases of the Digestive System	<b>210</b>	<b>1.80%</b>
Factors influencing Health Status and Contact with Health Services	<b>170</b>	<b>1.50%</b>
Neoplasm	<b>130</b>	<b>1.10%</b>
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	<b>130</b>	<b>1.10%</b>
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	<b>100</b>	<b>0.90%</b>
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	<b>90</b>	<b>0.80%</b>
Congenital Malformations, Deformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities	<b>90</b>	<b>0.80%</b>
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	<b>50</b>	<b>0.40%</b>
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	<b>40</b>	<b>0.30%</b>
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	<b>40</b>	<b>0.30%</b>
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	<b>20</b>	<b>0.20%</b>
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium	<b>10</b>	<b>0.10%</b>

Source: DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 100% data.

- 2.5 As can be seen the majority (58%) of Incapacity Benefit recipients suffer from two health issues:
- Mental and Behavioural Disorders (43.4%)
  - Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue (14.6%)

- 2.6 The table below outlines the duration on Incapacity Benefit/SDA from May 2002 to 2006 for Renfrewshire.

**Renfrewshire IB/SDA claim duration, May 02 - May 06**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>May 2002</b>	<b>May 2003</b>	<b>May 2004</b>	<b>May 2005</b>	<b>May 2006</b>
Total	14,200	13,400	12,900	12,600	12,200
up to three months	900	600	700	600	700
Three months up to half a year	600	600	500	700	400
Half a year up to 1 year	800	800	900	800	800
1 year up to 2 years	1,500	1,200	1,000	1,100	1,100
2 years up to 3 years	1,100	1,000	1,000	900	900
3 years and over	9,200	9,100	8,800	8,600	8,400

Source: Department for Work and Pensions 5% sample [Nomis: 21 December 2006]  
 Figures under 500 are subject to high sampling variation and should be used with caution.  
 Benefit claimants counts are rounded to the nearest 100 and are subject to sampling variation.

- 2.7 This illustrates that almost 70% of those claiming IB/SDA have been in receipt of these benefits for 3 years and over. This is in contrast to JSA where the majority of claimants are 6 months or under.
- 2.8 Unemployment in Renfrewshire has fallen quite significantly over the last two years but the number of jobs has also fallen. It is expected that employment in Renfrewshire will fall by 1,000 by 2015 representing a decline of just 1% (This is in line with the predicted performance for Scotland as a whole) however it also expected that there will be a significant number of employment opportunities created within Renfrewshire and the surrounding TTWA areas for example:
- 1,000 jobs as part of the Clyde Riverside Regeneration strategy (particularly in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase development of the Braehead and Xscape projects)
  - The development of Glasgow Airport, that may see an additional 2000 direct jobs at Glasgow airport mostly in the Transport and Communications sector but also in retail and admin and in addition to these.
  - A further 2000 jobs created over the period to 2015 at Bishopton where a brownfield site of some 2000 acres could be redeveloped to form an expanded village with approximately 2000 new houses and related construction and retailing opportunities.( subject to Scrutiny by Scottish Executive Inquiry)
  - 2,000 jobs within the finance and business development districts around Finnieston and Govan along towards the regeneration areas of Meadowside/Partick Renfrew and Clydebank.

- 2.9 Futureskills Scotland “The Scottish Labour Market 2006” report of Sept 2006 sets out key labour market information. It notes that Scotland’s labour market works well for many people and in many places, but for a significant minority of people and places it does not.
- 2.10 Within Renfrewshire there are currently 11,490 people claiming Incapacity Benefit with 43.40% of these with ‘mental or behavioural disorders’. 80% of those with mental ill health disorders are unemployed. Only 14% of known adults with a learning disability are in any form of employment and only 4% are in ‘open’ employment.
- 2.11 There are a number of agencies and services in Renfrewshire which provide and fund employment support programmes for adults with special needs. These are voluntary organisations, Careers Scotland, Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire, Department of Work and Pensions and further education colleges. Within the Council, there are the Chief Executives, Education and Leisure, Planning and Transport and Social Work Departments who are all active in promoting employment support for adults with special needs.
- 2.12 Adults with special needs require a range of services and support to enable them to maximise their opportunities to enter employment. Support is required through training and work preparation, gaining employment and then ongoing support to sustain employment over a period of time.
- 2.13 A key issue of concern is how to engage with employers to ensure that employment opportunities and support arrangements are in place to maximise the number of adults with special needs they employ. The Council promotes the double tick initiative and initiatives such as this can be used to highlight and monitor progress.
- 2.14 The ongoing Best Value Review of Day Services for adults with a learning disability is currently undertaking a survey of all current service users to determine employment understanding, experiences and barriers to gaining and sustaining employment. The survey identified around one-third (43) of respondents indicated that they were interested in employment, but there had been no clear, co-ordinated way in which they could progress.
- 2.15 During 2005 the Department of Social Work commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake a mapping exercise of current employment support services in Renfrewshire and made recommendations for future action (5.16).

### **3. Scope of the Review**

- 3.1 The scope of the Scrutiny Board’s review was to consider the following:
- Establish a baseline position as to how the current arrangements support the provision of employment opportunities for adult with special needs.
  - Identify barriers which prevent adults with special needs from gaining and sustaining employment.
  - Identify what actions and improvements are required to overcome these barriers.

- Consider how the Council can improve its internal arrangements and work with the key partners in promoting employment opportunities for those with special needs.
- Consider how the council can engage with local employers to promote opportunities for adults with special needs.

#### **4. EVIDENCE CONSIDERED**

4.1 Evidence was given in response to questions set by the Lead Officer, supplemented by questions from questions from members of the Board and by way of presentations and submissions. Evidence was taken from various witnesses including:

- Renfrewshire Council's Departments of:
  - Chief Executives
  - Social Work
  - Planning & Transport – Economic Development
  - Education & Leisure
  - Corporate Services – Personnel Services
- Scottish Executive Workforce Plus
- Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire
- Job Centre Plus
- Careers Scotland
- Paisley Partnership Regeneration Company
- Common Sens
- Reid Kerr College
- Haven Products Ltd
- Equal Access Partnership in Glasgow
- Greater Easterhouse Development Company

#### **5. Evidence From Council Departments**

##### **5.1 Chief Executives Department**

Andrew Noble of the Chief Executives Department advised that Workforce Plus was been launched at a time when employment rates across Scotland are at historically high. However while programmes in place have made progress in reducing the numbers of unemployed receiving Job Seekers allowances there has been a neutral impact on those individuals claiming incapacity benefit in Scotland.

- 5.2 Workforce Plus sets out a target of helping 66,000 individuals in 7 local government areas, to move from benefits to work. In advance of the publication of the Employability Framework for Scotland Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership agreed targets for the reduction of workless people in Renfrewshire dependant on DWP benefits as follows:

<b>Number of Workless People in Renfrewshire Claiming DWP Benefits (August 2004 baseline)</b>	<b>2007 Target for reduction in the number of workless people in Renfrewshire claiming DWP benefits</b>	<b>2010 Target for Reduction in number of workless people in Renfrewshire claiming DWP benefits</b>
18,900	2,500 (13.23% of August 2004 baseline)	4,500 (23.81% of August 2004 baseline)

- 5.3 The development of an Employability Framework is supported by additional funding from the Scottish Executive. The Scottish Executive has made available £1 million over 2006/07 and 2007/08 to develop and implement an Employability Framework in Renfrewshire.
- 5.4 In developing the Employability Framework for Renfrewshire partners will seek to develop a single employability service with Job Centre Plus acting as the central “hub”; with clear referral, assessment programme appraisal/ wrap around packages and post programme support. The service will develop and identify access to appropriate wrap around provision to meet the needs of individuals.
- 5.5 An Employability Framework has been developed by Renfrewshire CPP and the finalised Workforce Plus Action Plan was submitted to the Scottish Executive at the end of January 2007.
- 5.6 The Scottish Executive published its Financial Inclusion Strategy in January 2005. In June 2005, Financial Inclusion funding was announced by the Scottish Executive for a number of Scottish Local Authorities, including Renfrewshire, for the period 2006-2008. Renfrewshire received £450,000 per annum a total of £900,000 over the two year period. The Council agreed a draft Financial Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan in January 2006, and the finalised Strategy and Action Plan in August 2006.
- 5.7 Financial Inclusion relates to the ability of individuals to access appropriate financial products and services. Financial exclusion can occur when individuals are excluded from accessing financial products and services because the cost of the service expensive relative to their income. Individuals can also be excluded by a lack of knowledge on how or where to obtain services and via self exclusion by people who believe they will be refused financial services or products or who do not wish to engage with financial institutions.

5.8 People with special needs, including the disabled are at particular risk from financial exclusion. Renfrewshire's Financial Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan recognises this risk. There are a number of projects and services which have been put in place as part of Renfrewshire's Financial Inclusion Strategy which are specifically aimed at people with special needs. These include:

- Financial Inclusion Officer for Mental Health
- Financial Inclusion Officer for Cancer and Palliative Care
- Financial Inclusion Awareness Officer (Housing)

5.9 Andrew reported that increasing employment opportunities for people with special needs in Renfrewshire is high on the policy agenda of the Council and our Community Planning Partners. In particular the development of the Employability Framework over the next 18 months to two years which will be the principle driver of improving opportunities and support for people with special needs to enter, remain and progress in the labour market.

#### 5.10 **Social Work Department**

The Scrutiny Board heard evidence from Sheila Gillies, Department of Social work which highlighted the majority of their services focus on the provision of care and support. Services which aim to promote independent living and other general life skills will contribute to maximising an individual's employability, but this is not the primary purpose.

5.11 There are some services and support provided through the Social Work Department which directly impact on employability. These range from individual and group support within adult day services, specialist skills training modules at further education colleges, through to specialist employment support projects. Sheila advised that, many employability programmes and services are targeted at particular groups, or geographical areas, which again, limit the potential for adults with special needs to access these. Sheila also advised that adults with special needs often face the following:

- Lack of skills and experience
- Lack of confidence
- Issues relating to transport
- Parenting responsibilities
- Financial disincentives often caused by the 'benefits trap' (this was also highlighted by Gordon McGuinness of Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire)

- 5.12 Sheila advised that the lack of co-ordination in support and services can also cause a significant barrier, particularly around sustaining employment. Services and support are available to adults with special needs around work preparation, specific training modules at further education colleges and specialist support projects. However largely because of funding restrictions, support is limited on an ongoing basis for those in employment, particularly at times of difficulty, for example during a period of ill health. For those no longer in employment, a combination of factors were given as reasons why their employment had ended. Key issues identified were the lack of ongoing support to sustain employment, specific health difficulties and the temporary nature of many employment placements or posts. This was exacerbated by the temporary nature of funding, and resulting uncertainty, for many employment projects and programmes.
- 5.13 Sheila advised that employer confidence and understanding also presents a significant barrier for adults with special needs. Positive experiences of employing adults with special needs can mostly be found within some of the larger employers who have built up experience over a period of time. For many smaller, local employers this is more difficult and efforts require to be made to highlight positive experiences of others.
- 5.14 As at November 2006, there were 45 adults with a learning disability in voluntary work, 21 in open employment and 20 in supported employment. This represents 9.73% of the known adults with a learning disability in Renfrewshire, which is below the Scottish figure of 14%.
- 5.15 Within Renfrewshire, officers in the Social Work Department had for some recognised that whilst there was a range of employability support available for adults with special needs, it was uncoordinated and lacked cohesion. During 2005, an external consultancy, Blake Stevenson, was commissioned to carry out a qualitative research study to:
- Identify which employability support services were provided, and by whom, in the Renfrewshire area
  - Assess how effectively the approach to service provision was meeting the needs of people living in Renfrewshire
  - Identify where there was duplication or gaps in services
  - Make recommendations for a coherent, strategic and shared approach to the delivery of employability support service in the future.
- 5.16 The Blake Stevenson study reported the following:
- Whilst there was a range of providers offering employability support services in Renfrewshire, there was a lack of a coherent, integrated approach that ensures that clients can benefit from a tailor-made package of support to address their individual needs. The exception to this was the COMMON SENS project (6.29).

- There were too many opportunities for people, particularly the most vulnerable, to become stuck in services or simply revolve around and between services and make no real progress.
- A lack of transparency of services and quality assurance could hinder progress as it could make organisations reluctant to refer their clients on and overall could make services difficult to access.
- Many of those interviewed felt strongly that Renfrewshire Council, as the largest employer in the area, should act as a role model and develop good practice in providing employment opportunities to vulnerable people. This could be through full or part-time employment, work placements, work experience or work tasters.

5.17 Sheila advised that the Renfrewshire Employability Action Plan will provide the framework for the Council to work with key partners in promoting employment opportunities for those with special needs. It will enable greater integration and co-ordination of both employability and other services and support which are of particular importance for those with special needs.

5.18 Sheila advised that the Council itself as the largest local employer could make a significant impact on employment provision for adults with special needs. Currently, the Council is engaged in a number of programmes which support adults with special needs, for example Workstep.

5.19 Sheila advised that the development of social firms is another way to enhance employment opportunities for adults with special needs. Social firms are commercial businesses developed to provide employment opportunities for people with a disability or other disadvantages, ensuring that at least 25% of its workforce is from those groups (6.9).

## 5.20 **Planning and Transport Department**

The Scrutiny Board heard evidence from Richard Gibson of the Department of Planning and Transport who reported that Economic Development does not specifically provide employment opportunities for adults with learning difficulties however; they do provide significant financial support to a wide range of business within Renfrewshire, ranging from traditional manufacturing companies to voluntary organisations. However the department also funds the OPEN project which provides direct support to the client group under examination.

5.21 The “OPEN” project which is delivered by Enable and is funded by the Economic Development Division, Community Regeneration Fund and ESF. The objective of this project is to assist people with a learning disability to live independently in the community through obtaining and retaining employment in the mainstream labour market. The services provided include:

- Individual assessment and referral
- Action planning
- Skills need assessment
- Benefit guidance

- Employment marketing and job search
  - Direct help into employment
  - After care
- 5.22 Economic Development's involvement is also aimed at addressing social exclusion. We are aware that work, whether paid or voluntary, can result in a wider social network for many who have been removed from the labour market. In Scotland, 90% of people with a mental health problem are not in work, although 38% undertake voluntary work.
- 5.23 Findings from 'The Same As You' report demonstrate that people with learning disabilities want employment in the open labour market therefore through projects such as the OPEN project; we aim to address the barriers to improve employment opportunities for people. However, this report also stated that "local authorities need to give much greater priority to developing a range of employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities. And, with health boards, those authorities should lead by example in employing more people with learning disabilities".
- 5.24 The 'See Me' Campaign dispels some of the myths about mental ill health and it illustrates that taking and keeping a job has consistently been shown as a key life goal. There are around 117,000 people in Scotland with mental health problems who want to work but are currently unemployed. The confidence and self-esteem that employment provides is key to emotional wellbeing and a workplace that promotes good mental health achieves more through greater morale and productivity.
- 5.25 Economic Development, through working in partnership, aims to tackle the barriers to employment, both on the supply and demand sides, to facilitate greater participation into the open labour market, reduce poverty and address social exclusion for Renfrewshire's most disadvantaged residents.
- 5.26 Survey work undertaken by Economic Development with local employers has shown:
- Employers are largely unaware of what employment preparation programmes are available for this targeted client group.
  - Employers are unaware of what aftercare and support is available to them if they employ someone with special needs. Many employers felt if they were made aware of a specific aftercare support programme they would be more likely to consider employing people who face significant disadvantages and barriers to employment.
  - There was confusion of which organisation to approach in order to employ someone with special needs
  - Many employers felt there was a lack of co-ordination between agencies which left them feeling frustrated.

5.27 Richard further advised that the Scottish Executive's Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland sets out the national approach which will allow the public sector agencies such as the Council, employers and the voluntary sector to work together to co-ordinate and streamline activity aimed at supporting individuals to enter or return to work. As part of the Employability Framework, the Economic Development Division will be employing a Workforce Plus Manager with the specific role of assisting Community Planning partners to develop, manage and implement an employability framework within the Renfrewshire Council area. A principal task will be to engage with partners, providers and beneficiaries to raise the employability of jobless people and to meet the demands of employers in the local labour market.

#### 5.28 **Education and Leisure Services Department**

Gordon Terris advised that the Department of Education and Leisure Services provide support to both adults with special needs in relation to employment and for youngsters to support them in preparation for and transition to the world of work.

5.29 Gordon advised that all young people are given the opportunity to undertake work experience in their 4<sup>th</sup> year at school. This is delivered with the help of Careers Scotland and the links with the business community are very helpful in ensuring placements for students including those with special needs. Sheltered and managed placements are made to support those vulnerable youngsters who may be unsure and lack confidence in going into a workplace. Through the Determined to Succeed programme all schools are funded to develop enterprise education with all students. This allows youngsters with special needs to develop their skills in the secure school environment prior to going into the world of work. As part of this programme ELS has attracted an additional funding source to support an initiative specifically addressing the issue of employment for youngsters with special needs.

5.30 Gordon further advised that as part of the Scottish Executive's national review of learning disability services, a short-life working group was established to look specifically at employment. This group produced a report called 'Working for a Change' which stated that:  
'Most people with learning disability want to work and the evidence shows that they get the same satisfaction from working as anyone else. Most want employment in ordinary jobs ..... but in Scotland it is estimated that only one adult in 20 with learning disabilities has any form of paid work .....' 'Starting at school, people with a learning disability should be helped to think about employment prospects, and to try part-time jobs'. The council's proposals to further develop work based vocational learning for young people with additional support needs would aim to address these concerns.

5.31 Gordon advised that pupils with additional support needs (ASN) within mainstream schools or within the three special schools have access to a range of work experience opportunities depending upon the nature of their needs. A significant number of these placements have been created within the base school or the local community.

- 5.32 The vocational education programme itself has been extended to involve a small number of young people from two of Renfrewshire's special schools. These young people attend Reid Kerr College to undertake vocational courses to help prepare them for the world of work. A crucial part of the programme is the development of partnerships and links between the council, schools, key organisations, appropriate employers and voluntary organisations.
- 5.33 Gordon advised the second essential strand of support for employment opportunities for youngsters and adults with special needs is the work of the community learning team. CLaD supports all adults in the community, although at the moment there is only limited specific targeting of support to those with special needs. Education and Leisure felt that the needs of adults with special needs should be addressed through local community plans where provision can be discussed and developed to meet identified needs.
- 5.34 Adult learning services in Renfrewshire develop improved skill levels in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT, and allow adults to access to information and guidance about learning opportunities. In addition adult learning services provides learning opportunities for adults with special or additional needs by supporting the following groups:
- The Fairway Group (Glenburn)  
This group has been in existence for several years and offers a variety of activities including arts and crafts, music, drama, games and cookery.
  - Johnstone High Group (formerly St Cuthbert's Group)  
The group attracts residing in Johnstone and surrounding rural areas. The opportunities on offer include drama, art, health and fitness, independent cookery and intro to working with wood.
  - Greensyde Group  
15 day centre users access CLaD's Linwood Learning Centre one morning per week to participate in Introduction to IT courses. Greensyde staff support the individuals and a group tutor is provided by Cardonald College.

The above groups are offered specific support through adult learning services, including sessional staff, Disclosure Scotland checks and assistance with let changes. Additional support needs are accommodated through the provision of specialist keyboards, large monitors and height adjustable tables.

- 5.35 Gordon advised that given the need to increase efforts to include and empower all those in our community, to access employment and day social facilities, it may be that CLaD needs to direct more attention to this issue. Identification of needs; links with employers and engagement with colleges and trainers may be areas that could be developed in the future.

### 5.36 Corporate Services Department

The Scrutiny Board heard evidence from Raymond Cree of the Department of Corporate Services who advised that Renfrewshire Council as part of its overarching Equal Opportunities Policy has a specific policy - The Employment of People with Disabilities. The Council recognises that it has a clear obligation towards all its employees and the community at large to ensure that people with disabilities are offered equal opportunities to enter employment and progress within the Authority. In this respect, the council has been an authorised user of the "Double Tick" (developed by the Employment Service), since 1996 "Positive about People with a Disability". In using the Double Tick Symbol, Renfrewshire Council will:

- Interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.
- Ask disabled employees at least once a year what can be done to ensure that they can develop and use their abilities at work.
- Make every effort when employees become disabled to ensure that they stay in employment.
- Take action to ensure that key employees develop the awareness of disability needed to make the commitments work.
- Each year to review these commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve them and let all employees know about progress and future plans.

Re accreditation of the scheme was achieved in 2006 and a number of key improvements were highlighted by Job Centre Plus which included disabled access to the HQ buildings, tread pads on stairs and outside lifts, voice information on all lifts, wider access to meeting rooms to accommodate wheelchair users, and the provision of information, advice and facilities for all types of disabilities.

5.37 Raymond advised that at present the following arrangements are in place to support those with special needs to sustain employment:

- Corporate Services Department
  - Prior to the appointment of a Customer Service Adviser in the Contact Centre, a survey of the premises was carried out as the Adviser was wheelchair bound. To ensure he could be employed in the Contact Centre, adjustments were made to internal doors and to the gent's toilet.
  - A Clerical Assistant in Administration Services, who outside of work uses a wheelchair but at work does not use any appliance, was provided with a car parking space near the entrance to the North Building.
  - An HR Adviser in Personnel was provided with an orthopaedic chair to help relieve chronic back pain.

- Housing & Property Services Department
  - Adjustments are made for an employee within the first aid room to allow dialysis treatment to take place on a twice daily basis.
- Planning & Transport Department
  - The department supported and assisted two employees in purchasing digital hearing aids and also have a loop system currently in operation.
- Social Work Department
  - This department participates in the work step programme. The programme is open to anyone with a disability, physical or learning. Referrals normally come via the job centre plus. Departments who participate in the programme receive a fee for each filled placement to cover any costs associated with providing additional support to the employees. Social work currently has 4 placements, two are currently filled and two are vacant. The department meets with the two employees on a six monthly basis for an update and to ensure they are receiving the appropriate support. The intention is that they would be on the programme for a couple of years and then hopefully move on to a permanent post. The programme is on going, there is no specific timeline for this programme.

5.38 Raymond further advised in order to maximise attendance and to support and retain staff across the council specific adaptations have been made to accommodate employees with special needs which include adjustments to a first aid room to allow dialysis treatment to take place on a twice daily basis, specialist orthopedic chairs to relieve chronic back pain, hands free telephones and specialist mouse mats to relieve repetitive strain injuries. In addition there are also options for phased return to work, light duties, redeployment and work placed assessments to improve or adapt workstations to allow employees to enter or remain in employment. Training programmes are provided to support managers and employees on attendance management, and information is provided for all employees on Occupational Health provision, including those with special needs. This support service includes specialist provision of physiotherapy counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy.

5.39 As part of the employment diversity strategy and workforce planning and equality action plan, discussions have taken place with a number of local organisations regarding the use of potential voluntary work with the Council from BME groups. Raymond advised that some potential areas of the business may be willing to provide placements for people seeking work experience and provide support to individual's with specific needs wishing to work voluntarily or otherwise.

## **6. Evidence From External Bodies**

### **6.1 Scottish Executive Workforce Plus**

The Scrutiny Board heard evidence from Liz Catterson at the Scottish Executive who gave a background on the Workforce Plus Employability Framework for Scotland. The framework records that there are 509,000 people in Scotland who are not working and who are not classed as unemployed. Of these it is estimated that 168,000 would like to work. The Scottish Executive launched Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland in June 2006. The Framework recognises the progress that has been made since 1999 in helping people move from welfare to work. The Framework also recognised that existing provision, designed to move people into employment, still produces a number of unintended barriers which hinder individuals who wish to enter or return to the world of work. It is part of the Scottish Executive's Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) initiative, and describes the actions which need to be taken locally and nationally to help more people get into work.

- 6.2 Workforce Plus Partnerships draw on existing arrangements in the different local areas, and is linked into the local Community Planning Partnership. The National Workforce Plus Partnership will oversee the implementation of the which will allow public sector agencies, employers and the voluntary sector to work together to co-ordinate and streamline activity designed to ensure a comprehensive, holistic and seamless approach to supporting individuals to enter or return to work. The Scottish Executive's approach will be underpinned by reforms to the current welfare system being developed at a UK Government level via the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) green paper (New Deal for Welfare).
- 6.3 The Workforce Plus Team has a role in supporting the local and national Partnerships and overseeing the funding and evaluation of the Workforce Plus Action Plan which describes what the local and national partnerships will do over the next year.

### **6.4 Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire**

Evidence submitted by Gordon McGuinness from Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire showed that employability opportunities for adults with special needs is an area the Enterprise Network has gradually withdrawing from in recent years. This is mainly through strategic guidance which focuses and directs them to those closer to the labour market requiring short sharp interventions. The move in this direction has been reinforced by the challenging targets set by the Scottish Executive with regard to Training for Work programmes which effectively means that as progression rates to employment for this client group are relatively low concentration of Training for Work resources to meet their needs may mean that overall targets set by the Scottish Executive may not be met. Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire also raised other issues such as the financial insecurity entry level jobs and potential benefit traps.

- 6.5 Gordon advised that he had envisaged that provision for this client group should be managed at Community Planning Level and the Workforce Plus plan for the area, should have a focus on this particular client group.
- 6.6 The reduction in European funds, albeit with some provision for an early project call for "Vulnerable Client" projects will see some services go to the wall and it's unlikely that partners with pressured budgets and reduced leverage will make up shortfalls.
- 6.7 Gordon advised that employer perceptions also need to be measured and may vary across the client groups identified. Modest numbers are still prepared to accommodate individuals with learning difficulties and legislation is playing a much stronger hand in terms of those with physical disabilities. However, views in terms of assisting those with Mental Health and addictions are markedly different and require intensive development and support.
- 6.8 Gordon advised that the enterprise network has found the development of Social Firms, creating supported employment opportunities for clients has been a more effective way of developing opportunities and through their social economy support services have assisted the development of business and finance plans for organisations such as Renfrewshire Association for Mental Health and Unity Enterprise.

6.9 **Social Firms**

Social firms provide the bridge between health and employment, clearly demonstrating significant health benefits such as improved mental health and social functioning. Health cost benefits are also significant with small-scale research indicating a 98% reduction in use of in-patient facilities, day centres and day hospitals and a 47% reduction in use of medication (Coughlan, 1993). Social Firms are already incorporated in the Scottish Executive's Healthy Working Lives policy.

- 6.10 Social Firms offer an alternative to mainstream employment in a supportive working environment without reducing any sense of social inclusion. It is a real working environment offering training and personal development but with a far greater understanding of the support needs of individuals with severe mental health problems thus eliminating stigma. Social Firms ensure that an emphasis is maintained for developing people's employability.
- 6.11 Social firms are ten times more likely to succeed than mainstream businesses. This is due to the substantial amount of feasibility work that is conducted before the business start-up stage. A greater amount of caution is utilised as jobs will be created for people who are financially and socially vulnerable and a certain amount of sustainability needs to be ascertained. The business idea needs to be suitable for the client group, for instance a stressful working environment would not be suitable for people with severe mental health problems.

6.12 By using business as a means of creating real employment opportunities, social firms are often far more sustainable than employment and training projects due to their ability to generate their own income. Social firms therefore offer an enterprising and sustainable option for adoption within local employment strategy.

### 6.13 **Haven Products Ltd**

Tom Henderson of Haven Products Ltd advised they were an example of a social firm operating in Renfrewshire, Haven products operate as a commercially viable and efficient business, providing employment opportunities for disabled people. Around 86% of their employees are disabled. In addition they work with some of Scotland's largest blue-chip companies, who outsource vital elements of their production processes to them and they operate with a less than 2% absence rate. Tom advised that people who work in social firms recognise the flexibility and range of opportunities they offer in addition Haven Products Ltd offer staff a means of:

- Adjusting to a work routine and developing stamina.
- Obtaining the sense of having a real job with real pay.
- Working with people who understand mental health problems.
- Feeling valued.
- Accessing a real job in a real business.
- Integrated working environment.
- Small 'family business' atmosphere and environment

### 6.14 **Job Centre Plus**

The Scrutiny Board heard from Billy Walker of Job Centre Plus who advised that the Government has recognised the need to reverse the increasing trend of people moving onto Incapacity Benefits and staying there for long periods of time, sometimes indefinitely. The DWP produced Pathways to Work as a Green Paper in 2002, and set out a range of proposals to help people on Incapacity Benefits realise their aspirations of a return to work.

6.15 The key feature of 'Pathways to Work' is the opening up of the employment services side of Jobcentre Plus, previously this was only open to those on Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA), thus creating a 'Choices' package that clients can choose from. Clients access existing Jobcentre Plus support - such as New Deal for Disabled People - plus some extra support developed specially for Pathways to Work:

- The Condition Management Programme (CMP) a new programme delivered in partnership with the NHS. CMP is designed to help people understand and manage their health condition in a work environment.

- Return to Work Credit is a payment of £40 a week for people starting work of at least 16 hours a week and earning no more than £15,000 per year. Anyone wishing to apply has to have been receiving an incapacity benefit (including statutory sick pay) for 13 weeks immediately prior to starting work. It is payable for up to 52 weeks.

6.16 Billy advised that this fundamental change of culture towards balancing ability with disability has the following features:

- More skilled adviser support and help to return to work combined with action planning during the early stages of a claim including employment advisers specially trained to deal with people with health problems/disabilities (Personal Advisers), disability employment advisers (DEAs) and occupational psychologists (Ops).
- Easier access to the existing range of specialist employment programmes plus new work-focused rehabilitation programmes, offered jointly by Jobcentre Plus and local NHS providers.
- Improved financial incentives for Incapacity Benefit recipients both to seek work and to move into some form of employment such as the Return to Work Credit and Adviser Discretionary Fund;
- Early, tailored support for those having to move off IB onto JSA;
- Engagement of other key stakeholders - particularly employers and GPs.
- In-work support from PA's in crucial early months of work including supporting clients to develop coping strategies.

6.17 **Careers Scotland**

The submission to the Scrutiny Board from Careers Scotland advised that Careers Scotland are a one-stop shop providing career guidance to everyone in Scotland regardless of background or circumstances. As well as assisting school pupils and college students, Careers Scotland extends its services to all ages – helping people who are in or out of work, those who need career planning support and giving advice on learning and employment opportunities. Their purpose is to provide clients with what they need to make the most of their working life and enhance their job prospects. Careers Scotland assist with:

- learning and training opportunities
- information about the labour market;
- advice and guidance on career plans;
- developing skills to increase job prospects.

6.18 Careers Scotland staff will often act as an advocate for people with additional support needs to overcome any possible barriers. It is important a good relationship is established between the Careers Adviser and the client to ensure every support can be offered. Different barriers may exist, depending on the situation. Possible barriers could include:

- Hidden disabilities such as mental health problems. Many of these conditions are temporary and may respond to rest, medication or counselling. Often other people's attitudes and misinformation may provide the biggest barriers. Good staff training and information for other people is essential.
- Learning Difficulties can often lead to difficulties with written or oral communication. An awareness of the issue by employers and sensitive handling of situations can overcome potential problems.
- Physical impairments may result in restricted mobility, difficulty walking and difficulty with use of hands or arms. The physical environment forms the greatest barrier for people who may be wheelchair users or may have mobility problems. Adaptation to premises and the use of assistive technology may help.

Partnership working with organisations who offer job coaching or supported employment can play a significant role in this area.

6.19 Careers Scotland advised that individuals with high support needs, the types of needs outlined in documents such as 'Same as You', should have access to supported employment opportunities. Historically this group may have been placed in Day Care provision but alternative options will need to be considered.

#### 6.20 **Reid Kerr College**

The submission to the Scrutiny Board from Reid Kerr College focussed on a project designed to assist people who are disabled and/or have behavioural issues get into employment. The project has developed a holistic approach to supporting clients with learning difficulties and disabilities into supported employment within Renfrewshire. The project works on a partnership basis and draws resources from agencies such as Enable, Capability Scotland, Working Links and Careers Scotland. Key aspects of the project include delivery by a multi agency partnership which provides comprehensive support on an individual basis to these client groups and the introduction of an innovative mentoring programme to enhance job access, skills acquisition and job retention.

6.21 All students who joined this course had been known by the college over a number of years progressing from Development Course to Workstart Course and then attended classes through the Access system where students could choose from a selection of courses available throughout the week according to their own needs and personal timetables. It was recognised that they weren't progressing very quickly towards their chosen aim which was to find paid work. It was acknowledged that they would need specialist support to do this.

6.22 All the students have had several work experience placements (or job tasters which allow each student to have a wider more realistic choice of jobs and to help make informed choices) over the years and it is recognised that they have matured to the level of wanting to progress to proper paid work and are ready to do so. Families, social workers day-services and other key-workers have been involved in the planning progress and it is seen that this will have huge impact on the success of long-term employment prospects.

### 6.23 Paisley Partnership Regeneration Company

The Scrutiny Board heard evidence from Bill Anderson at Paisley Partnership Regeneration Company (PPRC) who are involved in local employment support within the administration of Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership's Community Regeneration Funded (CRF) employment projects.

6.24 Bill advised that PPRC currently have 10 CRF funded projects as part of their employment & training portfolio which deliver a range of support services to over 1100 beneficiaries.

6.25 Bill Anderson advised that there are a number of additional issues that can prevent clients from accessing positive outcome. The Table below sets out these barriers and the effect they have on the clients ability to access outcomes.

BARRIER	IMPACT
Drug/alcohol abuse	Possible criminal record, additional health problems: Substance misuse; Housing problems and homelessness; Poor basic skills; Low levels of qualifications, Lack of self-confidence and motivation to find work; Lack of work experience.
Disability	Negative perceptions of employers as to the ability of this group to contribute fully to the workplace, Possible Substance Misuse, Housing problems; Poor basic skills; Low levels of qualifications, Lack of self-confidence and motivation to find work; Lack of work experience.
Acting as a carer	Carers may have been unable to access support services due to their caring commitment they may suffer from Poor basic skills; Low levels of qualifications, Lack of self-confidence and motivation to find work; Lack of work experience and the need to access flexible working patterns.
ex offender	Employer's perception of criminal records and Disclosure issues reduces the number of employment sectors available; Housing problems and homelessness; Poor basic skills; Low levels of qualifications, Lack of self-confidence and motivation to find work; Lack of work experience.
Access to transport	Smaller Travel to Work Areas, financial costs of employment,

- 6.26 Analysis of the barriers identified that not all beneficiaries will have only one specific barrier that prevents them moving forward in the employability process. A number of beneficiaries will have multiple barriers that will require multiple interventions that are delivered either concurrently or simultaneously. Interventions and support may take months or years to get them to the workplace and once there to ensure that they stay there.
- 6.27 As part of the development of the Workforce Plus Employability Action Plan, partners have identified the need to establish clear and common communication and referral systems that will enable Renfrewshire to deliver a cohesive and partnership led model of delivery that will ensure beneficiaries when ever they access employability or other support services will be identified, assessed and supported onto the most appropriate support service
- 6.28 Bill used COMMON SENS (Shared Employment Network Solutions) as an example of a project demonstrating the benefits and effectiveness of working in partnership to deliver a range of support services within one organisation thereby enabling them to meet multiple barriers with multiple interventions seamlessly and with little confusion or disruption to the client. The ability of projects to target resources and deliver a wide range of support services within one programme mean there is minimal confusion and or disruption to the beneficiaries support plan.

#### 6.29 **COMMON SENS**

The project COMMON SENS (Shared Employment Network Solutions) was also highlighted in the Blake Stevenson study (4.16) this project focuses upon those individuals who require support to enter, re-enter or progress in the labour market. Made up of the following partners:

- Enable Scotland
- Phoenix House (drug and alcohol addiction)
- Apex (offending background)
- RAMH (Renfrewshire Association for Mental Health)

They provide one to one and group support to beneficiaries who have a range of thematic barriers (Substance Misuse, Mental and Physical Disabilities, Ex-Offenders and Learning Difficulties).

- 6.30 The Scrutiny Board heard from Bob Wilson who advised that COMMON SENS service delivery was made up of both one to one guidance support, which enabled them to work with clients in building on their recovery, identify ambitions to map out routes into training, voluntary work and employment and Group work offering a range of programmes and workshops on a number of critical areas affecting clients future employability. Support is offered to clients based upon the Enable model of support which provides an opportunity for employers and clients to have an agreement which details the required interventions in the work place. This can involve anything from periodic phone calls to review visits to clients. Some may be assured after the first six months, whilst others will need constant and open ended support.

## Outcomes March 2006 – January 2007

Total Referrals	158
Data zone	133
Non Data zone	25
Currently Active client files	71
Outcomes – Totals	23
Into work	5
Into Part Time work	8
Into training / education	8
Into voluntary activity	2
Sustained in employment / training	21

### 6.31 Equal Access Partnership in Glasgow

David Black of the Equal Access Partnership in Glasgow advised the Scrutiny Board the primary aim of the partnership was to enable the Health and Social Care sector to work more effectively with employability deliverers, in order to improve access to employment opportunities for their clients who are often far removed from the labour market and dependent upon benefits. The vision of the Partnership is that every adult in Glasgow regardless of age, gender, background, ethnicity, personal or health history should have the same opportunity as everyone else in the city to access and secure employment

6.32 David advised during consultation on the Equal Access to Employment Partnership it became apparent that whilst the strategic objectives provided a clear focus it was still unclear on how these would be delivered in practice, as employment and vocational training projects have only been marginal activities in the health and social care sectors. Furthermore, like any other city Glasgow has a complex web of initiatives and joining all these up at a city-wide level, to provide seamless pathways to work for disadvantaged people has never been tried before.

6.33 The Equal Access to Employment Programme provides a unique opportunity to test new methods of service delivery and to develop new approaches to policy, practice and processes within the overarching strategic framework established by EAEP. Therefore, the objectives of the DP will be to develop projects which:

- Re-focus the resources of the health and social care sectors to provide people with the effective health and social care supports that are needed to enter and sustain employment.
- Ensure that the resources/expertise of the mainstream employment, training and educational institutions are made available to people, who need elements of health and social care support, by equipping them with the personal and vocational skills required for success in the labour market.

- Connect up mainstream programmes so that people with health and social care needs experience a seamless pathway between the health/social care and employment/training sectors as they progress towards the labour market.
- Develop and re-shape mainstream programmes/projects to meet the specific needs of employers and their potential employees (i.e. a person or life centred approach) to ensure equal access to training and employment opportunities.
- Incorporate employment as a factor in the care planning process for health and social care clients so that programmes can be tailored to meet their specific training, employment, health and social care needs.
- Provide training and raise awareness for frontline staff in both the social and health care and the employment and training agencies, to ensure that they are aware of both the support needs of people and the employment and training opportunities that are available.
- Demonstrate new/more effective approaches on welfare to work to central government.

#### 6.34 **Greater Easterhouse Development Company**

Steven Davis from the Greater Easterhouse Development Company advised on an innovative GP referral project. This ground breaking project has led to the provision of employability support services from several primary care support centres and health centres throughout the east end of Glasgow with the objective of providing employability advice to clients with health problems who are in the likelihood receipt of incapacity benefit.

#### 6.35 Steven advised that the one year programme has achieved the following:

- Provision of employability support from both Easterhouse Health Centre and Baillieston Health centres
- Establishment of patient focus groups
- Establishment of a Referral Mechanism
- Over 120 clients referred to a Development Officer (who was appointed to work with health practioners)
- 15 people have so far commenced employment
- 18 people have undertaken employability support
- 13 people are undertaking training or further education

#### 6.36 Steven advised that the project under went an evaluation by Glasgow University and the following strengths were noted:

- The Project meets and established need/gap in service provision
- Health practitioners are becoming increasingly aware of the role/importance of employment for patients and there is considerable buy-in
- Health Practioners are proactively referring clients to the project
- Engaging with clients in health centres is an excellent outreach method with a traditionally hard to reach client group

## **7. Issues Emerging From the Evidence**

7.1 A number of issues emerged as a result of the evidence given by witnesses. These can be summarised as follows:

- Those with learning disabilities, mental health problems and addictions are at a greater risk of suffering long term unemployment and require more intensive, longer-term support, aftercare and follow through than other, less disadvantaged clients.
- There is an uncoordinated approach amongst organisations within Renfrewshire offering employability support.
- Inflexibility in the current welfare benefits system has been recognised as a major barrier for the client group on incapacity benefits moving into work. It was acknowledged that it is a big step for people to come off benefits since minimum wage jobs are unlikely to make them any better off. Clients who have been on other health-related benefits may also struggle with paying rent, insurance, domestic bills, etc
- There is a lack of co-ordination of work being carried out with employers and there is a need to provide information to employers and support to both the clients and the employers.
- The Scottish Executive's Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland sets out the national approach which will allow the public sector agencies such as the Council, employers and the voluntary sector to work together to co-ordinate and streamline activity aimed at supporting individuals to enter or return to work.

## **8. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Board notes the findings of the review as set out in the report and agrees the undernoted recommendations:

- 8.1 Development of joint assessment programmes across all agencies delivering employability services. This will minimise the duplication of information by individuals at each stage of their progress.
- 8.2 Build local labour market systems designed to match demand for labour with individuals seeking work and ensure that skills and training programmes accurately meet the needs of employers.
- 8.3 There is a need to provide in work support and aftercare to members of the client group who have gained employment to maximise their opportunity to successfully sustain it.
- 8.4 Improve the distribution of information to employers through increased marketing and seminars.
- 8.5 Production of clear and easy to understand information about how working affects benefits.

- 8.6 Examination of potential within the Council to secure access to career opportunities for adults with special needs.
- 8.7 Providing training and raising awareness for frontline staff in both the social and health care and the employment and training agencies to ensure that they are aware of both the support needs of people and the employment and training opportunities that are available.
- 8.8 Work alongside employer organisations to change their perceptions of, and behaviour towards, people with health and social care needs and to promote working practices and procedures, which enable people to obtain and sustain employment within the labour market.
- 8.9 Develop joint support projects, which combine specialists from employment/training and health/social care.
- 8.10 Within Renfrewshire further exploration of the contribution of social firms is required as a means to enhance employability opportunities for adults with special needs to gain and sustain local employment.

## **9. Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 The Scrutiny Board is grateful to all contributors for the time given in preparing submissions, presenting evidence and discussing issues and wishes to acknowledge their extremely helpful contributions.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THIS REPORT**

1 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS** - none

2 **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS** - none

3 **COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Social Inclusion - Assisting unemployed individuals to find employment.

Modernising Government – A co-ordinated approach which improves efficiency and effectiveness contributes to the modernising government agenda and reflects the Council’s commitment to open and transparent Government.

Sustainable Development – Contributing to people moving from welfare to work and positively impacting on the economy.

4 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** - none

5 **PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS** - none

6 **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS** - none

7 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS** – none