

Background Information on Scotland's Devolved Employment Services

This note accompanies the first edition of the new series of statistics on Scotland's Devolved Employment Services. It provides further information on Work First Scotland and Work Able Scotland, the transitional services put in place ahead of Fair Start Scotland, which launches in April 2018.

Background

In November 2014 The Smith Commission, through its Heads of Agreement report, outlined new powers for the Scottish Parliament including powers on employability. In July 2015 The Scottish Government subsequently commissioned a consultation seeking views on shaping future employability services. In its response to the consultation the Scottish Government outlined its vision for employability in Scotland and the values and principles that would support the development of services.

Powers over employability have been enacted through The Scotland Act 2016. In using the newly devolved powers the Scottish Government made the decision to implement a year of transitional services from April 2017 before the introduction of Fair Start Scotland in April 2018. Work First Scotland replaces what was Work Choice the Department for Work and Pension's disability service. Work Able Scotland does not replace, like for like, an existing service but supports those claiming health related benefits who want support to enter work.

Values and principles of devolved employment support

The Scottish Government has set out key values and principles for devolved services and these underpin policy development and service implementation.

The key values the Scottish Government has said will underpin its approach are:

- Dignity and respect
- Fairness and Equality
- Continuous Improvement

The Scottish Government in [A New future for employability in Scotland](#) outlined the principles that would shape a Scottish approach to employability powers.

- Delivery of a flexible 'whole person' approach;
- Services will be responsive to those with high needs;
- There will be a drive towards real jobs;
- Services will be designed and delivered in partnership;
- Services will be designed nationally but adapted and delivered locally;
- Contracts should combine payment by job outcome and progression towards work.

For Work First Scotland and Work Able Scotland the services provided are completely voluntary.

Participants in the services

WFS and WAS provide support for unemployed people furthest from the labour market including those with a health condition, at risk of long term unemployment, and for Work First Scotland, those with a disability. For this transitional year the Scottish Government is looking to support up to 4,800 participants through these services.

Participant journey

The Scottish Government has indicated it wants to take a different approach to the delivery of employability services and build a distinctly Scottish approach to ensure that participants feel supported at all stages into their journey to employment. For the transitional services and Fair Start Scotland the Scottish Government has outlined in its guidance to providers delivering the service that a full assessment of a participant's needs must be at the heart of the approach to securing appropriate employment outcomes.

A range of support has been developed to help understand the needs of the participant on the service. These include individual plans put in place to take a full view of the person's skills needs and help with practical support such as CV writing. This continues when the participant moves into employment, with support available for both the participant and the employer with a view to helping keep the participant in a post suited to their particular skillset and abilities.

Work First Scotland

2.1. What is Work First Scotland?

On 3rd April 2017, referrals to Work First Scotland, a devolved disability employment service began. Work First Scotland is one of two transitional services in place before the introduction of Fair Start Scotland in April 2018.

The overall aim of Work First Scotland is to provide a voluntary, tailored, coherent range of specialist employment services which can respond more flexibly to the individual needs of disabled people. It also seeks to help support employers who employ disabled people participating in the service.

Work First Scotland helps disabled people whose needs cannot be met through other employment support.

Work First Scotland's pre-employment support typically lasts for six months but can be extended, if required, for a maximum of eight weeks where there is a prospect of work. Participants receive help with personal skills and work-related advice to help them into supported or unsupported work.

Once a participant has found paid employment (or self-employment) of sixteen hours or more a week, the provider will then work with the employer and the participant to identify the support required for them to start work and stay in their job. This support lasts for up to six months.

Contracts and providers

Work First Scotland is delivered by three providers across four contract areas. Providers have the option to sub-contract with a range of other specialist or niche providers to support disabled people who are eligible and suitable for the service.

The contract areas and providers in each area are as follows:

Contract area	Providers
1. Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast and Grampian	Momentum Skills
2. Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside	Remploy and Shaw Trust
3 Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire	Remploy and Shaw Trust
4. Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde, Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders	Remploy and Shaw Trust

2.2. The Work First Scotland process

Work First Scotland is a voluntary service. DWP do not require people to participate as part of their benefit conditionality regime. Those who do not participate in the service or leave it early are not at risk of benefit sanction.

Referrals to Work First Scotland are made by Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches. . The role of the work coach is to ensure that only eligible and suitable people are referred. Referrals to Work First Scotland providers may also be made from a number of sources such as external partners, or self-referrals from people who wish to join the service.

All new participants work with their provider on a detailed Action Plan to address any barriers and employment support needs they have. The support includes one-to-one help support and advice depending on the participant's needs.

Once a participant has found paid employment (or self-employment) of sixteen hours or more a week (this could be more than one job which add up to sixteen hours or more a week) the provider will work with the employer and participant to identify the support required for them to start work and stay in their job. The provider will develop and plan a range of support tailored to the needs of the individual participant depending upon their individual circumstances.

Work Able Scotland

What is Work Able Scotland?

On 3rd April 2017, referrals to Work Able Scotland, a devolved employment service for those claiming health related benefits who want support to enter and sustain work begun. Work Able Scotland is one of two transitional services in place for a year until the introduction of Fair Start Scotland in April 2018. The service is delivered and managed by Skills Development Scotland.

The aim of Work Able Scotland is to provide a voluntary, tailored, coherent range of employment services which can respond more flexibly to the individual needs of participants and their employers and make better use of resources.

The service supports those in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in the Work Related Activity Group who are seeking employment support.

Work Able Scotland is tailored to meet individual need. It focuses on helping participants to achieve their full potential and move towards being more independent. It also seeks to help support employers who employ people participating in the service with a health condition.

Work Able Scotland pre-employment support lasts up to twelve months. Participants receive help with personal skills and work-related support to help support them into employment.

Contracts and providers

Work Able Scotland is delivered by three providers across four contract areas. Providers have the option to sub-contract with a range of other specialist or niche providers to support disabled people who are eligible and suitable for the service.

The contract areas and providers in each are as follows:

Contract area	Provider
1. Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast and Grampian	Progress Scotland (a consortium of the Lennox Partnership and Working Links)
2. Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside	The Wise Group
3 Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire	The Wise Group
4. Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde, Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders	Remploy

2.2. The Work Able Scotland process

Work Able Scotland is a voluntary service. It is delivered and managed by Skills Development Scotland. DWP do not require people to participate as part of their benefit conditionality regime. Those who do not participate in the service or leave it early are not at risk of benefit sanction.

Referrals to Work Able Scotland are made by Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches. The role of the work coach is to ensure that only eligible and suitable people are referred. Referrals to Work Able Scotland providers may also be made from a number of sources such as external partners, or self-referrals from people who wish to join the service.

All new participants work with their provider on a detailed Action Plan to address any barriers and employment support needs they have. The support includes one-to-one help or less intensive support and advice depending on the participant's needs.

Once a participant has found paid employment (or self-employment) of sixteen hours or more a week (this could be more than one job which add up to sixteen hours or more a week) the provider will work with the employer and participant to identify the support required for them to start work and stay in their job. The provider will develop and plan a range of support tailored to the needs of the individual participant depending upon their individual circumstances.