

Questions Re Improving Employability

Q1 Can more information be provided on the profile of the new contracts and grant processes to help employability organisations in bidding decisions?

A1 **The re-commissioning process is in response to changes in national provision that could lead to significant duplication of services in future.**

The Council's third party grants guidance and the new employability commissioning strategy sets out how the Council investment focus will change to minimise duplication with national programmes and meet identified need in the city.

To help manage the transition to a new set of services the commissioning process will be a mix of open and specified bidding opportunities phased over the next two years as detailed below:

Description	Indicative value	Other information
Challenge fund is an open and competitive fund run as part of the Council's third party grants process. Bid will be considered that contribute to the objectives and focus set out in the guidance	£1.2 million in 2012/13	Annual bidding process with option for multi-year agreements information available on the Edinburgh Compact partnership website http://www.edinburghcompact.org.uk/aboutUs/cityStrategy.asp
Employability Hubs: The provision of area based hubs that will seek to improve our service reach and clarity of offer. These hubs will act as a focus for local employability services in the city. Focus will be priority areas and criteria identified in Council's Employability Commissioning Strategy	£1.25 million per annum	4 year contract with annual break points with continuation dependant on performance. Contract matched to ESF Priority 5. Tender documents will be made available on http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/ in October.
Disability Services currently managed through the Council's Health & Social Care department will have their agreements extended to enable further work to be undertaken on the future approach to commissioning these services. [e.g. Forth Sector, The Engine Shed, Real Jobs, Woodhall at the Inch, Royal Blind Braille Press, Transitions Project (Action Group), Intowork]	Negotiated arrangements based on existing agreements	The management of these services will be transferred to City Development in 2012/13 with the aims to have a refreshed set of agreements in place by 2013/14.

Although each individual bid submission will be assessed on merit the recommendations to Council will be for a package of works that best delivers the priorities of the Council across the above strands within the available budget.

Q2 In the challenge fund guidance there is a primary focus on School Leavers/young people and low pay. The other 2 priorities appear ranked to be lesser priorities

A2 The investment targets within the guidance are:

- a) School leavers and Young People (14-19yrs)**
- b) Low Pay**
- c) Early Intervention**
- d) Support for Regeneration and Vulnerable individuals**

The Employability hubs contract and existing SLA's around disability service make a significant contribution to priorities c) & d) therefore challenge bids are mainly sought for priorities a) & b). However it is recognised that where there may be proposals that are not covered by these contracts or national services and a well-argued case could be made for funding.

Q3 "Low paid" is a new priority area is there any guidance on the expectations of service delivery that could be included in this area.

A3 Improving the sustainability of employment outcomes and the long term of reduction of in-work poverty is an aspiration of the new approach to employability. Proposals are therefore welcome that help people retain employment or progress out of low paid employment. It is anticipated that any activity funded in this area will be additional to existing aftercare work and will pilot activity that can inform our future approach.

Q4 It has been suggested that applications higher than £50,000, but less than £100,000, will be considered what is the likelihood of these bids being successful

A4 The Council has to comply with current legislation on procurement so there is a presumption that large value contracts will be let through the Council's contract procurement system rather than the third party grants process. However the challenge fund is a competitive pot and grant recommendations will focus on maximising the value for money against our priorities. Larger scale proposal will have to demonstrate excellent value for money.