PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Health Committee – 29 January 2014

Employability Network Development Plan 2011 - 2014

Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)

ABSTRACT

This report provides an update on the progress achieved during the Employability Network's second year of operation. The report highlights some of the key developments within the past twelve months and provides illustrative examples of work undertaken by partner organisations.

1. BACKGROUND/ MAIN ISSUES

1.1 The establishment of the Employability Network was approved by the Housing and Health Committee at its meeting on 31st August 2011 (report 11/435.) Committee received an update on the Network's progress during its first year of operation at its meeting on 6th February (report 13/57).

1.2 The Network consists of representatives drawn from statutory, voluntary and 'not for profit' sectors. It was originally established to provide a coordinated and targeted support structure for people facing particular challenges in accessing meaningful training and employment opportunities. This was considered necessary because of the difficulties faced by these people when market conditions are buoyant, difficulties which are more pronounced at times of economic downturn.

1.3 The work of the Network has been underpinned by the *Employability Pipeline* which is attached as Appendix I to this report. This has helped to guide partners in identifying the stages of support appropriate to the needs and circumstances of individual service users. It also provided the basis of an agreed referral protocol between partner organisations.

Progress to date

1.4 The Development Plan 2011 – 2014 highlighted a range of issues to be addressed collaboratively by partners within the Network. These were tackled through agreed Themes/Workstreams and the progress achieved is outlined in Appendix II to this report.

1.5 Central to the work undertaken during 2012/13 has been the priority given to improving communication both within the Network and with other stakeholders. In partnership with Perth College/UHI, the Network's website was established during the past year. This can be found at www.pkemploy.net. The Network is currently exploring the possibility of a formal launch of the website in early 2014.

1.6   The website – currently containing details of 28 services and partner organisations - will now form the principal channel of communication between partner organisations. It will also provide the means for circulating updates on key legislative and policy issues as they affect employment or training opportunities for service users.

1.7   In addition to the development of the website, Perth College/UHI also provided key support in producing the Network's DVD '*Work in Progress'.* Featuring interviews with service users and service providers, the DVD was 'premiered' at a special event held in Perth's Playhouse Cinema in June 2013. The event was well supported by Network members, service users and their families. The feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive and the DVD been has been in constant demand since that time.

1.8   The DVD is intended as a training tool for partner agencies in supporting individuals in identifying work or training options. It will also be an invaluable means of helping promote the work of the Network and engaging potential new partners. Work is underway on developing a resource pack to accompany the DVD.

1.9   For much of its first two years, the administration and support for the Network has been undertaken by a small group of Council officers. This has allowed Network members to focus on becoming established and developing effective links between organisations.

1.10   As part of the continuing evolution of the Network, the responsibility for administration and support will now fall to the newly established Governance Group. This was established earlier in 2013, consists of partners across sectors and has now assumed responsibility for overseeing the 'management' of the Network's affairs.

Performance review 2012/13

1.11   Following on from the Performance Review undertaken across key Network members in 2012, a further review was carried out during August 2013. The 2012 review was based on 14 returns from member organisations, with 2013 being based on 17 returns. As was with the case in 2012, this year's review took account of only Stages 5 through to 8 on the Employability Pipeline. The key features are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Progress April 2012 – March 2013: Pipeline stages 5 through to 8 only

OUTCOMES	PIPELINE STAGE(S)	Clients 2011/12	Clients 2012/13
Employment - Full time/Paid	7 – Job Brokerage; 8 – New Employee Support & Job Retention Services	52	119
Employment – Part time/Paid	7 – Job Brokerage; 8- New Employee Support & Job Retention Services	62	89
Sustained in Employment/Job retention	8 – New Employee Support & Job Retention Services	107	192
Voluntary work/work experience – (unpaid)	6 – 'Real' Work Experience and Volunteering	114	158
College/Further Education/Accredited training	5 – Accredited Training/College	169	103
Total		504	661

1.12   The 2013 returns show a significant increase in the number of clients supported during the Network's second year of operation. This is due partly to the inclusion of two services which had only just been established at the time of the 2012 Performance Review. These were, accordingly, not included within those returns. Each of these - Barnardos Works and YMCA's 'Living Balance' programme – were designed to support a fairly significant client base and this is reflected in the increased figures for 2012/13.

1.13   It has also been clear from the returns that the past year has seen improved targeting of support for individual clients as well as improved links between Network members. Most member organisations have recorded a steady improvement in the number of people supported into employment opportunities – both paid and voluntary.

1.14   The returns also indicate a reduction in the numbers participating in accredited training or further education since 2012. From the information available, there are no immediately discernible reasons for this reduction. However, anecdotal feedback from partners would suggest that this has more to do with there being fewer people for whom training or education was considered an appropriate outcome in that period.

1.15   In addition to the progress demonstrated by the information recorded in the returns, it is encouraging to note the continuing impact of specialist partners such as NHS Tayside Working Health Services who supported a total of 207 people during this period.

1.16   When considering the beneficial impact of the partners' work within the Network, account should be taken of the progress made by some of the individual clients. To illustrate the 'journeys' made by individuals often facing fairly severe challenges, 3 case studies are attached as Appendix III to this report. For reasons of confidentiality, the clients' details have been anonymized. Similarly, the partner organisations in the case studies have not been identified – firstly, for reasons of client confidentiality and, secondly, to avoid giving the impression that this report has favoured the work of certain partner organisations at the expense of others.

UPDATING OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014

1.17 The Network met recently to update its Development Plan, which has been the subject of previous reports to this Committee. The key priorities identified by the Network from 2014 onwards are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Updated Network Development Plan

Activity	Priority	Timescale
Coordination of services	Consider the spread of services across the Network and identify any opportunities for efficiencies or improving pathways	April 2014
	Undertake a review of the efficacy and accessibility of in-work support services for all client groups	April 2014
	Develop series of *good practice in employability* training seminars for Network members	April 2014 onwards
	Develop series of informal thematic/issue based learning opportunities for Network members	April 2014 onwards
Volunteer development	Review how best to maximise potential for volunteering as pathway into employment or training	Aug 2014 – April 2015
	Exploring options for expanding volunteering opportunities amongst client groups currently under represented in this field	Aug 2014 – April 2015
Supporting enterprise	Develop information package on enterprise and social firms to be available via the Network website	Oct 2014
	Explore further options to enhance employer engagement	June 2014
Evaluation/customer satisfaction	Develop an appropriate evaluative framework covering both organisational progress and customer satisfaction	March/April 2014

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 It is intended that partners should now focus on the priorities outlined in the revised Network Development Plan for 2014 onwards (summarised at Table 2 above). This will allow for a more flexible and responsive approach, one which can provide support in the development of good practice across the Network.

2.2 The establishment of the Network's own infrastructure over the past two years has given it a strong foundation from which to develop more effective links with other networks, partnerships and employers' organisations. This will allow for the exploration of additional opportunities for clients beyond those possible during the early stages of the Network's development.

3.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The Network's second year of operation has built significantly on the progress achieved during its first year. The evolving working relationships between partner organisations has led to continued progress in supporting people into employment and training (as referred to at 1.11 above). In addition, the development of the Network's website and the production of the DVD 'Work in Progress' has contributed greatly to enhancing the Network's capacity to support partner organisations in the exchange of information and noting of opportunities for clients.

3.2   The updated Network Development Plan, as summarised at 1.16 above, reflects the agreed priorities and provides a practical and informed basis for continuing progress throughout 2014/15.

3.3   It is recommended that the Committee welcomes the progress made by the Employability Network over the past year and notes the key priority actions within the updated Network Development Plan.

3.4   It is recommended that a further report on the work of the Employability Network be brought before Committee during the early months of 2015.

Author

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Approved

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John Walker	Executive Director (Housing & Community Care)	**8 January 2014**

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting   *Andy Crichton*

Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The undernoted table should be completed for all reports. Where the answer is 'yes', the relevant section(s) should also be completed

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	**Yes**
Corporate Plan	**Yes**
Resource Implications	
Financial	**None**
Workforce	**None**
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	**None**
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	**None**
Strategic Environmental Assessment	**None**
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	**None**
Legal and Governance	**None**
Risk	**None**
Consultation	
Internal	**Yes**
External	**Yes**
Communication	
Communications Plan	**Yes**

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The role of the Employability Network has particular relevance to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community/Single Outcome Agreement in respect of the following local outcomes:

- People are ready for life and work
- Employment opportunities for all

Corporate Plan

The work of the Employability Network has particular relevance for the following strategic objectives:

- Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives

2.   Resource Implications

Financial

2.1   There are no financial implications arising from this report. The service delivery across all partner organisations comes from within existing resources. A small annual operating budget for the Network of £5,000 is shared between the larger partner organisations.

Workforce

2.2   There are no workforce implications arising from this report as partners' staffing commitments have been met from within existing resources.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3   There are no asset management implications arising from within this report.

3.   Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1   The report is relevant for the purposes of the EqIA as the work it describes seeks to address inequalities in access to employment and training opportunities experienced by the client groups identified within the report.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2   No action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

Sustainability

3.3   There are no issues in terms of sustainability

Legal and Governance

3.4   The report contains no issues which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.

Risk

3.5   There are no issues of risk arising from the proposals in this report.

4.   Consultation

4.1   Network members, across all sectors, have been engaged in all stages of the Network's work throughout the past year. This includes, in particular, the development of both the website and the DVD as well as the updating of the Network Development Plan.

5.   Communication

5.1   The Network has agreed that the principal means of communication of progress achieved will be via the Network's website www.pkemploy.net/
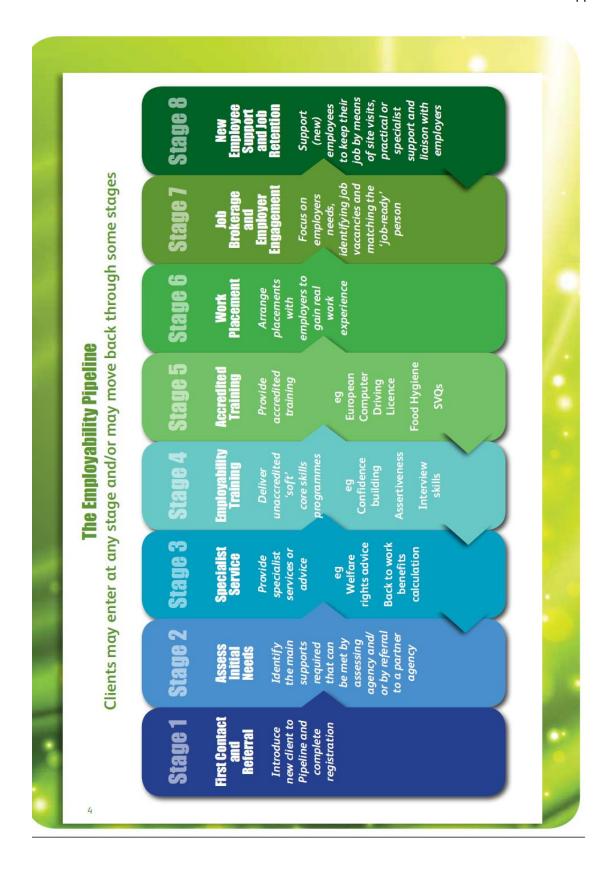
2.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing and Health Committee reports 11/435 and 13/57

3.   APPENDICES

Appendix I: Employability Pipeline

Appendix II: Progress on agreed themes/workstreams

Appendix III: Case studies

The Employability Pipeline

Clients may enter at any stage and/or may move back through some stages

Stage 1 — First Contact and Referral
Introduce new client to Pipeline and complete registration

Stage 2 — Assess Initial Needs
Identify the main supports required that can be met by assessing agency and/or by referral to a partner agency

Stage 3 — Specialist Service
Provide specialist services or advice
eg Welfare rights advice
Back to work benefits calculation

Stage 4 — Employability Training
Deliver unaccredited 'soft' core skills programmes
eg Confidence building
Assertiveness
Interview skills

Stage 5 — Accredited Training
Provide accredited training
eg European Computer Driving Licence
Food Hygiene
SVQs

Stage 6 — Work Placement
Arrange placements with employers to gain real work experience

Stage 7 — Job Brokerage and Employer Engagement
Focus on employers needs, identifying job vacancies and matching the 'job-ready' person

Stage 8 — New Employee Support and Job Retention
Support (new) employees to keep their job by means of site visits, practical or specialist support and liaison with employers

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Progress on Agreed Themes/Workstreams

Workstream 1	Employer Offer	
Priority action	**Progress**	**Comment**
Increase accessibility and use of job brokerage systems	*Joint protocols developed between partner agencies*	*Complete*
Develop the existing infrastructure to support effective *job retention services* through partnership working, clear protocols and workforce development/training	*Local establishment of NHS Scotland 'Working Health Services' providing support to employers with fewer than 250 employees*	*Matter to be reviewed as part of updated 2014 workplan*
Improve quality, range and accessibility of training, support and information available to employers	*Wider access to PKC online training information*	*Complete – training information now available via website*
Develop two way communications link with local employers on ongoing basis	*'Information for Employers' section included on Network website*	*Explore other possible routes for improved engagement with employers eg occasional breakfast meetings or e-learning packages etc*

Workstream 2   Learning and Development

Priority action	Progress	Comment
Undertake training audit to identify partner staff training needs	*Audit undertaken in Spring 2012*	*To be maintained as 'open audit' to allow regular updating*
Arrange access to *Mental Health Awareness* training as required	*Initial training organised for late 2012; access to PKC's online specialist training opened up to partner organisations*	*Provision of training in other specialist subjects to looked at*
Design, arrange or provide training programmes for staff in key partner agencies	*Access to on-line training extended via Network's website as of May 2013*	
Develop or locate a certificated accredited customised training on employability	*Discussions underway with Perth College/UHI about relevant accredited courses for employability practitioners*	*To be revisited in Partnership with Perth College*

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Workstream 3   Promoting and Developing Enterprise

Priority action	Progress	Comment
Maximise opportunities for sustainable employment through develop of local enterprises	*Social enterprise established at Westbank site; links also established with relevant staff in key partner agencies to assist in promotion of opportunities for local enterprise*	
Develop appropriate means of making small scale support available – information/advice; micro finance; specialist equipment	*Some smaller scale support available through some partner organisations*	*Information pack to be developed to help promote small scale enterprise*
Organise events for job seekers interested in developing potential business/enterprise ideas	*Not established so far*	*This will be revisited once social enterprise at Westbank has been fully operational for a reasonable period. Account will be also be taken of issues identified through locality planning as well as implications of Self Directed Support*

Workstream 4   Performance Planning

Priority action	Progress	Comment
Establish performance and reporting framework for the Employability Network	*Format for recording progress on workstreams agreed April 2012*	*To be revisited as part of review/updating of Network Development Plan 2014*
Devise *communication plan* to promote Network activity	*Has revolved mostly around press information around promotional activity;*	*Network website now to form principal means of communication (both internal and external)*
Develop *customer satisfaction framework* taking account both of issues facing service users as well as organisations supported	*Possible appropriate framework identified (SRI) – to be rolled out late 2013, early 2014*	*Practitioners' workshop/briefing to be organised*

Andy Crichton

Network Coordinator   **December 2013**

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Case study 1

J has a mild learning disability which has been a major factor in restricting his ability to gain employment over the years. This has an adverse impact on his self-confidence and his communication skills.

In June 2011, J sought support from one of the Network member organisations and, while with them, undertook a 'Work Ready' course, one day a week for seven weeks. This was to help him in developing work skills and included help with: preparing CVs, Job Applications, Problem Solving, Team Building, Interview Techniques etc. J was a willing participant and thoroughly enjoyed the course.

As a result of improved self-confidence, he sought opportunities for voluntary work as well as work placements in different settings. Some of these proved to be quite positive experiences but others offered little.

Nonetheless, J was confident enough to persevere and, following a work experience placement with a local retailer, J was supported to apply for a temporary position over the Christmas period. He was successful and, significantly, this meant that he was able to buy presents for his partner and young child for the first time. His enthusiasm and dedication during the temporary post impressed the employer who offered him a further 'trial' period. It was clear that the employer recognised the potential in J. If he could address certain issues identified by the employer – his slow pace at work and the need to update his skills – J understood that there was a reasonable chance of the post being made permanent.

With appropriate support, J was able to build on the progress made and was eventually successful in gaining a permanent post with the retailer following the trial period. The supporting role of the Network member organisation continues but on a reduced scale.

From uncertain beginnings, J's progress has been impressive - gaining permanent employment has made a major difference in terms of his own confidence and self-belief. His own, and his family's, quality of life is also greatly improved.

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Case Study 2

<div align="center">**Testimonial from parent of supported client – December 2013**</div>

As a parent of a vulnerable young adult with learning difficulties I have found the support, advice and assistance offered *by the Network partner** to be invaluable. By

supporting our son to search, secure and maintain a part-time job, he now has a structure to his week, a reason to get out of bed in the morning, increased self-esteem and some hope for the future that lies ahead. They have helped out son in so many ways such as:-

- Helping to reduce anxiety and develop confidence in a working environment by work shadowing.
- Encouragement to learn the job at a pace and quality that is acceptable to the employer and make him feel a valued team member.
- Offering ongoing support to overcome obstacles during employment.
- Regularly liaising with the employer about the complex needs of someone with learning difficulties and agreeing adjustments to make work sustainable.
- Offering continued support to our son so that he doesn't feel desperately isolated and placed in an impossible position when he hits a hurdle, which happens often!

I have found the *service** to be proactive, professional, thorough, caring and work hard to understand and meet the complex needs of their client group. I would fully recommend this service.

The text in italics has replaced the parent's original text which identified both herself and the service involved. This has been done for the reasons outlined in para 1.16 of the main report.

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Case study 3

L is a 32 year old woman who has both learning disabilities and severe psychological issues. She is away from her family who live in another part of Perthshire. She currently lives in supported accommodation in Perth with significant carer's support. She has never managed college or a work experience placement in her adult life and has struggled to cope in busy, unsupported situations.

She lasted only one morning on a 'get ready for work' course, walking out without warning. She had lacked confidence in her abilities but with the proper support and encouragement from the service, she was able to take advantage of other placement opportunities the service had to offer.

L was initially referred by her support worker as nothing else had worked for her. None of her previous settings had taken the trouble to understand her situation or to explore ways of working with her mental health disorder.

When working with the service, she had been supported at first in one of the outreach settings. Offering a quieter more relaxed environment in which she was able to settle more easily. She then moved to one of the service's city centre locations and started to become involved in more face to face work with other partner agencies, as well as beginning her accredited training.

Such has been L's progress in this setting, she has extended the range of training undertaken as well as becoming involved in social events with other volunteers. She is progressing well with her training and is increasingly more relaxed and confident in face to face situations. She is recognised by the service as a real asset and is well liked by her peers. It is a major achievement that she has been able to progress as well as she has.

It is unlikely that L will ever be able to hold down a permanent job in the immediate future – she will continue to need support for some time to come. However, given the barriers she faced at the outset, the progress made to date has been nothing short of life changing.

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