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Edinburgh's Jobs Strategy

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EDINBURGH JOBS STRATEGY GROUP

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Health, Work and Wellbeing - Strategic Context and Initiatives

Introduction

In Edinburgh, the work on health and employability is progressing well with an operational plan and action plan now being implemented. The context for this local work is informed by UK and Scottish strategies and initiatives. This paper summarises the strategic context for the work and outlines current UK and Scottish wide initiatives, the information is based on reports provided by the DWP and the Scottish Government.

Scottish Strategic Context

In recent years Scotland has produced a number of strategies which relate to work, health and well-being, the key documents are outlined below:

- In 2003 the Scottish Executive launched *Improving Health in Scotland: the Challenge* which identified the workplace as an area for focused action to promote public health, improve health and tackle inequalities. A year later they launched the plan *Healthy Working Lives* which detailed how the executive planned to put the workplace strand of their health improvement agenda into action. The Centre for Healthy Working Lives was established in 2005 to act as the catalyst and facilitator for the delivery of *Healthy Working Lives*. A review of *Healthy Working Lives* is currently being undertaken by the Scottish Government and the outcome of the review is expected in November 2009.
- The Scottish Government launched its *Equally Well* strategy in 2008, which aims to tackle health inequalities in Scotland. One of the recommendations of *Equally Well* was to establish test sites where new ways of working could be piloted around specific themes. The Lanarkshire test site is focussing on tackling health inequalities through 'employability' and a learning network is being established to share their experiences and ways of working.
- *Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland* was launched in May 2009; it is Scotland's mental health improvement action plan. One of its six strategic priorities is to focus on mentally healthy employment and working life.

UK Strategic Context

- The key UK document for work, health and well-being is '*Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*'; Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population, published in 2008. Many of the initiatives detailed below were identified by the review.
- In November 2009 the UK government will launch a national strategy for Mental Health and Employment; this will be launched alongside the Perkins Review, which has been assessing how more people with mental health problems can be supported into work.

UK and Scottish Initiatives

1. 'Fit for Work' Service Pilots

- At the heart of Dame Carol Black's review was a recommendation for government to pilot a 'Fit for Work' service.
- The 'Fit for Work' service will be focused on helping people who are currently on a period of sickness absence return to work. The service would bring together support such as healthcare, employment, skills, housing and debt advice.
- A Scottish wide bid has been successful in securing funding to pilot a 'Fit for Work' service across the country with additional money being made available by the Scottish Government.
- The Scottish wide service will start early in 2010 and will be led by SALUS and Healthy Working Lives.
- A variety of models are being tested across the UK to give the pilots the best chance of demonstrating the efficacy of early intervention.
- All the pilots will be robustly evaluated to help understanding about what intervention is the most effective in supporting people to remain in, or return back to work.

2. Employment Advisors in GP Surgeries: the Pathways Advisory Service

- Through the Pathways Advisory Service (PAS) the effectiveness of a Jobcentre Plus adviser being located within a GP surgery has been piloted.
- The adviser acts as a gateway offering work-focussed advice to individuals either on Incapacity Benefit or who have experienced a prolonged period of health-related absence to help to find or return to work.
- Following a positive evaluation there is commitment to expand the pilot and run it for a further 3 years.

3 Roll out of a new 'fit note'

- The current medical certificate or 'sick note' will be replaced with a new 'fit note' to help focus GPs advice on what people can do rather than what they cannot from April 2010.
- The 'fit note' is a means to support GPs to give individuals the best possible advice about when it is appropriate to return to work and the adjustments that they or their employer might need to make to help facilitate that return.
- The new certificate has been developed with the support of stakeholders including healthcare professionals, employer representatives and trade unions.

4. A National Education Programme for GPs

- In conjunction with the Royal College of General Practitioners a training programme has been developed for GPs to help them discuss health and work issues with their patients.
- This programme is designed to give GPs a better understanding about the benefit work can bring to the health of their patients, and the confidence to discuss the issue of work with patients during consultations.
- The programme was evaluated in 2008 and was shown to be very useful in increasing the confidence of GPs in advising patients on fitness for work issues.
- During 2009 the programme has been made available across Great Britain. The programme will run for two years.

5. An occupational health helpline for smaller businesses

- A telephone helpline service for smaller businesses is going to be piloted. This will offer professional occupational health advice to managers on *individual* employee health issues (including mental health) that cause problems that the line manager/owner manager is unsure how to address.
- The target audience is managers in small and micro businesses who are least likely to have access to occupational health advice and most likely to benefit from problem solving support.
- Local partners will bid for funding to design, market and deliver access points or "gateways" to the occupational health helpline. As well as acting as entry points to the helpline, these gateways will signpost employers to other local services and support. The uptake for "fee" and "free" variants of the service will be tested. Two year pilots will go live in December 2009.

6 Health, Work and Well-being (HWWB) Co-ordinators

- A Health, Work and Well-being Co-ordinator role is being established within each English region and in Scotland and Wales. The Co-ordinators will champion integrated approaches to health, employment and skills support, encourage local public sector employers as exemplars and build engagement with small businesses.
- The Co-ordinators will be accountable to the Regional Directors of Public Health and their equivalents in Scotland and Wales. Working within these established networks they will be well placed to work with strategic partners to champion and co-ordinate activity in their areas.
- In addition, the Health Work and Well-being Co-ordinators will administer a challenge fund to encourage and reward initiatives that improve workplace health (with a particular focus on mental health) and well-being and that demonstrate innovative approaches to better worker engagement.
- The posts are currently being recruited and the roles will be launched at the beginning of December 2009

7 The Royal College of Nursing Learning Zone Module

- On 28 November 2007, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), working in partnership with Government, launched its health and work learning module sited on the College's website.
- The training covers the relationship between work and health, focusing on rehabilitation and workplace adjustments. It was written by the RCN, with input from the DWP and DH. It is available to nurses across all nursing specialties.
- The nursing profession has a vital role to play in the health and work agenda. Nurses interact with patients in so many ways, across the full range of health services. And just like GPs, their advice and actions help to shape the patients views and influence their actions.

8 The Scottish Observatory for Work and Health

- The observatory was set up in 2008 and is funded by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Lanarkshire, Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives and the Scottish Government Health Directorates.
- Run by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, the observatory has initially provided an analysis of data relating to the incapacity benefit population in Scotland, and has potential to provide further data to inform policy and practice on health and work in the future.

9 Improving Access to Psychological Therapies(IAPT)

- IAPT offers effective 'talking therapies' intervention and treatment choices to people with depression and anxiety disorders.
- Therapists work alongside employment advisors, providing information, advice, guidance and practical support to help working people remain in work or return to work as quickly as possible.
- Initial pilots in England have been successful and based on this success the programme is now being piloted in West Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire, starting this month.

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