

Edinburgh City Jobs Strategy

A Cities Strategy Pathfinder

Summary

Edinburgh City Strategy Pathfinder is a new partnership with government under which our targets are to reduce the numbers on long term benefits by 2,755 by May 2009, and thereby increase the employment rate to 80.7%. Ultimately we aim to increase the employment rate to 82% by 2014. To do this we will:

- Develop a clear offer of services to jobseekers
- Develop a clear offer of services to employers
- Reach more customers through partnership with health and social care agencies
- Create a joined-up infrastructure which aligns funding decisions
- Improve management of information about beneficiaries
- Improve sustained employment by integrating skills training with pathways to work
- Set and achieve locally relevant supporting targets which will inform strategy development
- Improve communications across the partners' networks and consult with stakeholders

Cities Strategies – a national initiative with a local focus

The Cities Strategy, launched by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2006, aims to tackle worklessness in our most disadvantaged communities across the UK. The Cities Strategy areas selected will test how best to combine the work of government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors in a local partnership (consortium) to provide the support jobless people need to find and progress in work. Building on the success of Joined up for Jobs, Edinburgh was successful in its bid to become one of only 15 Cities Strategy 'Pathfinders, starting in April 2007.

Edinburgh City Strategy partners believe that we can deliver more if we combine and align our efforts behind shared targets, and are given more freedom to try out new ideas and to tailor services in response to local need. The Edinburgh Business Plan has been produced by a consortium of the main organisations involved in access to employment: Capital City Partnership, Careers Scotland, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Jobcentre Plus, NHS Lothian and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian. It is expected that the city's Further Education colleges will shortly join the existing partners. A small core team has been located within Capital City Partnership which is leading the consortium. Our strategy will contribute to the government's long-term aims of increasing the number of people in work and tackling child poverty. As a key part of this project, partners are identifying barriers to work such as national benefit rules or funding mechanisms, and are making the case for local flexibilities to remove these. The partners will seek to roll out successful aspects of the Pathfinder to East West and Midlothian at the earliest opportunity.

A Vision for Edinburgh

Our vision is to better integrate and manage the publicly-funded activities under our control to optimise results. We will build on work to date, and integrate health, social care and other treatment agencies into the City Strategy in order to increase recruitment of people from disadvantaged groups. We will also increase effective co-operation with employers to enhance job entry rates and aid progression beyond entry-level jobs to improve employment sustainability. Each partner is committed to focus their agency and their resources to achieving the consortium's targets.

The Challenge in Edinburgh

The City economy has grown and changed, with fewer manual and manufacturing jobs, and more part-time and temporary opportunities. Despite a strong local economy, substantial hidden unemployment still exists. With such low unemployment levels overall, inevitably people with deep-seated and multiple disadvantages make up a growing proportion of the total unemployed. Services to assist people into work must therefore prioritise those people who are most disadvantaged and help them to break the low pay – no pay cycle.

Edinburgh's City Strategy

For us to succeed in delivering our vision, we will concentrate on the following 8 key programme elements:

Element 1 A Clear Offer to Jobseekers (Lead Partner: Jobcentre Plus)

Each participating organisation and subcontractor in the employability field will:

- be clear what is available and what can be offered to which customers;
- enable customers to access services of all relevant providers;
- pool resources to achieve the best pattern and order of delivery;
- seek and act on feedback from customers in order to improve services.

Element 2 Greater Customer Reach (Lead Partner: City of Edinburgh Council)

To reach harder to help customers, we will assess the barriers facing each of the target groups (for example people with disabilities; lone parents; prison-leavers; homeless); deepen the co-operation with the agencies which give generic support to them, and co-ordinate employability support to present a clearer pathway to employment. Working closely with the NHS, we will integrate appropriate health and treatment agencies to increase referrals and better utilise their care and condition management expertise to support customers.

Element 3 A Clear Offer to Employers (Lead Partner: Jobcentre Plus)

Each provider organisation contacting employers should be able to present to an employer the range of appropriate City Strategy partnership organisations products and services. The offer to employers will focus specifically on:

- sectoral groupings of employers, based on a demand-led job brokerage approach;
- responses to large scale recruitment initiatives e.g. major store and hotel openings and construction employment opportunities;
- a more consistent joint approach to vacancy and placement handling;
- ensuring improved signposting; greater consistency in support to clients and employers after recruitment; and improved job/career progression information and advice;
- articulating clearly to employers the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and the offer that is being made.

Element 4 Joined-Up Infrastructure (Lead Partner: Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian)

We will initiate a process of joined-up funding and procurement which will be informed by:

- mapping the provision funded by the main partners;
- assessing the match with the desired pattern of services;
- aligning commissioning /procurement and contracting processes by funding partners
- identifying gaps in provision and opportunities to reduce duplication;
- pooling funds and resources where possible.

Initially we will use the Department for Work and Pensions Deprived Areas Fund to pilot joint procurement process.

Element 5 Improved Information Management (Lead Partner: Capital City Partnership)

We will make better use of data for monitoring of target outcomes and programme management. Capital City partnership will lead on the creation of a "virtual" ICT infrastructure to store and produce management information about clients of key partners.

- analysis of beneficiary pathways between multiple providers (tracking);

- analysis of target group profile and needs.

Element 6 Improving Sustained Employment (Lead Partners: Careers Scotland and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian)

Our aim is to improve sustainability of employment for City Strategy customers. Entrants to the job market with skills above the basic level are more likely to stay in employment and to progress within the workplace: therefore skills training and the achievement of industry recognised qualifications are a factor.

Element 7 Strategy Targets and Development (Lead Partner: Careers Scotland)

The overall target is an employment rate of 82% by 2014. Two headline targets for the Edinburgh City Strategy have already been agreed with the Department of Work and Pensions:

- a 3% stretch on the forecast reduction in benefit claimants across Incapacity Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance, and Income Support for Lone Parents;
- an increase in Edinburgh's employment rate from to 80.7% by May 2009.

We are currently developing a range of supporting targets and performance indicators to measure progress on identified local issues.

Element 8 Communications (Lead Partner: City of Edinburgh Council)

A fundamental element of success for the City Strategy will be our ability to improve communications. Our revised stakeholder analysis will be used to inform target audiences of the City Strategy aims – what we will do, how we will do it, what differences we will make and how to become involved in making a difference. Consultation will inform direction and will underpin other key programme elements.

The full business plan is available at:

http://www.joinedorforjobs.org.uk/employment/uploads/Edinburgh_CSP_-_Business_Plan_30-03-07.pdf

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