



RSL Employability Project Report

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1.0 Executive Summary

Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association commissioned Edinburgh Business Development (the social enterprise arm of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce) to carry out a research project focusing on the current and future role of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda.

Funded through Wider Role, the research began at the end of November 2008 and was concluded in March 2009.

Through a number of research methods including desk research, online surveys with RSLs and employability providers, focus groups with tenants and telephone surveys, key findings were identified and have been summarised into four main areas:

- Welfare reform and policy content
- Key findings from RSLs
- Key findings from employability providers
- Tenants' views

The RSLs that participated in the research we:

- Castle Rock Edinvar
- Trust, Hanover & Beild
- Link Group
- Manor Estates
- Muirhouse
- Lister
- Port of Leith Housing Association
- Dunedin Canmore
- Four other who preferred to remain anonymous

From these findings, a number of conclusions have been drawn and can be found in the conclusions section of this report. It is very clear that the ball is clearly in the court for anyone to play and RSLs do not need to do all the running, especially considering that around 70% of the tenants are the client group that all the employability providers wish to engage with. The question could be asked of why aren't RSL's doors being knocked down with offers of support/funding/assistance and how might we bring that more favourable situation about?

We would highlight the suggestions to improve communications and working relationships that came from participants in the research. These can be found in section 5.3 on page 21.

Fuller details of all research findings can be found in the appendices of this report. A funding guide and databases of survey findings have been produced separately.

2.0 Introduction & Project Objectives

With support from the Scottish Government's Wider Role funding, Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association commissioned Edinburgh Business Development in November 2008 to undertake research into the role of RSLs in delivering Edinburgh's employability agenda now and in the future. The objective of this piece of work was to carry out a study of RSLs, employability providers and tenants to achieve the following outputs:

- A summary document to outline the employability strategy for the City and the role RSLs could play in supporting the delivery of this.
- A mapping exercise across the City of Edinburgh to identify key relevant employability providers, their services, client groups, geographical range and funding, their plans for 2009 onwards, their offering and in particular where they see strong links with the RSL sector and its tenants.
- A synopsis of the impact the welfare reforms, and in particular the changes, such as Employment Support Allowance and the planned introduction of Flexible New Deal, will have on the employability sector and our neighbourhoods in Edinburgh.
- A funding guide for RSLs to identify resources to help deliver employability initiatives (provided as a separate document).
- An event in March 2009 for RSLs and employability providers to present the findings of the research and for further discussion and understanding.

3.0 Methodology

In order to achieve the project objectives, the follow methodology was used:

Familiarisation

Following an initial familiarisation meeting to establish the contacts and finalise the approach, a plan was agreed to contact the various tenants of the housing associations, RSLs and employability providers.

Desk research

Desk research was undertaken to identify and gather information on RSLs, employability providers, funding sources and welfare reform. Gaps in information were filled where possible through primary research.

Review of the Joined Up For Jobs (JU4J) website

Research was undertaken into employability providers and a review made of the JU4J website.

Surveys

Two online surveys were undertaken with RSLs and employability providers. Of the 21 RSLs contacted, 12 (57%) responded, and of the 72 employability providers, 33 (46%) responded. The aim of the surveys was to establish the range of employability services provided by RSLs and employability providers, levels of joint working, their opinions for further joint working and their opinions of the effects of welfare reforms. In addition, a face-to-face interview was undertaken with representatives of Dunedin Canmore Housing Association.

Databases of the RSLs and employability providers have been compiled and have been provided separately.

Focus groups & telephone interviews

Five focus groups were undertaken mainly with unemployed tenants of social housing providers. These were undertaken with support from Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, Castle Rock Edinvar, Gateway to Work, North Edinburgh Trust and Worktrack. In addition, four telephone surveys with housing association tenants were undertaken as a backup to the focus groups.

Event

An event was held on 2 March 2009 to share key findings from the research and to facilitate discussion on the next steps forward between RSLs and employability providers within Edinburgh.

Funding guide

Research was undertaken to identify resources to help deliver employability initiatives. These have been compiled into a separate document.

4.0 Key Research Findings

4.1 Welfare Reform & Strategy Context

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit for new claimants from 27 October 2008. This Allowance involves a new medical assessment called the Work Capability Assessment. It assesses what people can do, rather than what they cannot, and identifies the health-related support needed.

Most people claiming Employment and Support Allowance will be expected to take steps to prepare for work, including attending work focused interviews with their personal adviser.

Employment and Support Allowance consists of two phases:

- the assessment phase rate is paid for the first 13 weeks of claim while a decision is made on capability for work through the Work Capability Assessment
- the main phase starts from week 14 of claim, if the Work Capability Assessment shows that the illness or disability does limit a person's ability to work.

There are two groups within the main phase:

Work Related Activity Group

If placed in the Work Related Activity Group, a person will be expected to take part in work focused interviews with their personal adviser and will get support to help prepare for suitable work.

In return, the claimant will receive a work related activity component in addition to their basic rate.

Support Group

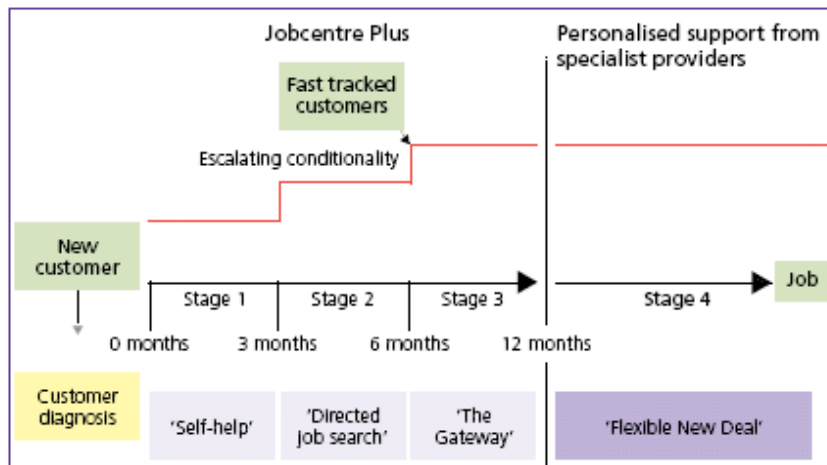
If placed in the Support Group because a person's illness or disability has a severe effect on their ability to work, they will not be expected to take part in any work but can do so on a voluntary basis if they want to. They will receive a support component in addition to their basic rate.

Currently the Employment Support Allowance is being introduced to new claimants only with existing claimants being assessed in October 2009. Most RSL's customers will be existing claimants.

Flexible New Deal

From October 2009, various New Deal programmes, the cornerstone of the Government's active labour market policies since 1997, will be replaced by the Flexible New Deal (FND). This may change due to the economic recession with numbers

increasing incrementally at present. The new programme will aim to find more effective ways to help more than 200,000 long-term unemployed people into work each year. Under FND, after 12 months of unemployment, claimants will be referred to private or third sector contractors, which will be paid by results to find them work. This new approach represents a radical shift in mainstream employment services. With up to £2 billion of contracts to be allocated over the next five years, and with the prospect of much more to come, it will be important to get the policy right.



Edinburgh City Strategy Pathfinder

Part of the Department for Work and Pension's Cities Strategies initiative, Edinburgh City Strategy Pathfinder is a new partnership involving the public, private and voluntary sectors, which aims to reduce the number of people on long term benefits by 2,755 by May 2009, and thereby increase the employment rate to 80.7%. Ultimately the aim is to increase the employment rate to 82% by 2014. To do this the strategy 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.

The vision is:

- To better integrate and manage the publicly-funded activities under control to optimise results.
- To 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.
- To increase effective co-operation with employers to enhance job entry rates and aid progression beyond entry-level jobs to improve employment sustainability.

To succeed in delivering the vision, the following 8 key programme elements have been highlighted:

- **Element 1** - A Clear Offer to Jobseekers (Lead Partner: Jobcentre Plus)
- **Element 2** - Greater Customer Reach (Lead Partner: City of Edinburgh Council)
- **Element 3** - A Clear Offer to Employers (Lead Partner: Jobcentre Plus)
- **Element 4** - Joined-Up Infrastructure (Lead Partner: formerly Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh & Lothian - now Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce)
- **Element 5** - Improved Information Management (Lead Partner: Capital City Partnership)
- **Element 6** - Improving Sustained Employment (Lead Partners: Careers Scotland and Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian)
- **Element 7** - Strategy Targets and Development (Lead Partner: Careers Scotland)
- **Element 8** - Communications (Lead Partner: City of Edinburgh Council)

More details can be found in **Appendix one**.

From the primary research undertaken by EBD, it is clear that there is no consensus of opinion on the likely effects that Welfare Reform will have on housing association tenants and employability.

The majority of the RSLs that participated in the research (75% of the respondents) had not and were not planning to make changes to the services they provided as a result of Welfare Reform.

However, many of the employability providers felt that Welfare Reform would have an impact on their organisations. A number of concerns were raised, including increased demand for their services and increased anxiety amongst service users, especially if they did not feel ready to move off of benefits. Concerns were expressed regarding the need for more joined up working amongst support and care providers, as well as organisations providing support into self-employment.

Of the RSL tenants that commented on the impact of Welfare Reform, some felt that it may make it more difficult for tenants to pay their rent, whilst others felt that it was too early to know the real impact of these changes.

The workshop participants (who included representatives from RSLs and employability providers) also commented that it was too early to know about the impact of Welfare Reform. However they mentioned a number of issues of importance, namely:

- When more information is known about Welfare Reform that JU4J use their networks to communicate the message to key stakeholders.
- Greater simplicity, flexibility and clarity were needed about the 'in work' benefit system.
- There needed to be focus not only on those farthest from the labour market but also on the newly unemployed.
- There needed to be a continuing focus on support for those with health issues who are returning to work.

4.2 Key Findings from RSLs

Of the 21 RSLs that were identified as operating within the Edinburgh area, 14 (67%) participated in the research either by emailed surveys, by telephone follow up or face to face.

When questioned about the initiatives they provided to support tenants back into work, 71% of the RSLs that responded said they provided benefits advice, with 43% offering signposting. Employability training and community events were provided by 36% of respondents.

	No. of Respondents	% of sample
Benefits advice	10	71
Signposting	6	43
Employability training	5	36
Community Events	5	36
Careers Training	4	29
TOIL project	2	1
Careers guidance at schools	1	1
Access to employment opportunities for BME communities	1	1
Social Care Academy	1	1
Trainee opportunities within trades team	1	1
Early intervention work soft skills	1	1
Job opportunities support	1	1
Careers in housing	1	1

Some of the RSLs that participated in the research provided specific details on some of the employment and training initiatives in which they were actively involved. Included in these key initiatives were:

- **TOIL Project** – (Training Opportunities in Lothian) offers 6 months paid work experience placements to young people leaving school with few or no qualifications. Backed up with in-house training and career guidance, the initiative was developed by Port of Leith Housing Association and now involves other housing associations such as Dunedin Canmore and Castle Rock Edinvar as well as agencies such as Skills Development Scotland, Careers Scotland and funding from Fairer Scotland. The placements are with local firms in a variety of trades, to give trainees real experience and skills that employers are looking for as well as a salary. Some of the placements have been with Bilston Operations, part of the Dunedin Canmore Group, which has a turnover of £1.2m and growing. It provides landscaping and property maintenance services to housing associations, although most of its work (70% - 80%) comes through Dunedin Canmore. Five apprentices are included in the workforce of 60 people. The company also provides a mobile caretaking service (including litter clearing), in the Hyvotts area, although the service is expanding across south Edinburgh. With a steady growth of 10-15% a year, the service has created two new jobs.
- **Edinburgh Construction Apprenticeship Programme** – this is a partnership between 7 housing associations (Dunedin Canmore, Places for People, Prospect, Home Scotland, Margaret Blackwood, Port of Leith and Hillcrest) that builds on the Hillcrest model. Working with two contractors – Hart Builders and J Smart and Co, the programme has enabled the companies to take on 4 joinery apprentices each. With the apprenticeships lasting for 4 years and training delivered by Hillcrest, the apprentices are trained at the Bilston workshop in Midlothian. The success of the programme has been limited as the contractors do not have a consistent construction contract, which means they have struggled to sustain more apprentices. The original intention was to employ 16 apprentices, but the economic downturn has made this difficult.
- **Social Care Academy**
Castle Rock Edinvar has been involved in the Social Care academy that provides a 5 week training programme which underpins the key areas for an SVQ that prepares people for work in Social Care, The initiative is aimed at unemployed people in local communities, though not exclusively tenants. Over 60 people gained work through this route so far. The programme is partly funded by Wider Role.
- **Youthbuild Scotland**
In collaboration with three other non-Edinburgh based RSLs, the Link Group works with Barnardos, local authorities, Job Centre Plus and other public sector agencies to help young unemployed tenants to build employment and training skills mainly in the construction industry. This year, the initiative benefited an estimated 10 people. Partners have included Action for Children Scotland, EDI/Parc and Capital City Partnership. Link has also worked with Falkirk Council

and provided employment and training opportunities via Falkirk Council benefiting about 14 people. Funding for this initiative has come from Wider Role and Inspiring Scotland. Muirhouse is looking to develop Youthbuild in its own area and is also working with North Edinburgh Trust to develop a similar style of employment training initiative.

- **Job Opportunities Support Project**
Involving Trust, Hanover and Bield, this project is aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Edinburgh. Some 285 clients were provided with one-to-one support and guidance, with 48 gaining employment, 15 completing work placements, 20 being sign-posted for Further Education courses and 5 taking up voluntary work to enhance their skills. The RSLs worked closely with Careers Scotland, Women Onto Work, Linknet Mentoring, Public Sector Academy, Skillnet, Colleges and Working for Families. Funding for the initiative came from Communities Scotland and the Capital City Partnership.
- **Trained Up** – this IT training project was developed by Dunedin Canmore and Everybody Online Gorgie-Dalry, working with Stevenson College and West Edinburgh Action. Run at 3 locations – Gorgie Dalry, Gilmerton and Oxfords, it offers three stages of training:
 - Stage 1: beginner IT sessions
 - Stage 2: qualifications including ECDL and MOS
 - Stage 3: train the trainer – to become volunteer tutors and help with the beginner level.

30 people so far have been through the project stages 1 and 2, with 12 completing stage 3. At least one person has moved into employment as a result.

- **Escalator Project** – Led by Prospect Community Housing Association in partnership with Dunedin Canmore with support from West Edinburgh Action, this 'door-knocking' project began in Oct 08, with a target to speak to 400 households in 6 months. Two staff are funded by Wider Action. The aim is to reach hard to reach groups and talk about employability support.
- **Money Advice / Welfare Rights** – this is a joint initiative between Dunedin Canmore, Castle Rock Edinvar, Margaret Blackwood, Port of Leith, Hillcrest (Dundee-based housing association) and the Citizens Advice Edinburgh. There is a shared team of 3 Money Advice workers and associated admin support.
- A **youth café** at Slateford Green (Dunedin Canmore) – working mainly with 13-15 year olds, but can go up to 17 years. The project uses art to engage with the young people and integrates employability-related skills and information into the activities. Some of the young people are working on a community art wall. They have a core group of 25-30 young people.
- **Skills for Life** – in partnership with Project Scotland and Prospect, this Dunedin Canmore initiative focuses on providing volunteering opportunities for 16-25 year

olds along with employability training and mentoring. With support from West Edinburgh Action, the initiative works with 10 young people, who commit to 30 hours a month for 3 months. They receive £55 a week to help them move off of benefits. Volunteers were placed in Dunedin Canmore, Smile Childcare and the Bike Station. The aim of the initiative is to build soft skills and pre-placement work experience. Mentoring support is also provided by HBOS and RBS. Priority on the scheme is given to tenants, although it is open to the local community.

This is not a comprehensive list of initiatives undertaken by Edinburgh's RSLs. However these activities were mentioned during the research and highlight some good examples of the range of innovative approaches and collaborative working that is being undertaken, not only between RSLs, but also with employability providers. It is clear that many of them are making a positive contribution to the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda.

As mentioned previously, the majority of the RSLs that participated in the research were not planning to make changes to their services as a result of the Welfare Reform. Feedback from the workshop suggested that it was still too soon to know what affect the changes would have and that RSLs should be kept updated as further information becomes available.

Would you like to get involved in providing training or employability initiatives in the future?	
Yes (already involved)	7 (50%)
Yes (not involved just now but want to be)	1 (1%)
No (not involved just now)	1 (1%)
Not Sure (not involved just now)	5 (36)%

Half the RSLs that participated in the research were currently involved in employment and training initiatives and intended to continue doing so in the future. Of the remaining RSLs, only one stated that it was not currently involved in employment and training initiatives and had no intention in becoming involved in the future. The other 6 RSLs (43%) said that they may be interested in becoming involved in the future.

Less than half of the RSLs that responded (43%) were aware of where to access funding for training or employment initiatives and had done so in the past. However, the majority said they were either unsure or did not know where to go for funding to support training and employability activities.

4.3 Key Findings from Employability Providers

Through the research, 72 employability providers were identified in the Edinburgh area. Details from the current Joined Up for Jobs (JU4J) website on their range of services, client groups and areas of coverage have been compiled in a separate Excel file and provided to Castle Rock Edinvar. All of the providers were emailed surveys and followed up with telephone calls. Of those who received the online survey, 39 (54%) responded.

Edinburgh's employability providers offer a wide range of services across the city and support a range of client groups. From the JU4J website (sample base of 72 employability providers), the breakdown on the range of clients supported can be seen in the table below:

Client Groups	No. of Employability Providers	% of Employability Providers
Unemployed over 12 months	40	56
Unemployed in receipt of other benefit	39	54
Unemployed over 6 months	38	53
Unemployed in receipt of JSA	38	53
Unemployed, not in receipt of state benefits	34	47
Unemployed under 6 months	32	44
No Qualifications	28	39
All Jobseekers	24	33
Part-time Employed (less than 16 hours per week)	22	31
Mental Health Difficulties (specialist service)	16	22
Physical Ill Health/Disability (Specialist Service)	15	21
Young People (specialist service)	13	18
Learning Difficulties (Specialist Service)	11	15
Drug and/or Alcohol Misusers (specialist service)	11	15
Ex-offenders (Specialist Service)	10	14
Over 50s (Specialist Service)	8	11
Lone Parent (specialist service)	8	11
Homeless People (specialist service)	8	11
Minority Ethnic (Specialist Service)	7	10
Women (specialist service)	6	8
Care Leavers	4	6
Refugees/Asylum Seekers (specialist service)	2	3
School leavers	2	3
Jobseekers and unemployed for more than 3 years	1	1
People with acquired brain injury or strokes	1	1
People with autistic spectrum disorder	1	1
Schoolchildren	1	1
Private and Commercial, ILA Branded	1	1
Work with BME clients with mental health problems	1	1

The core services provided by the employability providers are:

Core Services	No. of Employability Providers	% of Employability Providers
Help with CVs and applications	59	82
Help with Job Search	57	79
Interview Techniques	55	76
Confidence Building/ personal Development	54	75
Careers Advice and Guidance	52	72
Employment Advice	50	69
Initial Assessment	50	69
Job Skills Training	46	64
Identifying Literacy/ Numeracy Problems	44	61
Basic Skills Training	43	60
Awareness Raising for Employers	43	60
Aftercare	42	58
Unpaid Work Placements	41	57
Prevocational Training	37	51
Basic IT Training	34	47
Benefits Calculation and Advice	31	43
Support with Mental Health Problems	26	36
Other Qualifications	24	33
Self employment enterprise	23	32
Money Advice/Debt Counselling	22	31
VQ Training	18	25
Guaranteed Job Interviews on Programme Completion	17	24
Support for Ex-offenders	17	24
Accommodation Advice	17	24
Support for Drug Misusers	16	22
Childcare advice and Support	16	22

In addition to the wide range of employment advice, training and support services offered by the employability providers, the online survey identified a range of additional services that were being provided, including:

- Anxiety management
- Anger Management
- Training in construction and building skills
- Advice on colleges courses
- Training in horticulture
- Conservation
- Sustainability
- Life skills

- Food and mood
- Information on accessing Volunteering Opportunities
- Disclosure of convictions advice
- Advice on employment rights and role of trade unions
- Advice on student finance
- Disability Discrimination
- Independent Living
- Maintaining Mental Health
- Advanced IT
- Job Coaching
- E-Learning
- Accountability
- Team Working
- Equality and Diversity

In terms of geographical coverage, the employability providers listed on the JU4J website serviced the following areas:

	No. of Employability Providers	% of Employability Providers
Edinburgh Wide	57	79
North Edinburgh	15	21
South Edinburgh	13	18
East Edinburgh	11	15
West Edinburgh	12	17
Lothian Outside Edinburgh	41	57
Outside Lothian	16	22
All	15	21

From this table, it can be seen that the city of Edinburgh geographically is well serviced by employability providers.

Of those employability providers who participated in the survey, 23 (59%) said they were planning to deliver further services in the future. New and/or further services that were mentioned by the respondents included:

- Literacy services
- Softer skills for people living with HIV or Hepatitis C
- Programmes to work with people experiencing mental health issues
- Intermediate IT training
- Outreach services
- Lone parent programmes
- Ongoing support for people with individuals goals
- Working with adults and school leavers with learning disabilities
- Transition service linking in with schools
- Employer liaison
- Employability training to external key workers working with substance users

- An open programme for young people including building skills in key personal and social skills and independent living
- Job retention and supported employment

Less than half of the employability providers that participated in the survey (44% of respondents) said that they provided 'specialist' advice. Some of the areas in which additional support from employability providers were provided included:

- Budgeting and debt management
- Outreach support
- Money management
- Mental health management
- Self employment issues
- Anti discrimination advice

Only 7 (18%) of the employability providers that participated in the survey said that they had worked with RSLs to help tenants into employment.

However 9 (23%) said they had plans to work with RSLs in the future to help people into training and employment.

Unless they were involved with RSLs themselves, very few of the employability providers were aware of employment and training initiatives where RSLs and employability providers were working together.

Of the employability providers that participated in the survey, only 5 (13%) felt that there was effective co-operation between employability providers and RSLs. However 18 of them (46%) felt that their organisation would benefit from having closer links to RSLs.

Some suggestions on the ways in which co-operation could be improved included:

- A forum for discussion and information sharing
- Increased awareness in RSLs of employment services and better referral links
- More networking opportunities and links to networks such as Joined Up for Jobs, Lothian Employability Forum, etc.

Of the employability providers that were surveyed, 18 (46%) believed that recent changes to the welfare reform would impinge upon their organisation, with 22 (56%) believing they will impinge upon the employability sector in Edinburgh.

Overall, the employability providers that responded had a good knowledge of a range of potential funding sources for their work. Some 34 of them (87%) indicated that they were aware of at least one of the listed funding sources including City Strategy Pathfinder, Big Lottery, New Deal, Access to Work, Training for Work and Get Ready for Work. However, their levels of awareness of other funding streams were significantly lower, and these included ERDF, ESF and Fairer Scotland.

4.4 Key Findings from Tenants

From carrying out the five tenant focus groups and the four tenant telephone surveys, a number of key findings were identified. We would add the caveat that this was a small sample size and not broadly representative to draw firm conclusions.

- Tenants didn't view employability support as part of the remit of housing associations. However they were largely keen on their RSLs being involved in the provision of this type of service, which they felt they would be interested in using.
- Tenants felt that current RSL newsletters could be developed further to include job opportunities, training opportunities and signposting to other support agencies. They also mentioned that these types of opportunity could be promoted more widely by using, for example, email, posters and notice boards.
- Many of the tenants who participated felt that, whilst highly valued, it was often difficult to access welfare rights workers as there was a high demand for their services.
- Interview techniques and CV building skills were two areas mentioned by the tenants where they felt that their RSLs could offer additional support to help them back into employment.
- Tenants mentioned that they would be interested in their RSLs providing employment and training initiatives e.g. apprenticeships, work placements and training programmes. (Some of the RSLs were already involved in these types of initiative, but tenants were unaware of them). In addition, some of the tenants suggested that their RSL could offer financial support to do courses particularly where there are gaps in funding from the Scottish Awards Agency (SAAS).
- Additional employability support services mentioned by the tenants included local "job clubs" organised by their housing association.
- Some of the tenants felt that access to suitable childcare was a barrier to looking for employment, and any support in this area would be gratefully received.
- Some of the tenants felt that connections and signposting to employability providers (including Jobcentre Plus) were mixed and could be improved to provide a more joined-up service.

4.5 Funding Guide

The funding guide has been produced to help promote transparency in funding and to identify resources to help deliver employability initiatives (provided as a separate document).

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 RSL Involvement in Employability Services

There are 27 Housing Associations and/or co-operatives with social rented housing in Edinburgh. In previous studies it has been shown that between 60% to 80% of social housing tenants are not economically active. This creates pockets of deprivation across the city wherever socially rented stock exists. Where there are new large scale developments in the city there is a requirement to include a provision of 25% affordable housing. This can create new areas where there are concentrations of benefit dependent people, supported by RSL's, which did not exist previously.

One of the key drivers for RSL's to become involved in the employability agenda is help their customers to sustain their tenancies. Secure long term employment for tenants although not the only solution goes a long way to achieving this. That being said the transition period in to employment can cause many problems around changing benefits and as a consequence tenants falling behind on rent payments.

Sustained tenancies and economic activity also helps with community cohesion which can help reduce anti social behaviour and associated problems.

It is impossible to strip out many of the welfare/social inclusion factors from employability and this is part of the whole great customer reach rationale and benefits do have an impact on individual's employability decision making. The majority of RSLs that participated in the research (71%) provided benefits advice to their tenants. However less than half (43%) said that they offered signposting to employability providers, with only 36% saying they provided employability training and community events. Given that only two thirds of Edinburgh's RSLs participated in the research, this suggests that there is considerable scope for more RSLs, as part of their Wider Role function, to become involved in contributing to the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda.

Some good examples of innovative approaches and collaborative working between RSLs, as well as employability providers, were identified through the research. These included the TOIL Project, a youth café, shared resources to provide benefits and money advice, the Edinburgh Construction Apprenticeship Programme, Skills for Life, Trained Up IT project, Escalator Project, Youthbuild Scotland, Job Opportunities Support Project and the Social Care Academy. It was clear that many of these initiatives were making a positive contribution to the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda.

Those RSLs that were currently involved in employment and training initiatives intended to continue their involvement in the future. Most of them had a good understanding of possible funding streams for their work but were looking for clarity and transparency on some sources.

However, most of the RSLs that weren't currently involved in any initiatives indicated that they may be interested in becoming involved in the future although they were unsure at this stage. One factor that may have been contributing towards their lack of involvement

to date was a lack of awareness of possible funding sources. A further issue was around the skills and resources needed to become actively involved.

Through the funding guide produced as part of this project, information should now be available to help RSLs and their partners to identify sources of funding to support the delivery of training and employability initiatives.

The pressure points/gaps that clearly exist are that funding that is available is largely for the development and delivery of large scale projects. Providers are restricted to short-term, uncertain funding available through programmes such as the Cities Strategy Pathfinder and/or EU structural funds. Establishing relationships with UK-wide employability (particularly DWP and Jobcentre Plus) is essential.

5.2 Welfare Reform

At the time of this research many of the programmes introduced under Welfare Reform had only recently come into force. It is important that updated information is made available to help improve how RSLs plan or develop in this changing policy environment.

There is no consensus of opinion on the likely effects that Welfare Reform will have on housing association tenants and employability. On the whole, Edinburgh's RSLs were not planning to make changes to the services they provided as a result of Welfare Reform. However, many of the employability providers felt that Welfare Reform would have an impact on their organisations, including increased demand for their services and increased anxiety amongst service users, especially if they did not feel ready to move off of benefits. Some of the housing association tenants felt that Welfare Reform may result in increased difficulty for some tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Overall, there was a view that it was still too early to know the real impact of these changes. However, there was scope for improved information-sharing between employability providers, RSLs and other stakeholders on Welfare Reform and its impacts on tenants. There was also a need for greater simplicity, flexibility and clarity about the 'in work' benefit system.

The current economic recession is likely to increase the number of people looking for employment in an increasingly competitive labour market. In light of this, it was felt that the focus of employability support on those furthest from the labour market should widen to include help for individuals who have become newly unemployed. The provision of volunteering opportunities, work experience, skills development and practical support will be important for both client groups. There is considerable scope for employability providers to work in partnership with RSLs to address these needs.

5.3 Employability Service Provision

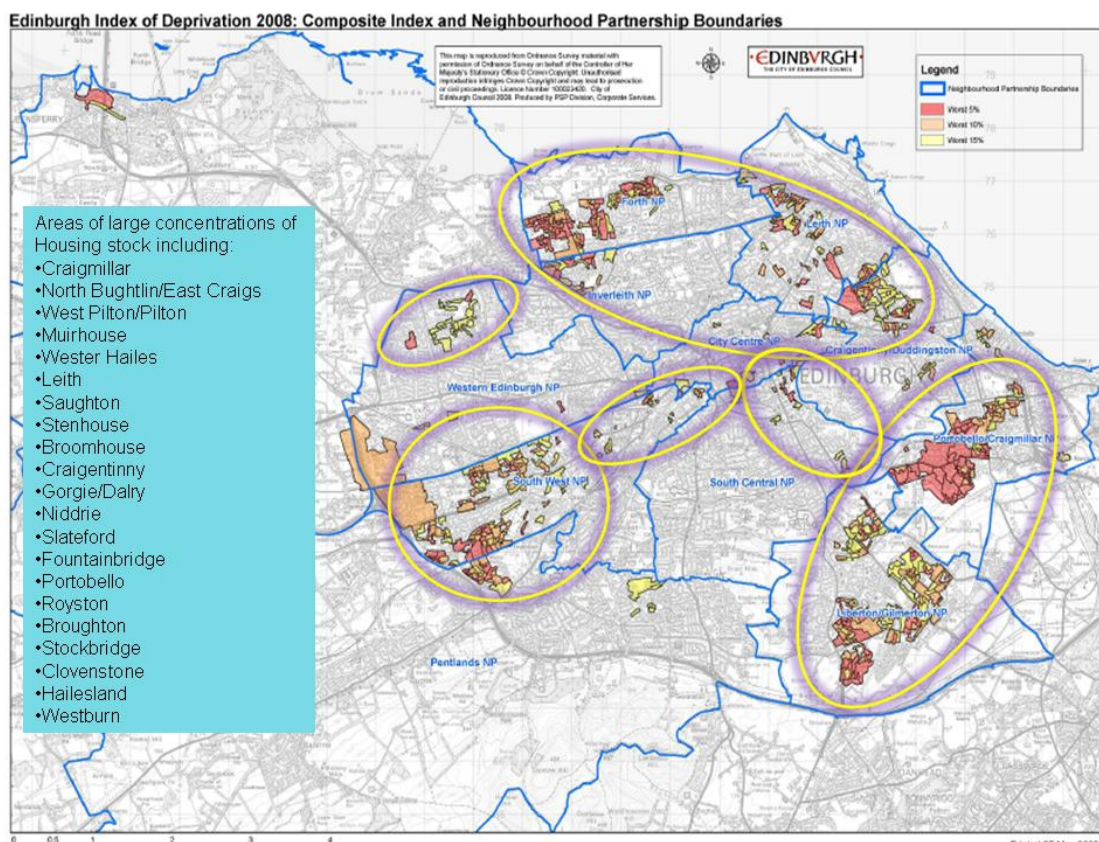
From looking at the provision of employability services across Edinburgh, it is clear that there is a good and diverse spread throughout the city, with many providers operating in the same areas as RSLs (although not always together).

A full list of employability providers can be found at the following website:

<http://www.joinedupforjobs.org.uk/online-directory.html>

Many of these agencies target specific groups (e.g. lone parents, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people with drug and alcohol dependency etc.) and, whilst some cover the whole of the city, many have a specific geographic coverage in particular areas of the city. As this is often based on areas of multiple deprivation, it also ties in where much of the RSL stock is located.

Unless they were involved with RSLs themselves, very few of the employability providers were aware of employment and training initiatives where RSLs and employability providers were working together.



Having mapped the housing stock of the main RSLs in Edinburgh, there is a very clear link to the existing areas of deprivation in the city and the map above attempts to show where the stock (in the oval shapes) matches the areas of deprivation (marked in red).

One of the most frequent concerns from this piece of research has been the need to improve information sharing between the RSLs and employability providers. With less than a fifth of employability providers having worked with RSLs in the past, there is clearly an opportunity for greater collaboration and more effective co-operation

to help tenants back into employment. At present it is felt that not enough relevant information is shared and when it is shared, information is not always passed on soon enough.

A number of barriers to information sharing can be identified and these include:

- Concerns about data protection
- Concerns about confidentiality
- The concerns of service users
- Constraints upon time and resources

Improvements to information sharing can only be made through effective partnership working.

RSLs, employability providers and other stakeholders could make improvements by working together and developing an information sharing protocol through:

- Information sharing protocols
- Confidentiality policies
- Confidentially statements
- Common consent forms

Detailed suggestions for improving communication and working relationships between RSLs and employability providers include:

- Better use by RSLs of existing networks and websites, such as Joined Up for Jobs;
- The development of a shared commitment to work together to engage with harder to reach groups and those further away from the labour market;
- A neighbourhoods approach targeting resources in to areas with large concentrations of social housing where no current local area focus is operating
- Working together to develop a common assessment of clients' needs;
- Continuing to work in partnership on employability initiatives that are delivering outcomes;
- Improving partnership working between RSLs and employability providers by breaking down some of the complexities and bureaucracies of both types of organisation to ensure there is greater transparency and a greater focus on the delivery of front line services;
- The development of a more effective signposting service to other employment/self employment providers e.g. Business Gateway, Job Centres and local employment agencies;
- The development of job clubs by RSLs, in collaboration with local employability providers;
- Joint targeting of specific client groups, such as young people, lone parents, over 50s, etc.;
- The development of connections between RSL newsletters and the Joined Up for Jobs newsletter, Working Capital;

- Increasing the promotion of employability services in general, including the use of case studies in newsletters to promote success stories;
- Using RSLs' trusted, locally rooted relationships with tenants and knowledge of employability issues to inform the Joined Up for Jobs strategy.

Scope also exists to improve communication, particularly in the areas of training and employability support and opportunities, with RSL tenants. On the whole, tenants were unaware that RSLs had a Wider Role remit and that the provision of employability support could be part of it. Even tenants of those RSLs that were engaged in a range of employability initiatives were largely unaware that they were taking place. However they were keen on their RSLs being involved in the provision of this type of service, as they felt that RSLs had a trusted relationship with their tenants.

Suggestions on ways to improve communication of employability opportunities to tenants included:

- The development of current RSL newsletters to include training and job opportunities (internal and external to the RSLs), and to promote links to other support agencies;
- The use of email and notice boards to promote these opportunities;
- The provision of information for tenants on employability e.g. in tenants' handbooks, community newsletters, notice boards, drop-in surgeries, etc.;
- The use of case studies to promote success stories for tenants
- Stronger connections to employability providers (including Jobcentre Plus);
- Targeting hard to reach neighbourhoods through direct mail from RSL's

In addition, some of the tenants felt that their RSLs could offer additional support in the areas of interview techniques, CV building skills and confidence building. Others felt that support with suitable childcare would help them to look for employment. Some of these are core services offered by many employability providers and could be provided to tenants in collaboration with them.

2.4 Next Steps

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSLs to identify partnership opportunities and working | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>How</u></p> <p>2-way process and more meetings between the RSLs and the employability providers is recommended</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative approaches and collaborative working between RSLs, and employability providers, to make a positive contribution to the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda. | <p>Involvement in the Greater Customer Reach group and the development of an action plan will help</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSLs to offer signposting to employability providers, provide employability training and community events. As part of their Wider Role | <p>RSLs are putting in applications for wider role funding applications that</p> |

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>function, RSLs should look to become more involved in contributing to the delivery of Edinburgh's employability agenda. It is important to build on the work carried out and continue to play a greater customer reach role</p> | <p>support the work of the employability providers. JU4J could arrange an annual of bi-annual event to look at further joint working</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RSLs and partners to identify sources of funding to support the delivery of training and employability initiatives and look at the possibility of joint funding applications. This might be through further wider role funding through the RSLs rather than traditional funding routes. | <p>Further cross collaboration through attending meetings</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved knowledge management strategy between employability providers, RSLs and other stakeholders. Making improvements by working together and developing an information sharing protocol for greater collaboration and more effective co-operation | <p>The Jobs Strategy Group will discuss this research paper and make recommendations for better collaboration, communication and joint working</p> |

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Welfare Reform & Strategy Context

Appendix 2 – RSL Online Survey Findings Report

Appendix 3 – Dunedin Canmore Housing Association Interview

Appendix 4 – Employability Providers Online Survey Findings Report

Appendix 5 – Tenant Focus Groups (Gateway to Work)

Appendix 6 – Tenant Phone Interviews

Appendix 7 – RSL & Employability Provider Workshop

Appendix 1

Welfare Reform & Strategy Context

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit for new claimants from 27 October 2008. This Allowance involves a new medical assessment called the Work Capability Assessment. This assesses what people can do, rather than what they cannot, and identifies the health-related support needed.

Most people claiming Employment and Support Allowance will be expected to take steps to prepare for work, including attending work focused interviews with their personal adviser.

Employment and Support Allowance consists of two phases:

- the assessment phase rate is paid for the first 13 weeks of claim while a decision is made on capability for work through the Work Capability Assessment
- the main phase starts from week 14 of claim, if the Work Capability Assessment shows that the illness or disability does limit a person's ability to work.

There are two groups within the main phase:

Work Related Activity Group

If placed in the Work Related Activity Group, a person will be expected to take part in work focused interviews with their personal adviser and will get support to help prepare for suitable work.

In return, the claimant will receive a work related activity component in addition to their basic rate.

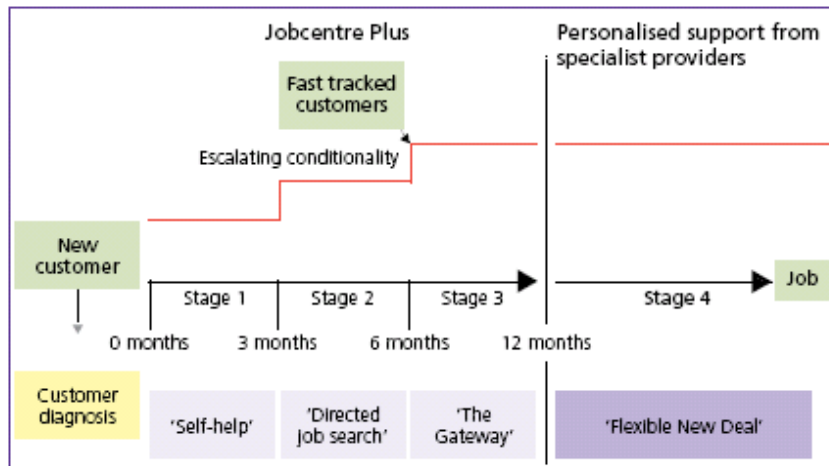
Support Group

If placed in the Support Group because a person's illness or disability has a severe effect on their ability to work, they will not be expected to take part in any work but can do so on a voluntary basis if wanted. They will receive a support component in addition to their basic rate.

Flexible New Deal

From October 2009, various New Deal programmes, the cornerstone of the Government's active labour market policies since 1997, will be replaced by the Flexible New Deal (FND). The new programme will aim to find more effective ways to help more than 200,000 long-term unemployed people into work each year. Under FND, after 12 months of unemployment, claimants will be referred to private or third sector contractors, which will be paid by results to find them work. This new approach represents a radical shift in mainstream employment services. With up to £2 billion of contracts to be

allocated over the next five years, and with the prospect of much more to come, it will be important to get the policy right.



A Cities Strategy Pathfinder

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 (now Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce))

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

For further information contact Matthew Crighton | Job Strategy Manager | Capital City Partnership| The Canon Mill, 1 -3 Canon Street, Edinburgh, EH3 5HE | Tel +44 131 270 6042| matthewcrighton@capitalcitypartnership.org

Appendix 2

RSL Online Survey Findings

Of 21 RSLs that were contacted, 14 responded, which equates to a 67% response rate.

Sample base: 14

Respondents were:

Castle Rock Edinvar
Trust, Hanover and Bield (joint return)
Link Group
Manor Estates
Muirhouse
Lister
POLHA
Dunedin Canmore
4 anonymous

Qu 2) Initiatives provided to support tenants back into work

	No. of Respondents	% of sample
Benefits advice	10	71
Signposting	6	43
Employability training	5	36
Community Events	5	36
Careers Training	4	29
TOIL project	2	1
Careers guidance at schools	1	1
Access to employment opportunities for BME communities	1	1
Social Care Academy	1	1
Trainee opportunities within trades team	1	1
Early intervention work soft skills	1	1
Job opportunities support	1	1
Careers in housing	1	1

Question 3 and Question 4**What specific initiatives e.g. employment and training are RSL involved with?****Link Group**

Established a social enterprise for its tenants and other unemployed people that benefits about 15 people per annum. The RSL partnered with 3 other (non Edinburgh) RSLs, local authority, Communities Scotland and Job centre plus.

Same respondent set up Youthbuild Scotland aimed at young unemployed tenants benefiting an estimated 10 people this year. They partnered with Action for Children Scotland and EDI/Parc with Capital City Partnership. They also partnered with Falkirk Council and provided employment and training opportunities via Falkirk Council benefiting about 14 people. Funding for these initiatives came from Wider Role and Inspiring Scotland.

The lessons learnt from this respondent was that regulatory framework for RSLs is often restrictive.

Trust, Hanover, Bield :

Job Opportunities Support Project aimed at Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Edinburgh. 285 clients were provided one to one support and guidance, 48 gained employment, 15 work placements were completed, 20 sign posted for FE courses, 5 accepted voluntary work to enhance their skills.

The associations worked closely with Careers Scotland, Women Onto Work, Linknet Mentoring, Public Sector Academy, Skillnet, Colleges and Working for Families. Funding was gained from Communities Scotland and the Capital City Partnership.

Lessons learnt were that there is a need to support Public and Housing Sector in attracting Minority Ethnic individuals to seek employment opportunities with them and BME individuals needs support and guidance to get into the job market.

POLHA

Training Opportunities in Lothian (TOIL) aimed at NEET Category (Not currently in employment or education or training) Skills Development Scotland, Careers Scotland and Fairer Scotland all involved and helped with funding.

Castle Rock Edinvar

Social Care Academy aimed at unemployed but not necessarily tenants. Over 50 people benefited into work and Wider Role funding was used.

Also linked in with TOIL project providing trainee placements and Harts and Smarts Initiative.

The organisation has an in house Financial Inclusion team, providing welfare benefits and money advice to their customers as well as leading on a Money Advice project with 4 other housing associations.

Dunedin Canmore

TOIL and Professional Careers in Housing. One young person and 2 disabled persons benefited. POLHA and Glasgow Centre for Independent Living were partners. Wider

Role funding was accessed. Lessons learnt were that a high degree of administration is required and the day to day overheads can be high. (See Appendix 3 for more details of initiatives).

Question 5

Have recent changes in benefits influenced the services you provide?	
Yes	-
No	9 (64%)
Not sure	3 (21%)
No Response	2 (1%)

Question 6

Do you have any training or employability initiatives planned for the future?

Polha

Yes - TOIL programme is ongoing

Muirhouse

Yes - Youthbuild model with Barnados Works and North Edinburgh Trust.

This will provide 26 week placements for young people between 16 and 24 years old.

Link

Yes - Youthbuild Scotland, and too many to list across central Scotland

Castle Rock

Yes - TOIL

Trust, Hanover, Bield

Yes - looking for further funding to continue Job Opportunities Support project

Question 7

Would you like to get involved in providing training or employability initiatives in the future?	
Yes (already involved)	7 (50%)
Yes (not involved just now but want to be)	1 (1%)
No	1 (1%)
Not Sure	5 (36%)

Question 8

Are you aware of where to access funding for training or employment initiatives?	
Yes	6 (43%) - All of these had already accessed funding for their projects named in Question 3 & 4
No	5 (36%)
Not Sure	3 (21%)

Appendix 3

Dunedin Canmore Housing Association Interview

16 January 2009

Dunedin runs a tenants forum which is mainly attended by people of the average age of 65. It recognised the need for a welfare rights service for tenants as many older people were not claiming the benefits to which they were entitled. The welfare rights officers are able to link benefits to employability.

Dunedin provides a quarterly tenants' newsletter (copies on file)

Initiatives in which it is involved are:

A **youth café** at Slateford Green – working mainly with 13-15 year olds, but can go up to 17 years. The project uses art to engage with the young people and injects employability-related skills and information into the work. Some of the young people are working on a community art wall. They have a core group of 25-30 young people.

Benefits Advice / Welfare Rights – this is a joint initiative with Dunedin, Castle Rock Edinvar, Margaret Blackwood, PoLHA and Hillcrest (Dundee-based housing association). There is a shared team of 3 Money Advice Workers and part time admin support..

Edinburgh Construction Apprenticeship Programme – this is a partnership between housing associations (Dunedin, Places for People, Prospect – poss one more), building on the Hillcrest model. They have two contractors – Harts and Smarts builders who have taken on 4 apprentices (joinery) each. They are trained at the Bilston workshop in Midlothian. The apprenticeship last for 4 years and the training is delivered by Hillcrest HA. They don't have a consistent construction contract so they struggle to sustain more apprentices – they had wanted 16 but the downturn made this difficult. Dunedin's role is to facilitate and provide opportunities.

TOIL Project – Dunedin engages with the TOIL Project, which is a collaboration with PoLHA. Part of the Dunedin Canmore Group, Bilston Operations has a turnover of £1.2m and growing. It provides landscaping and property maintenance services to housing associations. It receives 70-80% of its work from Dunedin. It employs 60 people – including 5 apprentices. It is also providing a mobile caretaking service (inc litter clearing), currently in the Hyvotts area, but spreading across south Edinburgh. It clears £300 of rubbish filled skips a week. It is an extension of the operations team and is growing at 10-15% a year and has created 2 new jobs.

Skills for Life – project in partnership with Project Scotland – focusing on providing volunteering opportunities for 16-25 year olds along with employability training and mentoring. Working with 10 young people with support from West Edinburgh Action, 30hrs a month for 3 months and receive £55 a week to help them come off benefits. 2

volunteers were placed in Dunedin, others in Smile Childcare and the Bike Station. The aim is to build soft skills and pre-placement work experience. There is mentoring by HBOS and RBS as well. First priority is tenants but open to the local community. This is run in collaboration with other housing associations.

Trained Up – an IT project working with Stevenson and West Edinburgh Action:

Stage 1: beginner IT sessions

Stage 2: ECDL MOS

Stage 3: train the trainer – to become volunteer tutors and help with the beginner level.

It is run at 3 locations – Gorgie Dalry, Gilmerton and Oxbgangs

30 people have been through the project stages 1 and 2 and 12 through stage 3. One person got a job with ECTA!

Escalator Project – run with West Edinburgh Action – door knocking project, began in Oct 08 targeted to speak to 400 households in 6 months. Two staff are funded by Wider Action. The aim is to reach hard to reach groups and talk about employability support

Dunedin Harbour Hostel – short stay facility for homeless people, with advice officers who help to stabilise them a support to gain a tenancy. Refer to Edinburgh Furniture Initiative and help build social networks

Link Housing Association are leading on the Youth Build project, working with Action for Children Scotland. Scope for a national project working with 16-18 year olds into construction

There has been a clash with Muirhouse HA, NET and Barnardos and the Networks project?

Funding Sources

Wider Role (HA specific)

Lottery

Grant-making trusts – Moffat, Robertson, HBOS, Cruden Foundation

Suppliers – when appropriate

Welfare Reform

Dunedin has 5000 tenants, 70% of whom are on benefits.

60%-70% of tenants are on full housing benefit

At least 20% are on Incapacity Benefit so welfare reform may affect them.

Not sure what will happen due to welfare reform, may stigmatise people more and may make it harder for people to

Reduction in grants and benefits will leave gaps – greater need for partnership working and Wider Role funding.

Appendix 4

Employability Providers Online Survey Findings Report

Results of Survey sent to Employability Providers

The survey was sent out to 72 employability providers with 39 responding, a 54% response rate. More details of the survey findings have been provided separately as an Excel database.

Sample base: 39 respondents

Question 2

All respondents currently provide at least one of the following services:

- Employment Advice
- Help with CVs
- Help with Job Applications
- Interview Techniques
- Confidence Building
- Basic Skills Training

In addition, some respondents stated other services they currently provide and these are:

- Assisting people become self employed
- Anxiety management
- Anger Management
- Training in construction and building skills
- Advice on colleges courses
- Training in horticulture
- Conservation
- Sustainability
- Life skills
- Food and mood
- Information on accessing Volunteering Opportunities
- Welfare benefit advice
- Disclosure of convictions advice
- Advice on employment rights and role of trade unions
- Advice on student finance
- Disability Discrimination
- Independent Living
- Maintaining Mental Health
- Advanced IT
- Job Coaching
- E-Learning

- Accountability
- Team Working
- Equality and Diversity

Question 3

Are you planning further services in the future?	
Yes	23 (59%)
No	6 (15%)
Don't Know	10 (26%)

Of those who said yes, other services planned for the future are:

- Literacy services if funding can be gained
- Softer skills for people living with HIV or HepC
- Programmes to work with people experiencing mental health
- Intermediate IT training
- Outreach services
- Lone parent programmes
- Ongoing support for people with individuals goals
- Working with people and school leavers with learning disabilities
- Transition service linking in with schools- awaiting lottery application
- Employer Liaison
- Employability training to external key workers working with substance users
- An open programme for young people including building skills in 9 key personal and social skills and independent living
- Job retention and supported employment models
- 09/10 National Programmes re-contracting is underway across Scotland – contracts will be issued before April 1 2009

Question 4

Who are your main clients?

- Offenders
- Ex-offenders
- People with addiction issues
- People living with HIV and/or Hep C
- BME
- 55+ and economically inactive
- Unemployed and school leavers
- Women returning to work
- Young people aged 16-18 Referrals from Careers Scotland, Transition, Lothian and Borders Police
- People with a disability
- People with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

- People with Asperger Syndrome
- NEET
- Jobs at Risk
- Barriers to Work
- Employed wanting to change jobs
- Joined up for Jobs clients
- All unwaged 16-65
- Low income clients for specific IT courses
- Get Ready for Work: Working towards Modern Apprenticeship Vocational Qualification,
- Training for Work
- Adults with learning difficulties
- People who have experienced homelessness

Question 5

Do you offer any specialist advice?	
Yes	17 (44%)
No	22 (56%)

Of those who replied Yes, specialist advice included:

- Budgeting and debt management
- Food preparation
- Outreach support
- Money management
- Volunteering placements
- Provide literacy and numeracy trainee assistance
- Adults with learning difficulties or acquired brain injuries
- Mental Health Management
- Anti Discrimination advice
- Disability issues
- Self Employment advice
- Advice on Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, the Police Act and on disclosures of offences
- People living with HIV and /or Hep C

Question 6

Which geographical area do you cover?	
North	13 (33%)
East	11 (28%)
South	17 (44%)
West	13 (33%)
Edinburgh Wide	28 (72%)
Lothian Wide including Edinburgh	14 (36%)
Outside Lothian and Edinburgh	12 (31%)

Almost all respondents covered at least two areas of Edinburgh, with some ticking up to 6 options.

Question 7

Have you ever worked with RSLs in helping tenants back into employment?	
Yes	7 (18%)
No	27 (69%)
Don't Know/ No response	5 (13%)

Question 8

Do you have plans in the future to work with RSLs to help people into training and employment?	
Yes	9 (23%)
No	22 (56%) - additional comments included; not aware of how to link in, not an area they have looked into but keen to become involved and would welcome opportunity to discuss
Don't Know/ No response	8 (21%)

Question 9

Are you aware of any initiatives where employability providers and RSLs have worked together?	
Yes	7 (18%)
No	22 (57%)
Don't Know/ No response	10 (26%)

Of those who replied Yes, answers included:

- TOIL,
- Trust Housing,
- Dunedin Canmore HA on the Trained Up project which delivers beginners to immediate ICT training,
- West Edinburgh Action,
- Redhall,
- POLHA.

Question 10

Do you think there is currently effective cooperation between employability service providers and RSLs?	
Yes	5 (13%)
No	2 (5%)
Don't Know	29 (74%) Additional comments included; not sure how to link in, concern that RSLs will try and re-invent the wheel re employability, your research will provide the answer but suspect that as always there will be room for improvement
Did not respond	3 (7%)

Question 11**Suggestions for Improvement**

Some suggestions on the ways in which co-operation could be improved included:

- Link in more with networks (Joined up for Jobs, Lothian Employability Forum) and use existing services more effectively,
- Networking although this is difficult to sustain due to limited staffing,
- That RSLs have a more understanding nature to service users who engage with employability services with respect to housing stock, rent payments, repairs, furnishings etc,
- Increased awareness of NHS provision
- Better links with community mental health staff
- Not sure as not aware of this type of service
- More support for people out of hours
- More awareness and more involvement with JU4J network by RSLs
- Work more closely with employers themselves too get them to buy into the process and communicate their needs to potential employees directly – as opposed to through intermediaries
- Outreach

Question 12

Would your organisation benefit from having links with RSLs in Edinburgh?	
Yes	18 (46%)
No	4 (10%)
Don't know	14 (36%)
Did not respond	3 (7%)

Question 13

Will recent changes to welfare reform including Employment Support Allowance and the Flexible New Deal have an impact on your organisation?	
Yes	18 (46%)
No	4 (10%)
Don't know	14 (36%)
Did not respond	1 (3%)

Additional comments included:

- Increase awareness amongst health professionals of need for assistance in helping service users explore employability. Service users themselves keen to have support and assistance of services. In turn likely to increase numbers of referrals to our part of the organisation
- Increase demand
- More people will utilise volunteering as a route back into work
- Policy around the economic downturn may also have an impact
- As more people are being encouraged to move off these benefits, self employment is often the best solution for people with disabilities or young children and can not commit to fixed employment contracts
- Possibly are other opportunities for the people we are working with. Also a number of employability agencies tend to cherry pick the people we have been working with for a while in other areas of our work that focus less on an employment outcome and more on skills development and improving engagement and motivation, we will probably see an increase in this
- The welfare benefit reforms will directly affect substance users who are not in rehabilitation
- Our clients may not cope with the structured interviews, group work element etc. Also being asked lots of questions about how their disability affects them. I'm not sure about finding jobs/caring is going to happen
- Increased anxiety of service users through changes, e.g. compulsory interviews, DLA reviews, people feeling they are being targeted to move off benefits before they are ready and dealing with the fall out. People are unsure of what the changes are and lack of affordable training for agencies like us with limited budgets to be able to clarify new rules
- A few of our service users have experienced a great deal of confusion about what benefits they are entitled. More leg work for the support workers and appointments to Advice Shop, CAB which are on a waiting list. There are waiting lists for the majority of support agencies within Edinburgh so it is not easy for service users to be moved on from Midpoint. Service users are being put on mandatory Work Directions orders who in my opinion are not in a stable situation to "look for work"
- Yes, opportunities we can offer to clients
- My organisation is too small to participate in FND but I am hoping that their approach to helping clients does not become too inflexible and Corporate. Some of the bigger groups and consortia can be too self interested rather

than client-need focused. FND may have the effect of supporting these big players to the detriments of the smaller and more responsive suppliers

- Most of our participants are not on benefit, so unlikely to have great impact, but we have not made any firm assessment

Question 14

Do you think recent changes to welfare reform will impact the employability sector in Edinburgh?	
Yes	22 (56%)
No	2 (5%)
Don't know	13 (33%)
Did not respond	2 (5%)

Additional comments were:

- Increase in people looking for work
- More people looking for more and perhaps specialist support
- FND will have an impact not just in Edinburgh but throughout the country
- With more support being offered to people in receipt of these benefits, people will become more employable therefore increasing the number of quality workers available to companies. It will increase the demand for all jobs across the city
- The sector will need to focus more on the long-term unemployed; I think volunteering and work experience will start to play a more significant role in employability
- It will force people who are not ready to work into the employment market as this client group does not have the necessary skills it will have a massive impact on people losing benefits with no other income
- It has already affected referrals to our project
- For those that are ready and able it is a very positive thing to be welcomed however for those that are borderline or fluctuating health problems whether mental or physical health (people living with HIV/Hep C can fit into this category) I am concerned with regards to the impact e.g. exacerbating mental health which can have a knock on effect to physical health and vice versa
- Larger contractors, less tailored localised delivery
- With regard to lone parents only
- It will have an impact but difficult to predict given the sudden development of the recession
- Any welfare reform will push people into jobs and will therefore make the market more competitive
- Increased number of job seekers with finite prospects, which is likely to lead to more instances of discrimination against our client group

Question 15

Which Funding sources are you aware of that can be used to fund the provision of employability services?

34 of the respondents (87%) indicated that they knew of at least one of the following 6 listed funding sources:

- City Strategy Pathfinder
- Big Lottery
- New Deal
- Access to Work
- Training for Work
- Get Ready for Work

The funding sources below were the least recognised:

- Charitable Trusts
- Skill seekers
- European Funding
- Fairer Scotland
- ERDF
- ESF

Appendix 5

Tenant Focus Groups

Group 1: Gateway to Work

Tuesday 10th February 2009

Participants: 3 City of Edinburgh Council tenants (North Edinburgh)

Key points from the group:

The group's perception was that they would not think of contacting their housing association for employment opportunities. They did not believe that the council delivered on the housing issues faced by their tenancy never mind looking to help with employability issues.

All received monthly local newsletters however only one tenant can remember seeing Waterfront job opportunities advertised.

The group would like the newsletter to include further job opportunities, training opportunities and signposting to other support agencies.

The group mentioned that the council notice boards were not accessible and that the council should be communicating with their tenants more efficiently.

All participants said they were aware of access to a welfare rights worker however they could never get an appointment it was always a case of "leave your number and we will get back to you" however their calls were never returned.

One participant said that they would be really interested in the council offering interview techniques and CV building skills to help them back into employment.

Another participant expressed an interest in the council offering employment and training initiatives e.g. apprenticeships, work placements and training programmes.

Suggestions for RSLs for Future

- Utilise the current newsletter by providing job opportunities and making these opportunities much more visible.
- Ensure information provided is both frequent and accessible i.e. accessible notice board and mailing to their tenancy.
- Provide a signposting service to other employment service providers i.e. Business Gateway, Job Centre and local employment agencies.
- Provide practical support in interview techniques, confidence building and CV preparation.

- Provide additional support through welfare rights worker with fixed appointments.
- Provide apprenticeship programmes with other partners and training schemes.

Group 2: Castle Rock Edinvar

Tuesday 10th February 2009

Participants: 5 Castle Rock Edinvar (North Edinburgh)

Key points from the group:

The group's perception was that they would not think of contacting their housing association for employment opportunities however the service they received in terms of housing was very good.

All received quartley newsletter however the group said they would like to see local neighbourhood newsletters which were community focused and circulated every 2 weeks.

The group would like the newsletter to include employment advice, job opportunities, training opportunities and signposting to other support agencies. They also thought information to help receive funding for training and education would be valuable.

One participant suggested communicating employment opportunities and volunteering opportunities through e-mail.

Only one participant said they were aware of access to a welfare rights worker through the housing association and they service she received was first class.

The participants said that they would be really interested in the housing association offering interview techniques, confidence building, help with CV's and help with job applications. Presently Working Links provides this service but it was felt that it could do not harm to have these services also offered through the housing association.

All participants expressed the view that childcare was an issue that tenants faced when looking for employment and support in this area would be greatly received.

All participants suggested that a "drop in surgery" would be very helpful and would provide face to face communication with the information providers.

No one in the group had a hobby that they would like to turn into a business however they did think it would be useful if the housing association could signpost tenants to the appropriate services.

From listening to the current projects Dunedin are involved with i.e. apprenticeship programmes and training projects, the full group thought this was something that their housing association could be involved with.

Suggestions for RSLs for Future

- Circulate a local community newsletter providing employment advice and opportunities. To also explore other methods of communicating to tenants i.e. email, notice board.
- Offer childcare support to make it easier for tenants to return to work.
- Provide help to get tenants into apprenticeships, work placements and volunteering positions.
- Improved access to welfare rights worker.
- Surgery sessions
- Offer practical support in interview techniques
- Offer confidence building
- CV preparation
- Signposting to other employment services
- Funding information

Group 3: Gateway to Work Focus Group

9 January 2009

Participants: 5 from housing associations

Dunedin Canmore – 2

Link – 2

Castlerock – 1

Key points from the group:

All received quarterly tenants' newsletters, but none were aware of any employment or training related information in them

With the exception of the Link tenant, all participants said they had access to a welfare rights worker who advised them on their benefits. The Link tenant wasn't aware of this service, however had accessed the Link Living support service, which worked with young homeless people to help them keep their tenancy.

Would like newsletters to advise on jobs that are on offer in the housing association and the council

Impact of welfare reform – it will become harder to pay rent, though so far the participants had not experienced much of an impact.

The group's perception was that it wasn't the remit of their housing association to provide employment and training support – just housing.

One participant (Dunedin Canmore tenant) said that he had been offered the opportunity of office work training but had turned it down – something he now regretted.

Suggestions for RSLs for Future

- Promote job vacancies and training opportunities in quarterly tenants' newsletter
- Make it easier for tenants to find out about vacancies and get interviews – notice boards, fliers, etc
- Offer more job-specific training opportunities
- Offer financial support to do courses particularly where there are gaps in funding from the Scottish Awards Agency (SAAS)
- Provide help to get tenants into apprenticeships because the housing association and welfare rights worker know you and can give you a reference

Group 4: Dunedin Canmore

Thursday 22nd January 2009

Participants: 6 all from Dunedin Canmore

Key points from the group:

The group's perception was that they would not think of contacting their housing association for employment opportunities. Their first point of call would be through making contact with local business or looking at local newspapers i.e. North Edinburgh News.

All received the quarterly tenants' newsletters "Connect" and were aware of training opportunities i.e. European Computer Driving Licence and volunteering opportunities through the newsletter.

The group would like the newsletter to include job opportunities and to have a centralised notice board which could include information on job and training opportunities.

All participants said they had access to a welfare rights worker who advised them on their benefits and were happy with the service.

One participant said that previously she had started her own business and had utilised the Business Gateway service. She thought it would be very useful if their housing association could signpost tenants to these services and work more closely with them i.e. drop in sessions held within the office.

One participant said that due to the current economic climate this was a time for their housing associations to encourage people. It was suggested by the group that tenants would be interested in help with preparing for employment through interview skills, preparing cvs and training.

The group would like a debt management/ advice service.

Some participants had hobbies however no one was really interested in turning this into a business. Participants would not know who could help with this if they had wanted to turn their hobby into a business.

Overall the group portrayed a very positive image of Dunedin and expressed that they were very happy with the service they received and were well informed.

Group 5: Dunedin Canmore

Participants: 9 all from Dunedin Canmore

Key points from the group:

The group's perception was that they would not expect the housing association to provide support towards accessing employment opportunities and their first point of call would be Internet, Paper, Job centre or Library.

The group's perception was that it would not do any harm if they got more involved with helping tenants to employment and would work in certain communities.

All received the quarterly tenants' newsletters "Connect" and half of the group were aware of apprenticeship opportunities through the newsletter or word of mouth but were not aware of any employment opportunities featured in the newsletter.

The group mentioned that they also receive "leaflet drops" from the housing association to promote computer training courses.

The group thought that if the newsletter was to include job opportunities it would have to become more regular.

The group also thought it would be useful to have a jobs notice board in the main reception of the housing associations office.

All participants said they had access to a welfare rights worker and the service was good. However the high demand did not match the current resources and they were finding it more difficult to access this service.

Impact of welfare reform – 1 participant was aware of the proposed changes but found it difficult to comment until these changes have come into effect.

One participant said that her daughter had just been made redundant at 49 and her daughter felt that the employment agencies talked down to her. The participant thought it

would be very useful if the housing association could provide employment support to both tenants and their families.

The group's perception was that tenants would not be interested in work placements as this may affect their benefits.

One participant explained that she went to citizen advice to talk to someone about her debt problems. She did not feel comfortable speaking with the Welfare Officer. She would like to see a debt management/ advice service where confidentiality can be guaranteed.

One participant explained he had lived at the same address for 10-12 years and had never heard of the "Escalator Project"

Suggestions for RSLs for Future

- Utilise the current newsletter by providing job opportunities and training information
- Have a centralised information point i.e. notice board within the main office reception that includes job and training information
- Provide a signposting service to other employment service providers i.e. Business Gateway
- Provide practical support in interview techniques, confidence building and CV preparation
- Provide additional confidential support through debt management advice

Appendix 6

Tenant Phone Interviews

Thursday 29th January & Friday 30th January 2009

Phone Discussions

Tenant – Link Housing Association

Tenant – Council Tenant

Tenant – Dunedin Canmore

Tenant – Dunedin Canmore

Key points from the phone calls:

The tenants did receive quarterly tenants' newsletters, but were not aware of any employment or training related information in them.

Would like the newsletter to include information on job opportunities and training opportunities.

Some tenants weren't aware of the welfare officer but did say this was a service that would be valuable.

One tenant had used the welfare officer through Dunedin and thought it was extremely helpful.

Would like to see a notice board that promoted volunteering opportunities and training opportunities in their local area.

The tenants believed that it would be very beneficial if the housing association was involved with helping with interview techniques, CV building and access into work.

It was the tenants perception was that it wasn't the remit of their housing association to provide employment and training support – just housing. They thought that if their housing association was to be involved with employability this would be a service that many would use.

Presently the tenants use employability services such a Worktrack or the Job Centre to help source training opportunities or job opportunities. One tenant was currently speaking with the Job Centre about the European Computer Driving Licence however it was taking a long time to obtain the details and get feedback.

One tenant would like to see a local "job club" organised by the housing association. Presently apart from Work track they do not have any local employability services in the area and a visit to the Job Centre means they have to go into central town.

The tenants thought it would be useful to make it more accessible to find out about vacancies and volunteering opportunities through fliers mailed to their home address.

Suggestions for RSLs for Future

- Promote job vacancies and training opportunities in quarterly tenants' newsletter and to make it easier for tenants to find out about vacancies and volunteering opportunities through notice boards, fliers, etc.
- Provide interview skills and CV building support for tenants.
- Provide local employability services in social inclusion areas such as Craigmillar and North Edinburgh
- Provide help to get tenants into apprenticeships and offer more job-specific training opportunities

Appendix 7

RSL & Employability Provider Workshop

Breakout Group Findings

3 March 2009

Group 1: Existing Infrastructures

There are existing infrastructures in both the RSL and employability arenas and they provide wide coverage in areas of need. Are the collaboration opportunities that currently exist, or are planned, adequate for the needs of the individual tenants, stakeholders involved at the Cities Strategy Pathfinder?

- To continue partnership working between RSLs and employability providers with future collaborations being a real possibility.
- RSLs have a trusted relationship and are local and rooted. They have access and knowledge of employability issues which benefits their involvement with the Joined Up For Jobs (JU4J) strategy
- RSLs have a shared commitment and high profile which again benefits their involvement with JU4J strategy
- To show and promote a willingness to work together
- To maintain the element of “trust” between partners
- To break down the complexities and bureaucracies within RSLs and employability providers with an emphasis on front line services
- Establish a education process for front line staff
- To achieve transparency in funding
- To continue with the Wider role funding
- To fund and support TOIL (Training Opportunities in Leith) properly and support areas that already work
- To join up RSLs with employability providers and to open up communication channels with each other

Group 2: Use of Communication Channels

Are the existing communication channels being best utilised?

- Improve and enhance links with RSLs and employability providers
- Continue signposting to appropriate agencies
- RSLs to promote information for tenants re employability e.g. tenants handbooks, community newsletters, notice boards
- Ensure tenant perceptions are correct about who provides what
- Improve internal communications within RSLs and employability providers
- Use case studies to help celebrate success through communications channels
- Investigate link between RSL newsletter and “Working Capital” newsletter (JU4J)

- Through communication channels target specific groups i.e. young people, over 50's, unemployed, single parents
- Utilise JU4J website

Group 3: Breadth of Services

There is a wide breath of services offered by both RSLs and employability providers. Do all the right people know about these services and how do we maximise on their availability?

- RSLs could help with employability through employment services, training, apprenticeships, childcare support, communications, drop in surgeries
- To continue to offer Welfare and benefit advice provision
- To continue with TOIL where successful
- To maintain existing links through JU4J
- To carry out common assessment of needs
- To focus on local not city centre services with a good geographic spread
- Increase the promotion of employability services
- RSLs working together with employability providers to engage with harder to reach groups and those further away from the labour market

Group 4: Welfare Reform Impact

What impact will the welfare reform have on both employment and employability, who will it affect and how?

- Lack of consensus on impact of welfare reform
- To simplify and clarify the "in work" benefit system
- To provide greater flexibility
- Not to lose focus on those farthest from the labour market but to also focus on the newly unemployed
- Retain focus on those returning to work with health issues
- Work not necessarily a route out of poverty "employed poor" is still an issue