

## Connecting Scotland

The Connecting Scotland programme aims to close the digital divide, with a target of bringing 60,000 households online by the end of 2021.

Organisations can apply for support on behalf of the people they work with. This includes:

- Digital devices – iPads and/or Chromebooks
- Internet connectivity – a mobile WiFi hotspot with 24 months unlimited data
- Training and support – for staff and volunteers to become ‘digital champions’ to support people to use the internet confidently and safely

From **30 August – 27 September** the programme will be accepting applications from organisations working to remove barriers related to digital exclusion for unemployed young people and adults (aged 16+).

From **28 September** the programme will be accepting fast track applications from organisations that can identify users who are:

- Digitally excluded, and
- On a low income, and
- At risk of social isolation and loneliness (particularly older people, people with disabilities, and single parents)

Please visit [Connecting Scotland](#) for full details and guidance.

## LEP

### **Forth Valley Regional Employability Roundtable Event – Monday 23rd August 2021**

Over 100 partners took part in a Forth Valley wide virtual Employability RoundTable event held on 23rd August 2021. The event focused on No One Left Behind, the Scottish and Local Government strategy to support the delivery of a person-centred, flexible Scottish employability system that integrates and aligns services and implementation of this locally across the Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire council areas.

With a key aim of supporting the run up to Phase 2 of No One Left Behind from April 2022, participants from the public, private and third sector heard input around a number of key areas including:

- No One Left Behind, the journey so far
- Local scene setting around the current Forth Valley Economy and Regional Skills Assessment
- How LEPs across the Forth Valley area have been working at strengthening their local partnerships

- Transforming Employability Services: The Scottish Approach to Service Design

Local Councillors fully supported the event with a welcome address offered by the leader of Clackmannanshire Council and concluding remarks delivered by the leader of Falkirk Council, both keen to highlight the importance of current developments.

After presentations and Q & A opportunities, participants broke into localised discussion groups considering how LEP's could communicate better in the future with stakeholders, what might be the best way to consult with stakeholders on service delivery, establishing interest around future provider forums and considering options around opportunities for future annual employability conferences.

The importance of placing service users at the heart of any developments was a strong theme emerging from the event which was welcomed by all in attendance together with commitment from partners to work together around areas such as continual improvement approaches, service delivery and ensuring those who are furthest away from employment get the support they need.

Feedback from the event was hugely positive;

*“Reassuring and exciting to hear how everyone is so passionate and well informed around approaching this so creatively and enthusiastically. Look forward to hearing more and working further together.”*

*“It is the first time I have actually understood the bigger picture and the assessment of what is a service, and what is service design. This really helps with context and understanding the approach as well as the background and better outcomes for users. This helps with clarity of expectation..”*

Employability leads will now review feedback from the event using information gleaned to help support the future implementation of No One Left Behind across the Forth Valley areas.

## News

### Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary

On Wednesday 25 August 2021, the Scottish Government published its sixteenth set of statistics for its national employability service – Fair Start Scotland (FSS). This publication presents statistics for Fair Start Scotland (FSS) from April 2018 to June 2021 and experimental statistics on the No One Left Behind strategic approach to employability delivery, reporting on those receiving support from April 2019 to March 2021.

A copy of these statistics can be found [here](#).

### **Green Jobs Workforce Academy**

A new Green Jobs Workforce Academy has been launched, delivered by Skills Development Scotland. The advice service will help people take a greener approach to their careers, from accessing training and learning new skills, to finding a new green job.

This 100 days commitment of the new Scottish Government has been launched as the First Minister welcomed news that ScottishPower were creating 152 new green jobs, of which 135 will be based in Scotland.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “Looking ahead to COP26 in Glasgow in November, Scotland can be proud that our climate change ambitions, backed by investment in creating a highly skilled green workforce, will be showcased on an international stage.”

These new roles will be listed on the [academy's website](#) alongside information on the types of jobs emerging in sectors crucial to Scotland's transition to a net-zero economy, such as renewable energy, construction and transport. You can read more about the Green Jobs Workforce Academy [here](#).

### **Flexible Workforce Development Fund 2021-22 guidance published**

The guidance for the Flexible Workforce Development Fund in the academic year 2021-22 has now been published by the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland.

An evaluation proposal for the Fund is currently in development and will be commissioned in the coming months.

The Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) enables employers in Scotland to address priority skills and skills gaps in their organisation by accessing funding to create training programmes that meet their needs. These programmes can be delivered in partnership with their local college, The Open University in Scotland (OUiS) or an independent training provider. This guidance provides details on the different funding routes available in academic year 2021-22 and information on how employers can access the Fund.

You can read more about the new guidance [here](#).

### **Social Security Scotland**

Child Disability Payment Starts on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and will now be provided by Social Security Scotland. Client advisers now available in the Forth Valley area to assist with applications etc.

### **Dial A Journey**

Child Disability Payment Starts on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and will now be provided by Social Security Scotland. Client advisers now available in the Forth Valley area to assist with applications etc.

### **Adult Disability Payment**

Disability Payment Starts on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and will now be provided by Social Security Scotland. Client advisers

### **Noone Left behind**

CJS, alongside the Employability Fund (EF), is still due to transition to NOLB Phase 2 in April 2022, which means it will no longer exist as a national programme run by SCVO and ringfenced to the third sector.

Going forward, the CJS funding (£5 million this year, but higher in previous years), which has supported over 10,000 particularly vulnerable YP to date, will be split by 32 and included in local authority NOLB/YPG budgets. We know from employer feedback and surveys undertaken that many local employability partnerships (LEPs) may not be ready to take on responsibility for commissioning/delivering an alternative in time, or there is minimal engagement happening with the third sector.

We know that the situation is variable depending on which Local Authority you provide services in, but we need to keep the conversation going and keep feeding back your hopes and fears. I know some CJS employers are writing to their local MSP. We can support with this if desired.

Is this something that third sector employability services in Falkirk are interested in discussing or contributing to?

If so, please email [scott.malcolm@cvsfalkirk.org.uk](mailto:scott.malcolm@cvsfalkirk.org.uk)