

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET PAPER – 29 JUNE 2011

### ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

#### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to use £98,068 allocated by Scottish Government for 'Activity Agreements' in East Ayrshire which are aimed to support targeted young people achieve a positive and sustained destination.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In June 2009 Scottish Government launched an 'Activity Agreements' pilot in 10 local Authorities. Following successful evaluation of the impact of the pilot on supporting young people achieve a 'positive and sustained destination', Scottish Government is keen to implement Activity Agreements in all 32 local authorities from the end of June 2011.
- 2.2 In March 2011 Scottish Government announced that £4 million would be made available to local authorities to support the implementation of Activity Agreements. In East Ayrshire a grant of **£98,068** has been offered to support this programme.
- 2.3 An Activity Agreement is an agreement between a young person and adviser which stipulates the identified young person will take part in a programme of learning and activity to help them to become ready for formal learning or employment. The young person may receive a financial allowance in return for complying with this agreement.
- 2.4 The implementation of Activity Agreements in East Ayrshire if approved would follow the national guidance on Activity Agreements published in August 2010

#### 3. ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS IN EAST AYRSHIRE

- 3.1 Subject to approval, an Activity Agreements package will be implemented in East Ayrshire from July 2011.
- 3.2 The Activity Agreements will target vulnerable young people who need the most support to move on to a positive destination when they leave school. The following are examples of specific target groups:
- Looked after children and care leavers
  - Young carers
  - Young parents
  - Young offenders
  - Young people with low attainment in school
  - Young people who persistently truant
  - Young people with physical or mental health problems or disabilities
  - Young people involved in alcohol or drug misuse

- Young people with behavioural issues
- Young people with additional support needs
- Young people for whom English is a second language
- Winter leavers
- Young people leaving special schools
- Young people who are homeless
- Young people who are a risk to themselves or others
- Young people who do not sustain an initial positive destination

- 3.3 The initial target group for Activity Agreements, taking cognisance of the groups identified in 3.2, will focus on young people most at risk of entering a negative destination when they leave school in East Ayrshire – there were around 158 young people who entered a negative destination across the authority in 2009-10. It is important to note that some young people who initially enter a negative destination may not be in need of additional support, either because they have a deferred offer of a job or further /higher education course, or already have a clear and realistic expectation of what they want to do and are pursuing opportunities.
- 3.4 Some young people will initially enter a positive destination but not sustain it. An Activity Agreement may be used in such circumstances if there is a view that it would be of benefit to them.
- 3.5 Some young people will have disengaged from school before their school leaving date; there will therefore be a significant element of outreach work in engaging those young people in Activity Agreements.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that 60-70 young people in East Ayrshire may be able to be supported through the support of an Activity Agreement to progress on to a positive destination.

#### **4. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITY AGREEMENTS**

- 4.1 The development of Activity Agreements will be led by the 16+ MCMC Coordinator who will be assisted by an Activity Agreements Coordinator (AAC).
- 4.2 The AAC will be a full time post for one year to implement the Activity Agreements programme. Duties will include:
- Allocating a Trusted Professional to work with the young person
  - Support the Trusted Professionals in negotiating learning agreements
  - Arranging the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) application with the Trusted Professional and the young person
  - Working with providers to ensure that an appropriate programme of learning is arranged
  - Monitoring the progress of Activity Agreements and destinations of the young people
  - Set up and maintain a Trusted Professional network to support their work with young people
- 4.3 The coordinator will work closely with partners such as Skills Development Scotland, (SDS), Colleges, Community Learning and Development (CLD), Skills Development and Employability Service (SDES) and providers in the development and implementation of Activity Agreements.

## **5. TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS**

5.1 For the most vulnerable young people, a strong relationship with a trusted professional, acting in an advisory and guidance role will be a critical element of participating in and sustaining learning. This advisory role is central to Activity Agreements. While SDS has a crucial role to play, there are others who will carry out this advisory role for specific young people, depending on their needs. The development of this guidance will ensure a close alignment to Getting It Right For Every Child.

5.2 Vulnerable young people's choice of learning, and their ability to sustain that learning, will often require intensive advice and guidance. That advice must come from someone who:

- has, or can build, a strong relationship with a young person;
- has an awareness of the learning and support opportunities available locally;
- has an awareness of the local labour market;
- can act quickly at point of contact with a young person;
- is able to deal with a range of young people, many of whom will display challenging behaviour or have complex needs;
- has credibility with the organisations who work with a young person;
- has the ability to negotiate and advocate on behalf of the young person;
- takes a solution-focused, non-judgemental approach

5.3 This role will be filled in East Ayrshire by 6 SDS Key Workers, 5 Transitional Support Workers and potentially 3 CLD Community Link Workers.

5.4 An initial training programme will be delivered to all of the Trusted Professionals which will include Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) procedures, developing knowledge of local provision and counselling skills.

5.5 The AAC will coordinate regular network meetings of Trusted Professionals to provide support, communications and updates.

## **6. LEARNING PROVISION**

6.1 A bespoke programme of learning will be arranged for each young person depending on their learning needs, their personal development requirements and their ability to maintain a programme of learning.

6.2 A range of informal learning will be identified through engagement with providers and appropriate programmes and will be negotiated with the young person, their parent or guardian, the AAC, a Trusted Professional and learning providers.

6.3 The following providers have already identified potential provision:

- EAC Community Learning and Development
- Kilmarnock College
- Action for Children
- YIPWORLD
- Impact Arts
- East Ayrshire Skills Development and Employability
- Centrestage
- Barnardo's

- East Ayrshire Leisure Development
- East Ayrshire Carers Centre
- The Zone
- Enable
- Rathbone
- First4skills

6.4 Funding will be available to support partners in the form of a small start up grant to encourage providers to work with young people within their existing provision and programmes

6.5 The learning provision will also include an element of Work Experience where appropriate. This will be coordinated by the AAC and Trusted Professional working with the Schools Work Experience Coordinator.

## **7. REFERRALS**

7.1 All referrals on to Activity Agreements will come from SDS Careers Advisers.

7.2 Schools will refer young people to a Careers Adviser who will carry out a Needs Assessment to help to decide if an Activity Agreement is the most appropriate route.

7.3 The Careers Adviser will then refer the young person to the AAC who will arrange a meeting as soon as possible with the young person, their parent/guardian and a Trusted Professional to negotiate the learning agreement.

7.4 If a young person is to drop out of an initial destination then it is essential that the provider completes a referral to SDS so that a Careers Adviser can make the decision on whether an Activity Agreement is an appropriate next step.

## **8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

8.1 Young people will be entitled to claim an EMA while they are on an Activity Agreement.

8.2 The EMA will be administered by the finance department and young people will apply for the EMA with support from the AAC and their Trusted Professional.

8.3 Young people will be entitled to an EMA if household income is £20,351 or less, and will be awarded a weekly allowance of £30. Young people from households with more than one dependent child and where the household income is £22,403 or less will also be eligible for a weekly payment of £30 per week.

8.4 Where a young person is not entitled to an EMA or has difficulty in accessing one due to family circumstances then the AAC and Trusted Professional will try to access other financial assistance.

## **9. INTENDED OUTCOMES**

9.1 Young people will start on their Activity Agreements from July 2011 with a view to starting in a full time positive destination in September 2011.

9.2 It may not be possible for a young person to start at this time therefore start and completion dates will require to be as flexible as the learning programmes.

9.3 The target will be to move young people on an Activity Agreement into formal education, employment or training within 3 months of starting on the agreement, although it is recognised that this timescale may not be possible for all young people.

9.4 It is essential that learning agreements contain agreed development targets for young people including an agreed timescale for accessing a positive destination.

## 10. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Activity Agreements contribute to the priorities of the Promoting Lifelong Learning and Community Regeneration plans.

## 11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Activities Agreement grant of **£98,068** from Scottish Government will be committed to support the programme as follows:

Activity Agreements	Budget
Trusted Professional Training	£ 700.00
Activity Agreements Coordinator	£ 28,000.00
Support for Providers	£ 40,000.00
Trusted Professional Network	£ 3,000.00
Travel Costs for young people	£ 10,000.00
Individual Tailored Programmes	£ 15,000.00
Individual Support for young people	£ 1,368.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 98,068.00</b>

## 12. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 An Activity Agreement Coordinator will be recruited on a Grade G6 temporary contract to coordinate the implementation of this programme. Associated costs are noted on table at 11.1.

## 13. POLICY/LLEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no policy or legal implications arising as a result of this report.

## 14. RISK IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no risk implications.

**15. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

15.1 Any equalities impact arising from these changes will be carried out on an individual basis.

**16. RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) approve the proposed use of Activity Agreement grant to implement a programme of Activity Agreements in East Ayrshire;
- ii) invite the Executive Director to prepare a detailed report on an annual basis describing progress in achieving the outcomes outlined for Cabinet and the Governance and Scrutiny committee; and
- iii) otherwise, note the contents of this report.

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**List of Background Papers**

**Nil**

Members wishing further information should contact Andrew Sutherland, Head of Service: Schools on Tel: (01563) 576126.

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