**UK Shared Prosperity Fund (People and Skills) and**

**the Scottish Government’s No One Left Behind phase 3**

**Information and Consultation Event**

**Tuesday 7 June 2022, 10am, Microsoft Teams**

**Questions and Answers:**

**Q: Given that the UK Community Renewal Fund took longer than anticipated to be signed off and starting, do we know if the UK Gov will be flexible about when the money can be spent if there is a delay in finalising and signing off on the investment plans?**

A: This is a different process to the UK Community Renewal Fund as the allocations per place have been agreed so it’ll hopefully be a quicker process. We have been given allocations over three financial years. It is not yet clear if the allocations can be moved between financial years but we have to presume not. The issue is more likely to be that, where a request for an extension to submission of the Investment Plan is made, this may push back the final sign off from UK Government to enable spend.

**Q: Is there a clear definition of economically inactive from the UK Government?**

A: We are expecting further guidance to be provided in the summer and hope this will be clarified.

**Q: Is there any indication of admin costs relating to data systems, collation of data etc? Previous funding streams have not allocated resource to data management or systems, despite this being key to providing the data returns required.**

A: The only management costs mentioned so far are the 4% management fee. Having a central Programme Management Office should help coordinate some of this. If we think costs for data management should be included as part of our delivery, we can put it in the Investment Plan and see if it is accepted.

**Q: Does this funding include support for 14 and 15 year olds or is it just 16+?**

A: We have checked with UK Government and the funding can support any age as long as the intervention contributes to the outcomes and outputs detailed as part of the prospectus.

**Q: Is there any indication about how payments will be made – will it be the case that Local Authorities pay up front and are then subject to auditing to claim funds back?**

A: Payments will be made up front. For this year, it will be made upon sign off of the Investment Plan. For subsequent years, this will be at the beginning of the financial year. Underspend must be repaid and cannot be carried forward. We are still awaiting clarification of the evidence required.

**Planning for the Future – group discussion:**

* The focus is on those furthest from the labour market.
* We must be mindful that it is across the whole spectrum of employability support, not just for those who are economically inactive.
* Indicative outcomes are similar to previous structural funds.
* There is a key gap around green skills which has also been flagged up at a city region level.
* For No One Left Behind phase 3, if we need to commission services, this takes time. We need to be starting that process now in advance of any final announcements from Scottish Government so that we are prepared.
* With the current political turmoil at UK level, we should be mindful of potential delays if this disruption continues.
* Colleges have received ESF so they may then want to access the UKSPF. It also tends to be lower-level courses that are cut first so perhaps something that needs to be picked up at a local level through this funding.
* Discussions with employers around construction courses was really successful. This will also be continued with the Vocational Training Framework to best meet the needs of employers.
* With No One Left Behind phase 3, we are going to require a ‘finishing school’ for job-ready clients to prepare for work. This has been a large part of Fair Start Scotland so there is potential for a gap when this ends if NOLB phase 3 doesn’t address this. Employers are stating that the quality of clients coming through is not at a high enough standard. This is often in relation to their job-readiness, rather than a lack of skills.
* We need to make sure that there is enough support for people with learning difficulties and mental health difficulties who require extra support. All In Edinburgh was previously ESF-funded so close monitoring of this is required to make sure it is still meeting these needs. In addition, we need to make sure that all programmes are accessible to all.
* For mental health support, IPS is the best model and should include clinician support. This wasn’t successful with Fair Start Scotland because it was payment by outcome.
* NHS are currently undertaking a review of employability services, including IPS. It would be ideal to ensure that this is linked and co-produced where possible.
* In relation to green skills, the HCI Skills Gateway (Housing, Construction and Infrastructure) works closely with the Universities but there is a gap in community-based provision.
* There needs to be a focus on hidden unemployment – most excluded families, young people not claiming benefits but impacted by Covid.
* There is already a lot of support for young people. One of the key areas that needs support is the 50+ age group. Who may have had their jobs impacted by covid and not eligible or not claiming benefits. They are less likely to be recruited as they are often seen as less desirable. Age Scotland did a lot of work around flexible working agenda to try and prevent poverty for this client group. There is no specialised provision beyond mainstream services to support them currently.
* Local place-based support for households at risk or in poverty, including access to mental health support, is important. There is an Advice Review currently being carried out and one of the interventions recommended is likely to be advice for families as this is seen as a good entry point to encourage uptake of wider support. This includes lessons learned from the Maximise! project.
* The Scottish Government’s Child Poverty agenda is a significant investment and must be included as part of the strategic planning for this funding.
* There is real concern around how the UK Government are going to manage the data and evidence requirements to measure the impact from so many investment plans. There is concern that there aren’t already mechanisms in place for this and, to minimise disruption for organisations, local authorities and UK Government, this needs to be finalised before delivery begins. There needs to be a consistent data language across the whole of the UK from the start to ensure impacts can be measured.
* To ensure that clients get the best supportive service, it is imperative that organisations are trusted to deliver services, without the requirements for data and systems becoming more prominent than the service delivery.

**Timeline:**

We are requesting a short extension to the submission of Edinburgh’s Investment Plan to allow us to take it to the Council’s Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 4 August. We don’t want a long extension as this will then have a knock-on effect on it being approved by UK Government.