

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET7 November 2024Report by Director of EnvironmentChild Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund 2024/26**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the award of Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund from the Scottish Government for the delivery of employability in 2024/26.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a) Note the contents of this report and the grant award from the Scottish Government and approve the use of the award for the Flexible for Families Employer Programme as outlined in the report.

BACKGROUND

3. The Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund (CPAF) was launched by the Scottish Government in July 2023, and a second round was launched in May 2024. The fund's aim is to provide support to enhance an area's approach to tackling child poverty: supporting small scale projects to generate evidence on known problems; adapting approaches that have been successful in other areas; or re-designing services to deliver greater impacts on child poverty. The initiative aligns with the Scottish Government's 'Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, Best Start, Bright Futures 2022 to 2026' and its 'Equality Mission' to tackle poverty and protect people from harm. The national fund is a competitive scheme that local authorities can bid into.

4. East Renfrewshire Council has been awarded a grant of £20,000 in 2024/25 and £40,000 in 2025/26.

5. The award will fund a project to support local employers, including East Renfrewshire Council, to consider more flexible working opportunities which meet the needs of local parents and carers. By working flexibly, parents and carers, particularly lone parents, parents with a disability in the household and parents of large families, can get into work, stay and progress in work. This will help improve their finances and support their families to move out of poverty. Those parents on the programme will also be offered better off in work calculations and staff will report on improved earnings.

REPORT

6. East Renfrewshire Council submitted a successful grant bid to the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Practice Accelerator Fund (CPAF) in July 2024. The project, Flexible for Families Employer Programme, has been developed in partnership with Flexibility

Works who will undertake the day-to-day delivery of the project. Flexibility Works are a social enterprise who specialise in encouraging flexible and new ways of working in Scotland to meet the changing needs of businesses and employees. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are also a partner in the project and will provide advice from a public health perspective.

7. Local lived experience feedback tells us that amongst parents and carers, there is a great deal of demand for jobs which are flexible, but such opportunities are not widely available. We want to support local employers to consider how flexible working might work for them, and therefore create a local employment market which offers a broader range of jobs which appeal to parents/carers.

8. The project will provide support for up to 30 local employers, including support assessments, mentorships and other actions as appropriate. The project will also support up to 15 families. Support to parents will include individualised action plan, job search support and job matching. Parents will also be linked into those local businesses with flexible working opportunities.

9. The project will deliver the following outcomes: Increased understanding of current flexible working practices across East Renfrewshire employers; Improved awareness amongst local employers of flexible working practices, and the benefits they can offer; Increased number of local employers adopting flexible working policies; Increased number of local employers working towards and achieving Flexible Working Accreditation, and; Increased number of parents entering flexible employment.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

10. There are no significant finance implications from this report. The project will be funded by the Scottish Government grant award and the Service will oversee the management and delivery of the project activity and report to the Scottish Government as required.

11. The Council must comply with the conditions of the grant, as set out in Scottish Government guidelines.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

12. Consultation has taken place with a range of internal and external partners via the East Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership and with the Employability Lived Experience Panel.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

13. There are no property, legal, IT, Subsidy Control, equalities, sustainability or climate change implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSIONS

14. The CPAF programme provides an excellent opportunity to support and strengthen local action to tackle child poverty in East Renfrewshire and will complement work already underway via the No One Left Behind and UK Shared Prosperity employability programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Note the contents of this report and the grant award from the Scottish Government and approve the use of the award for the Flexible for Families Employer Programme as outlined in the report.

Director of Environment

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