

## **CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM**

### **Question 1. Are there other areas you think the Partnership Agreement should address?**

The Employment Planning Implementation Group (EPIG) reports to the Adult Service Executive Group (ASEG) which in turn reports to the Joint Partnership Board for Glasgow City Council (GCC) and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC). The EPIG is made up from representatives of GCC; NHSGGC and various specialist employability service designed specifically to support health and social work clients move along the employability pathway. This response is from the EPIG.

The members of EPIG would be keen that the new programme continued to support sustained targeting of those in the population who have low or no skills. Without targeting, those most distant to the labour market will remain just that. Many in this group have the new and additional pressures of being targeted by current Welfare Reforms and evidence shows that many simply lack the skills to engage in mainstream programmes. If this group are to take advantage of newly created and improved local employment opportunities then continued investment in specialist services is required. We would further add that there should be recognition of softer indicators as evidence of progression and of the multiple interventions required in order to progress clients who are currently far removed from the labour market.

### **Question 2. Do you think these thematic objectives will best address Scotland's short term and long term challenges?**

The consultation document highlights that helping those furthest removed from the labour market and those with low skills remains a priority. However the loss of the capacity building theme is concerning as those most distant from the labour market often require support through capacity building measures to encourage initial engagement prior to following a more structured employability programme.

### **Question 3. Do you think there are any other thematic objectives which should be addressed?**

The full impact of the current Welfare Reforms on those least able to access and sustain mainstream provision won't be known until after the start of the 2014 – 2020 programme. The members of the EPIG want to ensure that there are flexible and relevant options to allow people to progress from the start of their pathway through to mainstream provision and onwards towards a job. Omitting the early capacity building activities takes out a step for some people and the jump into more structured programmes is often too great for people to make or sustain.

**Question 4. Do you think the Scottish Themed Funds will address Scotland's key challenges?**

The members of the EPIG recognise the challenges on funding in the current economic climate. Therefore minimising duplication is particularly relevant in order to maximise the total outcomes for the funding. It is difficult to answer this question without being able to compare the amount of funding being allocated to each theme.

**Question 5. How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your sector?**

The members of the EPIG would support moves to reduce the layers around the governance of European funding.

**Question 6. How do you think the governance and delivery arrangements will impact on your organisation?**

The EPIG members have a sense that local organisations have found accessing European funding more difficult in the current programme. The diagram on page 15 shows 6 levels between the Managing Authority and a delivery agent which can slow down decisions and communication. The services currently accessing European funding to support services to vulnerable groups would be keen that there was a transparent process with regards governance and delivery arrangements.

**Question 7. Are there any unidentified governance or delivery arrangements that could aid simplification of the future programmes and ensure that the Structural Funds complement each other?**

The EPIG members understand that a recent evaluation of the current governance and delivery arrangements was undertaken. They would be keen that those processes which shown to work in the evaluation were built upon rather than a whole new raft of arrangements brought in.

**Question 8. What other delivery options do you think would be feasible for delivering youth employment initiatives?**

The EPIG members agree that high youth unemployment should remain a priority. However they would be keen not to limit the funding of opportunities to those under 24 years of age as there is a high proportion of over 24s accessing the current specialist provision.

There are established structures dealing with youth unemployment which bring key local partners together in deciding local priorities. Any focus on youth employment should be integrated into current structures and not duplicate these by developing something additional. The EPIG members would not support the suggestion that the third sector should lead on this activity though they will have significant input to service delivery.

**Question 9. What other measures could be taken to reduce the audit and control pressures?**

Recent evaluations should offer some findings on what organisations felt about the current level of audit and control. Perhaps these findings could be used to further develop a more effective audit and control processes that are integral to service delivery but at the same time do not have a significant impact on being able to deliver services.

**Question 10. Do you have any further comments on the proposals?**

The integration of funds into one single funding programme seems logical and should reduce duplication of similar provision. However this should not be used as a method of reducing the actual number of applications for European funding from organisations who often deliver specialist services for targeted groups.

The members of the EPIG would be keen to avoid a funding regime that encouraged and / or supported organisations into competing for clients more likely to produce a job outcome rather than those who needed support. There has been recent poor publicity surrounding mainstream provision where the issue of “parking” clients less likely to produce a job outcome was raised. Those clients may very well include those who had previously accessed specialist ESF provision. The social inclusion element needs to reflect the range and intensity of interventions required to progress those who are most distant from the labour market. There should be recognition of softer indicators as evidence of progression as opposed to a reliance purely on job outcome figures.