

Creating and Developing Positive Destination Posts for Adults and Young People within Midlothian Council**Report by Director, Education, Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to identify ways to increase employment opportunities within Midlothian Council for those who are unlikely to secure a positive destination.

2 Background

2.1 Midlothian Council currently has a small proportion of young people as employees, a higher than average number of young people in negative destinations and entry level posts which cannot be filled through internal and external advertising. Therefore this report explores and identifies a recruitment model to address this issue.

2.2 Options

2.3 The aim is to introduce a model which:

- creates a level playing field for young people applying for posts within the council.
- increase the number of young people who progress to employment with Midlothian Council, especially those at risk of a negative destination including those who are looked after or accommodated.

2.4 Any model chosen cannot unfairly advantage or disadvantage others who may wish to apply for posts. Ring fenced posts or creating a points system for those leaving school, care or college are not possible as they would be discriminatory and not stand up to scrutiny. In addition simply guaranteeing an interview through points or targeted interviewing would not necessarily achieve the desired objectives as the current strength based interview process for these posts disadvantage young people as it draws on previous experience which they do not have.

There is one approach which would allow targeted advertising due to the explicit funding criteria which is the 'Youth Employment Support Fund'; we were awarded a number of places which were co-funded and only open to a specific age group, although the number of opportunities through this fund was limited. This funding has changed to 'The Scotland Employer Recruitment Incentive, new rules have been developed and public sector employers are now not eligible to apply.

- 2.5** However it may be possible to increase the number of opportunities through implementation of the model below which would be cost neutral for the Council. This model would be for entry and other level posts and would enable the creation of Midlothian “Positive Destinations Posts” however the definition of “Positive Destination” in this instance would be wider and include long term unemployed, women returners and anyone seeking employment who had just finished education or a course of study.

Positive Destination Recruitment Model

Steps	Action
Step 1 Recruiting Managers	<p>When a vacancy arises especially entry level posts consideration is given to creating a Positive Destination Post open to all adults and young people. However in the advert we would highlight that this post is especially suitable for school leavers, women returners and long term unemployed. This would go straight to external advert</p> <p>The recruiting manager would make a decision to convert their post to a positive destination post starting on a lesser salary and using the overall budget for the post to include training.</p>
Step 2 Recruitment scrutiny and authorisation	The authorising post recruitment panel/DMT/CMT when reviewing all posts will consider if the post is suitable for conversion to a Positive Destination Post if the recruiting manager has not indicated this already.
Step 3 Post Advertised Externally	Publicity emphasises that these positive destination posts would be especially suitable for school leavers, women returners and long term unemployed. There would be a filtering question in the application process which would make anyone currently in full-time employment ineligible to apply.
Step 4 Additional Support for Candidates	Pre application and interview support offered by Lifelong Learning and Employability LLE
Step 5 Interview Process	A strength based interview will not be used instead a literacy and numeracy test would be given and a different interview

	format used aimed at finding out about the motivation, potential and attitude of the person.
Step 6 Ongoing support if successful.	The new member of staff in a positive destination post would have access to relevant certificated training and access to a work coach identified by the recruiting manager. Forums would be set up for the positive destination post holders to meet and support each other on a monthly/bi monthly basis supported by LLE.

In addition a strategic target could be set for every service to have a set number or % of vacancies offered as Positive Destination Posts, monitored through quarterly performance monitoring.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

It would be important that the recruiting managers have researched the training options and financially recognised the changes needed within the conversion of the post to a lower paid Positive Destination Post with appropriate training. Resource implications need to be recognised for running forum support to candidates, development opportunities, giving advice to managers on suitable development schemes, and development of a robust Contracts of Commitment.

3.2 Risk

The conversion of the post could result in other staff having responsibility for some elements previously carried in the post. Some mitigation of this effect with the use of Contracts of Commitment that require two years of working in Midlothian to avoid payback of development costs by the employee. Reducing turnover and resource employed in filling future vacancies.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

This approach will support adults and young people experiencing multiple barriers to employment to take their next steps, whilst addressing positive destinations.

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This approach will support young people to take their first steps and others to reengage with a chosen job/career pathway.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

None

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

This approach is a proportional response to the Council's desire to offer Positive Destination opportunities whilst being open to all thus satisfying equalities legislation but reduces the barriers for those starting and returning to employment. An EQIA is attached.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Midlothian Council has previously accessed funding from European Social Fund and Scottish Government through the Youth Employment Scotland Fund (YES Fund). The YES Fund ended in June 2015 and has been superseded by The Scotland Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI). Local Authorities are not eligible to draw down funding from this programme.

3.9 IT Issues

None

4 Summary

This report sets out a model for creating positive destination posts within the authority.

5 Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- Approve the promotion and implementation of a systematic approach to the conversion of existing substantive posts to Positive Destination Posts taking into account the EQIA using divisional budgets.

- Agree that targets will be set by Heads of Service in relation to the number or percentage of Positive Destination vacancies in Midlothian Council to be converted on an annual basis. These will be tracked through quarterly performance reporting

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