

Greener Ways to Train Young People

training *for* better



greenspace and
job opportunities

02

Local Authority Training and Employment Schemes in the CSGN area

Across Scotland, Local Authorities are running and supporting a wide variety of outdoor employability and training initiatives which offer young people opportunities to develop skills and to gain experience and confidence which can make them more job-ready. This case study profiles approaches undertaken by five different Local Authorities within the CSGN area.

Context

The impact of the economic downturn has not been equally spread across all age groups within the labour market. Young people (aged 16-24) have suffered the most with a huge reduction in employment opportunities. There are around 65,000 unemployed young people within the CSGN area, an unemployment rate of 23% .

The social and economic impacts of this scenario are profoundly costly, not only in the present sense, but also as these individuals get older and carry the experience of disengagement with the labour market into later life. Research shows that youth unemployment costs the UK Taxpayer £22 million per week in terms of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), with additional related costs of up to £23 million per week in youth crime and up to £133 million in lost productivity. **Across the CSGN area, youth unemployment cost £193 million per year in JSA payments alone.**



Bringing change to life



Central Scotland Green Network

Costs

A conservative estimate is that the CSGN area, youth unemployment costs around £193 million per year in Job Seekers Allowance payments alone.

The environmental sector can play a role in enhancing the employment prospects for everyone – especially young people, by delivering meaningful career-orientated skills, transferable ‘soft’ skills and also vital work experience, which a wide variety of employers require. Here is what five of the Local Authorities within the CSGN area have been doing.

West Lothian

West Lothian Council’s Employability Section obtained Government funding for their Future Job Fund employability scheme, this was matched with LEADER funds which paid for equipment hire, protective clothing and tools.

The scheme provided an opportunity for the Council to take on trainees to deliver specific maintenance and construction duties in Almondell & Calderwood, Beecraigs and Polkemmet Country Parks.

The work has included fence construction and repair, footpath construction and improvements, landscaping, habitat enhancements, woodland management and clearance of litter.

Trainees developed vocational and core skills which were then consolidated throughout their 26 week work placement. This resulted in significant improvement in self-esteem and confidence to compete for jobs or further education, as well as improved health as a result of working outdoors.

In addition to enhancing the employment skills of individuals, the programme gave young people the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live. As they worked, the trainees were often given positive feedback by local residents who appreciated their efforts. This was seen to be an additional motivator, encouraging trainees to complete tasks to a high standard.

In 2012, this scheme saw 23 of the 33 trainees progress into work, 1 into education and 8 return to unemployment.

Stirling

Stirling Council used a Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprentice Scheme approach to support the activities of the Ranger Service. This has included physical maintenance and improvement tasks such as access



improvements and invasive vegetation control, creating damming ditches at a lowland raised bog and removal of birch regeneration, and also biodiversity monitoring tasks such as undertaking regular butterfly transects.

Additionally, the apprentices were given the opportunity to work alongside local residents and volunteers to plant trees at various locations including Forthbank Loop - a Community Greenspace Project supported through the CSGN Development Fund. This community orientated aspect of the scheme also gave the trainees the chance to run public events and took them into school classrooms to raise awareness of environmental issues and help pupils to achieve their John Muir Trust Awards.

During 2012 this scheme saw 18 apprentices obtain SVQ level 2 in Environmental Conservation. They also became qualified in use of chainsaws and power tools, pesticide application, first aid, tree inspections and badger surveying. One of the trainees in this scheme also won the 2012 Lantra Learner of the Year in Environmental Conservation.

The Council has also had similar success with a Fisheries Management modern apprenticeship scheme.

Falkirk

Falkirk Council's Employment and Training Unit utilised a Skills Development Scotland - Skillseekers Initiative called 'Get Ready for Work' to fund teams of Environmental Operatives aged between 16 and 19.

During 2012, over 80 trainees undertook tasks such as footpath improvements, erected green infrastructure such as benches and litter bins, undertook general hard landscaping works and installed horticultural arrangements.

Fife

Supported by Fife Council's Employability & Skills Team, and Building Services, Fife Council has established a core paths implementation scheme.

The initiative was jointly funded by the CSGN Development Fund and the Council and ran over the course of two years undertaking a programme of signage and minor improvement works to the core path network within south-west Fife. These improvement works were identified through an earlier project also supported by the CSGN Development Fund.

During 2012, four young people, aged 16 to 24 were employed on contracts of up to six months. They each received training in asbestos awareness, manual handling, strimming and brushcutting, risk assessment and health and safety. They also participated in the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS), received formal training in the use of mobile access towers and have been supported in their search for further employment.

Improvement works were completed on 45 core paths. In addition, the Fife Greenspace Strategy identified ten communities with access to lower than average amounts of greenspace per 1,000 population. As a result of the project, core paths were developed in two of these communities (Auchtermuchty and Kingseat) to allow improved access to the surrounding countryside.

Glasgow

To develop and maintain Glasgow's parks, gardens and open spaces the City Council developed a programme of horticultural works including the Commonwealth Initiative - Horticultural Apprentice Programme funded by Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) and the Skills Development Scotland - 'Get Ready for Work' programme.

The training included both indoor and outdoor horticultural activity including propagation, establishing plants,

"In addition to enhancing the employment skills of individuals the programme gives young people an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live. The recognition that their efforts gain through immediate feedback from members of the public when out working is a motivator to complete tasks to high standard."

Archie Morrison, NETs, Land and Countryside Service, West Lothian Council

equipment and machine operation, health and safety in the workplace, plant identification, selection of growing media, and planting locations.

Over 80 16-19 year olds benefited from the programme, working and training in locations such as the Botanic Gardens, Victoria Park and in community gardens, schools, and on GHA land.

Apprentices worked towards gaining MA/SVQ Level 2 in Horticulture and a high proportion went on to either full time employment or further education.



Benefits

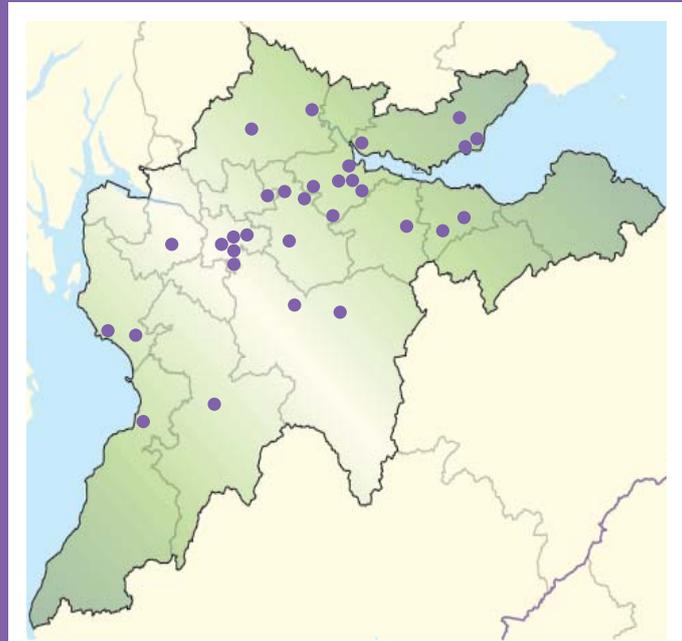
All of these projects linked the Local Authorities' shared commitment to providing training and employment opportunities for young people with on the ground action to deliver physical maintenance and improvement works.

Outdoor training in the CSGN area

Key Facts

- In 2012, there were a total of 677 trainees, on 57 separate courses - 12 trainees per course.
- Courses were delivered through from 31 programmes which were administered by 24 separate organisations.
- Programmes lasted an average of 24 weeks and most schemes ran at least twice during the year.
- Of the 297 individual trainees for which we have additional data, 135 (or 46%) went directly into employment, 27% returned to unemployment, 20% went into volunteering, 5% went into education and 1% undertook a further course.
- The mean average cost per trainee was circa £6,225 (though this varies widely)

Location of outdoor training schemes in the CSGN area in 2012



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The CSGN will change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area.

What is the CSGN?

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments in the National Planning Framework 2. It is the biggest greenspace project in Europe and will help to make Central Scotland a more attractive and distinctive place to live, to visit and to do business. The CSGN has wide political and partner support and an all encompassing remit, far beyond just a 'green' initiative, with economic development central on the agenda.

Why are we interested in training?

The prosperity of Central Scotland is fundamentally linked to the skills of its workforce and we believe that the environmental sector can play a positive role in enhancing the employment prospects for everyone – especially young people. This will help to deliver not only career orientated skills but also those transferable 'soft' skills which a wide

variety of employers require. Under the 'A Place for Growth' theme, the CSGN aims to increase employment and training in land based 'green' and 'low carbon' industries with the objective of not only providing meaningful work experience and support for young people but also to improve local greenspace for everyone to enjoy.

What are these Case Studies for?

This report is one in a series of six case studies which demonstrate that for a relatively modest investment, outdoor based training and employment projects can have profound and far reaching impacts on the lives of people furthest from the labour market. The reports are intended to inspire other organisations to take similar approaches and to inform interested parties, such as Local Authorities, in order to encourage a supportive environment for such initiatives.

Getting in Touch

To discuss this case study please contact:
Stephen Hughes, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager,
Central Scotland Green Network Support Unit.
E-mail: stephen.hughes@centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

For further information on the CSGN and other case studies please visit: www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org

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