

<b>1. Name of SOA case study</b>
Falkirk Council – NEET and employability
<b>2. What was the local need addressed by this SOA case study?</b>
The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the Falkirk Council area was significantly higher than the Scottish average. Moreover, the NEET level was approximately twice as high in the areas which fall into the worst 15% under the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
<b>3. What was done – and by which partners?</b>
<p>The ‘More Choices More Chances’ partnership group was established under the auspices of the local Workforce Plus Partnership, bringing together all the key partners, including Job Centre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, Forth Valley College, Education Services and the Council’s Employment Training Unit. The partnership has worked to achieve the goal set within ‘16+ Learning Choices’ whereby all school leavers will be provided with an appropriate offer of further education, employment or training. More importantly, however, the partnership aims to ensure that the ‘offer’ leads young people into a positive and sustained destination, with a particular focus on those individuals who are most likely to need additional support to make this transition successfully.</p> <p>Recognising the importance of this particular issue, Falkirk Community Planning Partnership established outcomes and indicators targeting the NEET group for its Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) allocation, which were also incorporated into the SOA. This led to the allocation of a substantial proportion of the FSF to NEET/employability projects targeting both young people who have not yet reached school leaving age and those who are already NEET. As well as enhancing the work done by the statutory sector members of the partnership and drawing mainstream resources into this area, the FSF has also been utilised to bring voluntary sector innovation and expertise into play, with a particular focus on young homeless people and learning disabled young people. All of these projects are required to target those areas in the worst 15% under the SIMD, to ensure accelerated impact for the most disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>An additional benefit of targeting the NEET group through the FSF, which is in addition to the broader SOA focus, is that it brings a degree of community oversight through the FSF Monitoring Panels. Local community organisations make up these panels and thereby have become active partners in tackling the issue of young people who are NEET, again with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged communities.</p>
<b>4. What is the evidence of the benefits for communities – or if the benefits are still to be delivered, what is the timeline for that?</b>
There are two elements in terms of benefit for communities – the reduction of the NEET level overall and closing the gap between the most disadvantaged communities and the rest of the Council area. The overall NEET level for the Falkirk Council area has been cut over the first year of the SOA from 16% to 13%, bringing the Falkirk figures in line with the Scottish average. Although we are clearly concerned that this figure may rise over the coming months, given the economic downturn, our aim is to try to ensure that the Falkirk NEET figure falls below the Scottish average. In terms of closing the gap, we have not yet seen significant benefits, but we anticipate that the 2009-10 figures will reflect the particular focus on this outcome, despite the challenges of the recession, which inevitably hits the most disadvantaged communities hardest.
<b>5. What added value has the SOA process brought to the delivery of these benefits?</b>
The SOA process has enabled the More Choices More Chances partnership to focus on very specific outcomes rather than individual service approaches. In particular, this has meant that the partnership has been able to identify barriers that young people face when being supported by more than one agency over

time and to develop a coherent approach which can be tailored to individual needs. Furthermore, by highlighting the importance of tackling NEET as a CPP-wide outcome, the SOA process has facilitated discussions with a much wider range of partners across the statutory and voluntary sector, so that all service providers see this issue as a part of their business.

**6. What next steps are you taking to meet this local need?**

The More Choices More Chances partnership continues to work towards providing an appropriate offer and, more importantly, a positive and sustained destination for all young people in the Falkirk Council area. Currently we are bringing forward additional investment in this priority to respond to the economic downturn, as well as beginning to plan how resources will be allocated following the removal of the FSF ring-fencing.

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