



Community Jobs Scotland

Evaluation Report

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Foreword

I'm proud to introduce this evaluation of our long-running Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) programme, though of course that pride is tinged with sadness that it's coming to an end.



The programme has twin aims: to provide positive destinations for young people furthest from the labour market; and to create jobs in the voluntary sector. It has achieved both those aims. It's clear that charities, community organisations and social enterprises provide a supportive environment for their young employees. They grow their skills and confidence and feel valued. The employers get added value which in turn benefits their local community. Across the 10,000+ jobs that were created, 40% of the young people were still employed 13 weeks after the original placement finished. Compared to other programmes, this is an extraordinary achievement.

As Scotland embraces the concepts of community wealth-building and aspires to become a wellbeing economy, this is exactly the sort of programme that moves us along that journey. The new National Strategy for Economic Transformation sets out programmes of action for a fairer and more equal society, eradicating structural barriers to people participating in the labour market. The approach that the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation's (SCVO) has evolved with Community Jobs Scotland does just that, so I would expect the local arrangements currently being set up to learn from that success.

That local dimension has long been integral to CJS, with community benefit being an essential requirement of each job created. Employers who have participated tell us that building capacity and confidence in their localities has paid dividends. The young participants are paid a proper wage, keeping the local pound local.

Our survey shows that the specialist support we have provided to employers through the scheme has greatly enhanced the success of the participants, and this approach cannot be lost when councils take over the reins.

I would like to thank the hundreds of voluntary organisations who have worked with us over the years, and the small team at SCVO for all they have done to support those employers and the thousands of young people whose lives have been changed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Fowlie".

Anna Fowlie
Chief Executive, SCVO



Summary of the key findings

Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) has delivered 10,367 jobs in the supportive environment of the voluntary sector over an 11-year period.

A recent survey was conducted by SCVO with more than 200 participating voluntary organisations from every local authority area in Scotland. It looked beneath the surface to consider in more depth the reasons for the success of the programme and provides recommendations for the future as employability transitions to new local programmes.

The voluntary sector is an ideal employer to support those who are furthest from the labour market to find a way forward. The person-centred approach inherent in the voluntary sector allowed a caring environment for young people on the CJS programme to benefit from the support and flexibility needed to enable them to have a hand up into the world of work.

Eighty four per cent of employers reported that all or most placements were successful. This is an extraordinary achievement when the participants were people facing the biggest barriers to any sort of employment such as those with care experience and those with disabilities. The CJS programme was focused on young people aged 16-29, and the success of this approach has been extended to a new project in partnership with SCVO, Highland Council and Highland TSI to include long-term unemployed over 50 years old, another significant group who are far from the labour market.

84%
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Key to this success is the Community Jobs Scotland programme structure with 93% of employers agreeing that the CJS support team at SCVO brought value to both employers and employees. The named person, who is an expert in supporting employers to embrace inexperienced staff with barriers, is central to the support model. The team at SCVO were cited as being approachable, supportive, knowledgeable and provided reliable support when needed. The account managed approach for employer support is therefore crucial to the success of the employability pipeline.

The new approach to local employability support through Local Employability Partnerships has much to recommend it. However, local authorities must work hard to engage the voluntary sector as employers. 62% of respondents stated they had minimal relationship, no relationship or were trying to establish a relationship with their local authority. There is much work to do here to support the voluntary sector employers, and building trusting relationships takes time.

Outcomes for employee, employer, staff within the employing organisation and the local community are set out below:

✔ The highest ranked benefits for employees were:

- Increased confidence
- Secured long-term employment
- New skills development
- Improved employability skills
- Progression from economic inactivity

“ The employees often found a direction and purpose in life, allowing them to pursue a career and get a foothold in life against the barriers and challenges they face.

“ CJS has helped to take young people away from a life of crime, physical and mental health and well-being problems and alcohol and/or drug abuse and misuse.





Highest ranked benefits for employers were:

- Organisation has grown in capacity
- Gained new perspectives
- Increased staffing numbers in the voluntary sector
- Able to offer new or additional services
- Benefited from new skills being introduced



Employers feel more confident taking young people and recognise that they can be an asset to the business.



The CJS role helped us increase our ability to deliver more frequent activities.



An ability to lead by example in the community.



Highest ranked benefits for staff and supervisors of a young person:

- Gained new perspectives
- Continuing professional development
- Learned new skills
- Improved job satisfaction
- Improved relationships



Benefits mostly were adapting style of management and being more focused on wellbeing and how to work through challenges in a supportive and encouraging way.



Supervisors have a sense of achievement when they see the growth of the young person.



Highest ranked benefits for a local area or community:

- Supported vulnerable members of the community better than before
- Provided more local services
- Reached a wider community
- Tackled social viewpoints or prejudices
- Increased community spirit



CJS posts offered peer connections and promoted role models within the community, for future employees to aspire to work within our organisation nationally and locally.



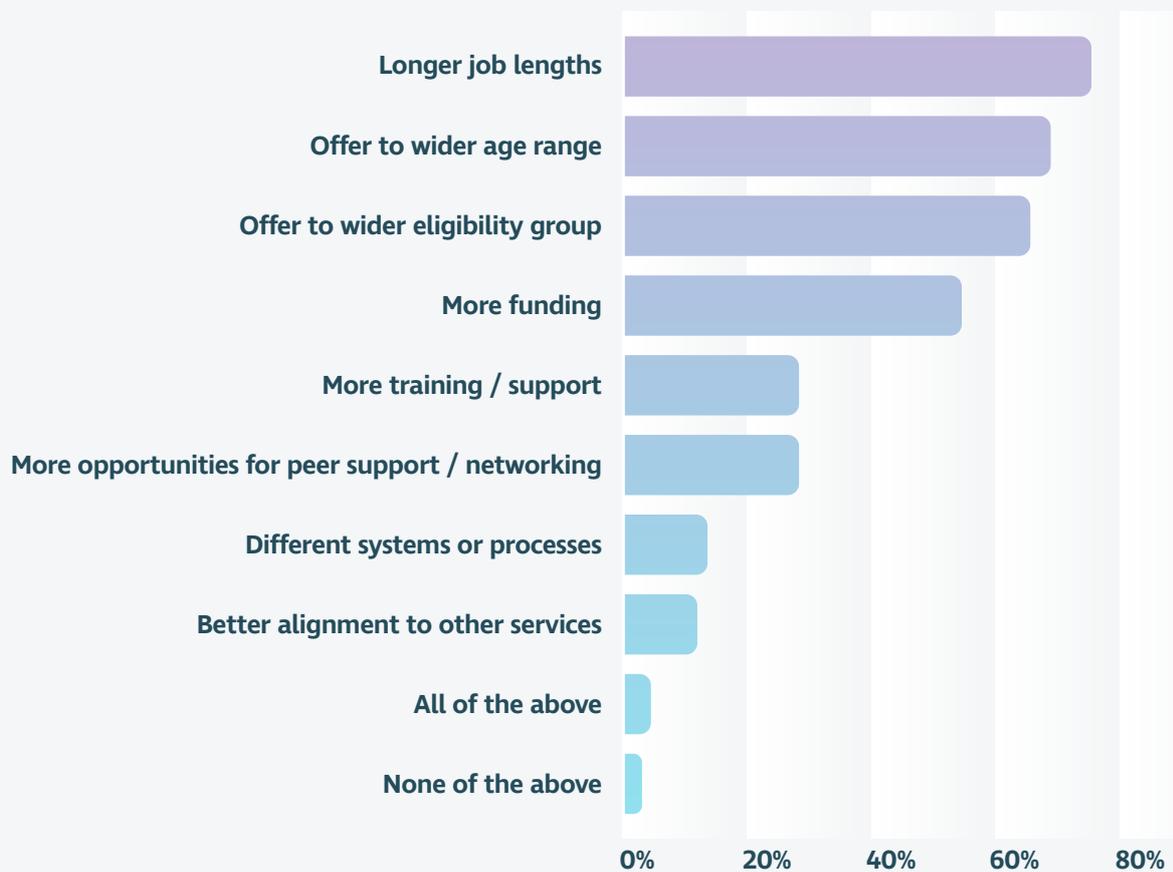
Brought the community closer as a whole.



What can be done better?

As Community Jobs Scotland finishes and a local approach to employability takes shape, SCVO's survey suggests some key improvements that could be made to increase impact of work placement and employer support programmes.

Key improvements to CJS as a programme:



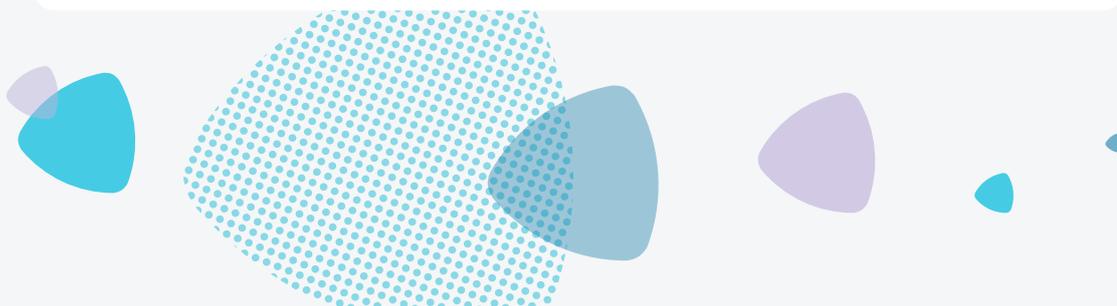
Additional written responses from organisations highlighted two further areas for improvement:

1 The most frequent comments were around frustration at the wider process, a call for simplification of the system rules and more awareness of the CJS programme processes from referrers such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Skills Development Scotland:

- “ We had a couple of individuals that would have benefitted from being taken on again through CJS, however, this was not an option due to the rules.
- “ The system for young people to apply through DWP was confusing and many DWP staff were unaware of the programme. Could applicants give expressions of interest through CJS or employer in the first instance, who then pass on to DWP staff to process?

2 The other most frequent comments were on the theme of barriers in the funding set-up preventing transition to ‘accredited opportunities linked to education’ for the participant:

- “ The jobs could have been aligned alongside an apprenticeship so they could have gained practical experience and qualification hand in hand and not having to stop one to do the other.
- “ It would have been beneficial for us to allow the young person to be on Modern Apprenticeship at the same time. The MA funding is used to cover the training provides the assessor verifier costs rather than the costs of employing the young person. I appreciate this may be double funding but a reduced rate for MAs may be applicable.





Impact of Community Jobs Scotland

Those with experience of the Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) programme have told SCVO of the overwhelmingly positive impact the project has had over the past decade.

Julia Seymour

fundraising executive at Young Enterprise Scotland

"Community Jobs Scotland is, in my honest opinion, an amazing scheme which I have had the privilege to be a part of with young people who have gained valuable experience and confidence to flourish in a nurturing environment.

"I feel that the young people joined the organisation a little brow-beaten and lacking the confidence that they 'can do'. School just wasn't the right environment for them for various reasons. Over the course of the placement, they flourished and realise they 'can indeed do' and they 'can indeed do very well'.

"I have had the pleasure to work with two young people in particular and, whilst they gained skills themselves, and had the chance to get on the work or further education ladder, I gained so much in return from them. I had the privilege to watch them grow and flourish and when they get that 'spark' it's a fantastic thing to watch and a great motivator."



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Julia Seymour

Young Enterprise Scotland

Helen Lawrenson

Center Director, Falkland Stewardship Trust



Helen Lawrenson has been center director at the Falkland Stewardship Trust for 17 years. The organisation started working with CJS in 2011, and the experience has been incredibly positive for the charity and those it employs.

Ms Lawrenson said: "I think it's been transformational for so many young people. We've had a number of young people who have a number of barriers to work. For them to have an opportunity like this to start their working lives, it's incredible. Otherwise, I don't think it would be open to them. In the past, if they'd said they'd not had a job or they spent their time in their room, they'd have a complete lack of confidence. These jobs have been so good in allowing them to get a taste of what work life is like.

I think it's has been transformational for so many young people.

Helen Lawrenson
Falkland Stewardship Trust

"We try and do that with as much care as possible. We carry out a lot of training. We set our expectations, and it could be as basic as turning up to work, and if not just give us a call. It's getting them into a pattern so they understand this is what a workplace is like,

and we try to give them as much experience as possible which suits the business, but if they have a particular interest we're happy to explore that."

"We've had at least 30 people in. I think it's changed how we hire people. And it's changed the structure of our organisation.

"CJS has also helped us apply for funding. It's been a win-win.

"I think it's almost like instinct, working with a young person. You think they're getting a good experience, but it might not be what they want for some of them exactly. But we'll help them get there, and some will go back to education or jobs that are more suited.

"Those who have been retained have a sense that they want to work here, they have a good friendship network, they're passionate about what they do. For most of them, when they first came out here, it's a beautiful part of Fife, gorgeous countryside, most haven't been here before and wouldn't have contemplated that. But they're here now and they're making a very significant contribution."

Steve Hutchison

Center Administrator, Falkland Stewardship Trust

One of those success stories at the centre in Fife is 31-year-old Steve Hutchison, who joined the Trust in late 2017.

After finding it difficult to get a job following time at university, Steve was recommended to the CJS programme via his work coach, and is now the centre administrator at Falkland.

He said: "I was on Jobseekers, had been applying to lots of council jobs but they all kept not accepting me, but not giving me much feedback. Then my advisor at the Job Centre had mentioned CJS and said it might help.

"She put me onto the SCVO website which listed lots of different jobs and what we could go with.

"I came in for the interview and got the job – I loved it right away. Helen, the boss here, is amazing. Within the first couple of weeks I was saying I didn't want to leave and stay past my year. Any time there were new tasks coming up, things they were struggling for, I volunteered. By the end of my year I had too many responsibilities for them to let me go.



It's completely changed my life to be honest.

Steve Hutchison

Falkland Stewardship Trust

“As a person, I feel I’ve got better at communicating. I was always shy and nervous, but one of the favourite parts of the job is talking to customers. I feel I’ve come a long way in self-confidence. I’ve done some training, first aid and fire wardens, and have finished a social media marketing diploma.

“It’s completely changed my life to be honest. I would have been completely different otherwise. When I was on jobseekers I had just come out with a degree, and my plan was to go into gaming. But this is completely different.

“I got a mortgage on a flat in 2019, and I wouldn’t have got that without. It’s made a big difference. I imagine now if I was to apply for a job like I was before I’d be expecting to make an interview, with all my experience, whereas before they were just blanket rejecting me.”

Liam McFadyen

Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company

Another recent beneficiary of the programme is Liam McFadyen, 21, who joined Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Company in Ayrshire through CJS seven months ago.

He said: “What had happened was I was struggling to find employment for a while. Places wanted experience but I found it hard to do that without anyone taking me on. My work coach put me down for a course with CJS, got an interview and came here. It went great and I got the vacancy.

“From then on, I worked the full-time of the contract, and when it expired the team wanted to keep me on and I got another six months contract.

“It was honestly a lifesaver. Every morning I’m looking forward to coming into work. It’s been a great opportunity to adapt to new skills, in-work qualifications. It couldn’t have gone any better.

“Without CJS, I would still have little to no experience. It’s very hard to get positions without experience. It has given me a lot more confidence, particularly dealing with my anxiety. I’ve made new friends, I felt like part of the team, I really really can’t fault it – I think it (CJS) is a foolproof idea.”

It was honestly a lifesaver. Every morning I’m looking forward to coming into work.
Liam McFadyen
Cunninghame Furniture Recycling Project





Conclusion

That the Community Jobs Scotland programme has been an unqualified success is without doubt. With more than 10,000 work placements over the 10 years of the programme, there is much to celebrate in this achievement. The employer feedback is testament to the support that the Employment Support Team at SCVO has provided during this time and demonstrates the importance of the account management model when considering employer support to enable those who are furthest away from the labour market to gain skills and confidence.

CJS has created over
10,000
placements in 10 years

The positive employer experience as they themselves grew in skills, understanding and valued the fresh ideas from young people to their organisation is a hallmark of the project. To enable employers to be confident in embracing those who are furthest from employment is a major challenge and a major issue facing the Scottish economy as it responds to a labour market squeeze. Community Jobs Scotland has demonstrated how good infrastructure can deliver for those who face the most barriers and prepare employers to welcome others like them in the future.



Background

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) has delivered the Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) programme, funded by the Scottish Government, since August 2011. It has created over 10,000 paid opportunities with Scottish third sector organisations for young unemployed people.

The programme was managed by SCVO and was guided by an Advisory Group (meeting quarterly) that includes the Scottish Government, SCVO, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group (SLAED), Scottish Prison Service (SPS), Barnardo's Scotland and Who Cares? Scotland.

✓ Rationale for the programme:

- The high levels of youth unemployment in Scotland, at the time
- The success of the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) consortium approach in Scotland
- A measure to help support the third sector in an environment when there was and continues to be increasing demands for services and cuts in funding
- The significant promotion of a job creation/FJF approach from SCVO and the third sector

✓ The CJS Programme's high-level principles included:

- Targeting young unemployed people
- Jobs across all 32 local authority areas
- Jobs in the voluntary sector
- Jobs must offer community benefit
- Jobs must last at least six months
- Jobs must pay at least minimum wage

- Jobs must be for at least 25 hours a week
- Additional training, CJS employee having access to £200 for off-the-job training and associated costs
- Additional job search
- Focus on job sustainability



Programme Evolution

Over the years the programme has developed, it included:

- Offering opportunities to young people, aged between 16 and 29 years
- The introduction of the Living Wage top-up fund for those employers paying the Living Wage to their CJS employee(s)
- The move from 26 (18-29 years) and 39 week (under 18 years) contracts to 52 week contracts, giving young people a longer period to develop their work skills/experience whilst they are dealing with ongoing personal issues
- Offering part time opportunities for disabled young people
- Levering in additional monies from Work Choice contractors i.e. Shaw Trust and Momentum, jobs were created offering 16 hours of work per week and lasted 18 months
- Since 2019 the part time jobs are also available to other groups who need the flexibility of part time work e.g. carers, lone parents etc.
- Focusing on those who are more disadvantaged in accessing the jobs market i.e. care experienced, carers, disabled people, young people with convictions and military early service leavers
- Offering opportunities to young people on Activity Agreements
- Offering a more flexible CJS Training Fund for both the employee and the employer to include support in accessing and maintaining the jobs (e.g. 1st months travel costs when required, paying for counselling support etc.)

Positive outcomes

Employers taking part in CJS between 2011 and 2021 reported to SCVO that

56.9%

of young people progressed on to a positive destination i.e. jobs or further education/training.

This increased to

64.2%

when including volunteering. And of those moving into a job,

48.2%

were retained by their CJS employer.





Community Jobs Scotland

Contact

If you would like to discuss anything in the report or how SCVO can help with your employability project, contact moira.cuthbertson@scvo.scot

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