

SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE NATIONAL

GET READY FOR WORK PROGRAMME

EVALUATION

Final report

Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and process

The GRFW evaluation process was conducted by Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants in the autumn and winter of 2005/6; its conclusions are based on data on the first four years of GRFW operation. The methodology applied was designed to include the views of a wide range of stakeholders key to GRFW's effectiveness, and sought to complement data analysis with more qualitative inputs.

The context within GRFW has, and will continue to operate, is changing rapidly. It is not sensible to review programme performance in isolation from this wider picture, and the evaluation process has been used to position the intervention in anticipation of forthcoming changes. The NEET issue, the Scottish Employability Framework, and related changes in pre-16 support are of key relevance. We have also reflected at points on the English E2E model, which has similarities to GRFW.

Programme performance and costs

GRFW has grown significantly over the 4 years of operation, with just over 8,400 recorded starts in 2005/6. This represents an increase of 32% since the initial year of operation. Just over 1,400 (17%) of these starts, however, were young people returning to GRFW after previous involvement. The Lifeskills strand accounted for just under 10% of all starts, but it has been the fastest growing part of the programme in recent years.

Positive outcomes were 41.3% in 2005/6 – up from 24.2% in the initial year of operation. These have risen consistently year on year. As anticipated, Lifeskills outcomes have always been lower, and in 2005/6 were 15.2%. In terms of the type of positive outcomes, progression to jobs is the most popular, and this popularity has grown in recent years. Participants on the programme for longer periods of time have, on average, a higher incidence of positive progression. There are very significant variations between LEC areas in terms of performance. These are detailed in the report appendices.

GRFW costs over the 4 years of operation have totalled £77.7 million, and in 2005/6 were £22.17 million. Total costs have increased by 44.4% since 2002/3. In 2005/6, 85% of total costs were spent on the mainstream strands, and 15% on Lifeskills. These costs include a significant element of trainee allowances which are an unavoidable expense within the programme.

Costs per outcome are consequently calculated net of trainee costs to enable a fairer comparison with other related SEN interventions. On this basis, in 2005/6 cost per positive outcome on the mainstream strands of GRFW was £3,483, and for Lifeskills £22,911. When progressions to other GRFW strands are included this latter figure falls to £9,829.

Targeting and access

GRFW has engaged a wide and diverse group of young people under the banner of “additional support needs”. Who the programme is targeted at has been the subject of significant regional and agency variation. At the heart of this is whether GRFW is a supply or demand led programme, and how easily the

tensions between these perspectives can be reconciled in practice. Increasing network outcome targets have sharpened the focus of this debate. In this context there is a need for greater precision on what GRFW should, and should not, be expected to do. Further clarifying the distinction between Lifeskills and the other 3 strands of GRFW will help in this regard.

Assessment and access arrangements have generally improved as the programme has settled down. Understanding of the respective roles of Careers Scotland and training provider staff has improved, as has the need to recognise the connection between initial CS assessment, and the ongoing assessment processes required once the trainee has started with the provider.

GRFW model

The basic tenets of the GRFW model have been confirmed in practice, and were widely viewed as an improvement on previous programmes. It was generally seen as a more flexible and client focused programme – but “creeping rigidity” in practice was also apparent. Overall, consultees stressed the adage “if it ain’t broke” in discussions on further redesign. But there were convincing arguments expressed in our process to now rationalise the GRFW strands.

GRFW is not, and should not be, a standard programme – flexibility and innovation have been fostered by allowing local provision space to operate. But it makes defining what happens in the programme at a national level harder, and in section 5, we suggest generic good practice which should continue to roll out across the network.

Lifeskills

Lifeskills has been the most challenging and innovative strand of the programme. It was intended to be, and is, distinctive. Its fit within the enterprise network at times seems uncomfortable. Initially the key progression from Lifeskills was articulated by SEN as being to other GRFW strands, but over time this message has been lost in both programme practice and reporting. Urgent action is needed by SEN to reinforce this, as the uncertainty is causing tensions. With this significant developmental requirement, we conclude that Lifeskills should remain within the GRFW umbrella but that its difference should be recognised more in practice

Full time participation on Lifeskills is the most common option, and participation periods do not vary significantly from the rest of the programme. This is a cause for concern as Lifeskills is still meant to be an employment focused intervention. This pattern of engagement suggests that it may in fact take on characteristics of “condition management”. In future, we believe Lifeskills should become a shorter term, part time and ad hoc experience.

Programme promotion and image

GRFW has had a low profile as an enterprise network product. This has been linked to promotional complexities connected to programme objectives and targeting. We believe it is now necessary to more positively promote the programme. This process should be led at the local level, and build on the identified good practice detailed in the report.

The role of Careers Scotland

The Careers Scotland input to GRFW has continued to improve in most areas, after a difficult start. In both the initial assessment and review roles a number of initial areas of confusion have been clarified. But there are still significant regional variations in delivery. Where the process works well, added value is apparent in: assessment; wider linkages; independent review; local labour market expertise; and post programme support.

A key issue is whether there is a growing gap in Careers Scotland and LEC views on programme objectives - based on the former having a stronger connection to the supply side motivations in programme operation. The implications of two issues need to be tracked to avoid this potential gap widening (a) the raising of the network positive outcome targets, and (b) the forthcoming relocation of Careers Scotland out-with the enterprise network umbrella.

Careers Scotland deliver the Personal Advisory Service through a mixture of dedicated and generic models. There are a number of geographical and historical reasons for this. Each approach has advantages and drawbacks, and we do not feel that the evaluation should conclude definitively in favour of one or the other. Rather we outline a specification of good practice that either approach should aspire to

Recording of impact

There are two major and related weaknesses in recording impact: the lack of ongoing tracking data on participant progress on programme completion; and the lack of any information on the types of jobs young people progress to. These gaps have wide reaching implications, and significantly limit the ability to gauge the full programme impact. They should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

A clear line now needs to be drawn on the debate on soft indicators of distance travelled – in future we think it is important to clarify and communicate that soft indicators contribute to programme improvement by providing vital ongoing intelligence, but they do not in themselves justify ongoing programme operation.

Links to Skillseekers and MAs

Progression rates from GRFW to Skillseekers or MAs were 16.3% in 2005/6 - this figure has fallen over the years of GRFW operation. It is a cause of some concern. In future we believe this performance level must rise, and that SEN should set targets in this respect and monitor progress.

Quality

There is a general sense that the quality of GRFW has improved significantly over the 4 years of programme operation. A number of weaker training providers have been removed from the programme, and Careers Scotland's input has generally improved. But evidencing quality within GRFW is difficult. Whilst there is no enthusiasm for GRFW moving towards a regimented assessment process, some level of partner system for introducing more formalised quality standards would be of value.

Participant offer

Future consideration of the level and nature of allowances paid to GRFW participants need to be considered in the context of wider debates on remuneration levels for participation in post school options.

Aftercare

Improved aftercare provision was a common element of our consultations. We believe this a complex issue, and requires definition and a clear statement of intended impact. Local pilots should continue to be analysed but we do not conclude that the case has been made at this stage to specify and introduce a network wide aftercare service.

Recommendations

A total of 34 recommendations are detailed in our concluding section in 8 categories: targeting and programme objectives; programme design, operation and delivery; partnership and strategic linkages; recording programme impact; programme progression; quality; funding and resources; and promotion

The future recommendations primarily suggest action for the enterprise network, but given the importance we attach to the programme's fit within the wider operating context, we have also suggested some areas where other agencies need to contribute – most fundamentally in terms of Scottish Executive guidance on the future of the youth guarantee. This represents an extensive package of action and it is essential that SEN use the year 2006/7 to manage the suggested change process. A related action plan to achieve this should be developed by the Skills and Learning Team, which recognises this will be a sensitive process demanding clarity and good communication

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

Introduction

Scottish Enterprise National commissioned Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants in August 2005 to undertake an evaluation of the Get Ready for Work (GRFW) programme.

GRFW was introduced in April 2002 as the enterprise network's new national labour market access intervention for young people aged between 16 and 18 with additional support needs (ASN).

The evaluation brief called for a fundamental review of all aspects of programme performance with a particular emphasis on 4 key issues: the transition and progression of young people with ASN within GRFW; the standard of programme delivery; the costs and benefits; and the role of Careers Scotland.

An interim evaluation report was submitted to SEN in December 2005, and a workshop was convened with the evaluation advisory group to consider its content. The interim report did not seek to make any firm conclusions, but suggested the key themes the final evaluation needed to address in detail. These are picked up in section 5.

Evaluation process

The evaluation process was underpinned by a number of key principles which were agreed with SEN as the need to:

- ensure the approach was inclusive, and that views were gathered from the wide range of stakeholders with experience of GRFW delivery, and representative of the whole SEN area
- focus on key lines of enquiry to give the review process focus within a complex operating context
- work in close partnership with the client throughout the process
- produce clear, unambiguous and evidenced recommendations in the final evaluation outcomes

Our method included:

- ongoing consultations with key management staff involved in the design of the programme within Scottish Enterprise National
- individual consultations with key staff from the Skills Directorates in all 12 LEC areas
- regional discussions with LEC staff to feedback messages from the individual sessions, and review local data from our metrics analysis
- consultations with national and regional management staff within Careers Scotland

- a series of focus groups with Careers Scotland staff directly involved in GRFW delivery
- visits to 16 training providers across the network which have included discussions with management and delivery staff, observation of some GRFW delivery, and discussions with programme participants
- 13 focus group discussions involving a total of 90 GRFW participants
- a postal survey of all training organisations currently providing GRFW, with over 75 responses received to date – a response rate of over 80%
- 20 interviews with employers involved in the programme
- a comprehensive review of performance data provided from the CTS system by Scottish Enterprise and analysis of wider indicators related to post school progression. This included a dedicated metrics workshop with the evaluation steering group in October 2005
- compilation and review of a range of more localised background documentation on GRFW provided by local LEC staff, Careers Scotland, and training providers
- preparation of an interim evaluation report in December 2005, and a workshop with the steering group to discuss its content
- a closing workshop with the Advisory Group on the draft report in April 2006

Format of final report

Following the executive summary, this report is structured as follows:

Section 2 – summarises the original rationale and objectives for the introduction of GRFW, and key issues in the wider operating context.

Section 3 – contains the headline data on programme performance, and some wider indicators at national and local level which relate to GRFW and its performance.

Section 4 – considers programme total and unit costs.

Section 5 – reviews the programme under 12 key themes: programme targeting, rationale and NEET reduction; assessment and access; the GRFW model and delivery; the Lifeskills strand; promotion and image; the role of Careers Scotland; outcomes and impact measurement; quality and accreditation; employer links and progression focus; programme resourcing and the financial deal for young people; progression routes, outcome focus, aftercare and tracking; and value for money.

Section 6 – contains our conclusions and recommendations on future programme operation.

Appendix 1 – presents LEC level analysis to enable comparison between areas.

Appendix 2 – summarises the views of programme participants from the focus groups held.
Appendix 3 – highlights the key messages from the English E2E programme.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

GRFW continues to evolve within a fast moving policy context, which needs to be understood at both a national and local level. The original design of the programme recognised this in the early 2000s; since then the pace of related change has if anything increased.

Overall, we would assess these changes as positive for the GRFW programme, and the young people it seeks to support. But it also provides challenges; demanding the programme continually considers that appropriate connections are made, and ensures maximum “fit” and additionality.

As we refer repeatedly throughout this report, local variation is common in programme operation, and this often reflects varying local circumstances. It is important these are understood to ensure a national programme such as GRFW retains maximum local relevance.

We summarise the most important elements of context below.

GRFW original rationale and objectives

GRFW was introduced in April 2002 as the national training programme for “..young people who without additional support are unable to access other training, learning or employment opportunities”. It succeeded the Skillseekers STN programme. The new approach built on many of the lessons from the STN experience, and its design in part reflected the enterprise network response to the findings of the Beattie Committee, which scoped out the need for improved school to labour market transitions for potentially disengaged young people.

Key features of GRFW, which distinguished it from its predecessor programme included:

- a more flexible training offer in terms of programme duration and content
- a more customised approach for each young person participating
- a breakdown of the training element to 4 strands to provide greater definition and ensure the scope of provision was widened¹
- a reduced requirement for participants to work towards a formal SVQ
- an increased role for Careers Scotland in terms of front end assessment and ongoing review of participant progress

It was recognised from the outset that the aspirations for GRFW represented a significant change in youth training provision, placing new developmental demands on all key stakeholders – training providers, LECs, and Careers Scotland. A further challenging feature of the programme’s introduction was that it coincided exactly with the introduction of the new Careers Scotland organisation.

¹ The nature of the 4 strands is detailed further on pages 38/39.

Interim evaluation 2003

The first year of GRFW's operation was reviewed by the same consultancy team undertaking this evaluation. This was a part of a pan Scotland exercise commissioned jointly by Scottish Enterprise and HIE. Key conclusions from the report were:

- considerable progress was evident in developing the programme in the initial year, and that in most areas the model of GRFW was considered preferable to its predecessor
- in particular, the flexibility of the model was viewed positively, as was the easing of the need for young people to pursue VQs.
- the development of GRFW had been a long and hard process in some areas, which was far from complete by the spring of 2003
- the sense that GRFW represented a radical change from previous approaches varied between areas and stakeholders – this in part reflected different approaches to Skillseekers STN provision in the latter years of its operation
- establishing the lifeskills strand had been the most challenging part of programme development, but also where most innovation in approaches was evident
- outcomes into positive outcomes were 24.2% across the Scottish Enterprise area. In addition there was widespread consensus that the programme also delivered a range of softer outcomes in terms of distance travelled, but that these were not commonly or systematically evidenced
- the profile of GRFW was generally low amongst young people, parents, and wider potential referral sources such as schools
- development of the Careers Scotland input to the programme had been slower than anticipated in many areas, and the challenges of setting this up simultaneous to establishing the whole organisation had been underestimated

NEET and the Scottish Employability Framework

Addressing high levels of young people aged between 16 and 19 years old who are “not in education, employment, or training” (NEET) has been a growing national government policy priority in recent years. GRFW is viewed as a key part of the response to this issue for young people who have left school.

The concern with NEET stems from a combination of persistently high levels of NEET status (internationally amongst the highest of comparable countries) co-existing with a period of sustained economic buoyancy at the national level. Moreover, research demonstrates that sustained or frequent episodes of NEET status between the ages of 16 and 18 leads to difficulties for many people in engaging or sustaining labour market involvement throughout their lives. A number of other negative indicators connected to mental health, addictions, and offending are also likely to be higher.

Within this context, one of five working groups established to develop the Scottish Employability Framework (SEF) was charged with looking at the NEET challenge, and with suggesting future policy responses. The report of this group is now available. All of the report's 5 action themes are relevant to GRFW:

- improved partnerships, enhanced intelligence, and clear targeting of interventions
- exemplary support services
- effective pre 16 intervention
- an aligned set of post 16 interventions
- a comprehensive range of financial incentives for young people

The potential implications of the SEF for GRFW are considered in detail in section 5; at this stage it is worth noting that the evaluation process has been viewed as an opportunity to define the future role of GRFW within the context of a wider range of partner interventions. This is critical to agreeing who the programme is for, and what it seeks to achieve. It also requires a reinterpretation of the concept of the "youth guarantee" and what this should mean in a changing context, and a growing recognition of the implications of true partnership working.

Education specific policy drivers

Simultaneous to the evolution of GRFW and the development of the NEET strategy, a number of key policy changes originating within the Scottish Education Department increasingly impact on the GRFW programme. These include:

The Additional Support for Learning (ASL) Act – which from November 2005 places statutory duties on local education authorities to work with partners to identify progression routes for young people with additional support needs. The definition of "additional support" within the Act incorporates a much wider group of young people than previous approaches. The Act also triggers the need to design and implement new information sharing systems amongst partners. For GRFW it offers the potential to (a) introduce the programme as an option at an earlier stage, and (b) offer GRFW providers improved information when young people join the programme.

Skills for Work – involves new pilot programmes offering vocational alternatives for young people not attracted to traditional academic options. GRFW may be a suitable progression option for some Skills for Work participants.

Education Maintenance Allowances – these offer payments to young people to stay on at school after their statutory school leaving age. In some areas there are views that this may reduce the flow of young people into GRFW.

All of these initiatives are still at an early stage, and how they will impact in practice is still unclear. But they are a key part of the changing landscape affecting the potential throughput of young people into GRFW. How the programme fits with these developments will be important to future development, demand and design.

Smart Successful Scotland (SSS)

SSS is the key strategic driver of the work of the enterprise network, and provides the core justification for the network's ongoing support for GRFW. The key link is to the "Learning and Skills" priority and in particular the requirement of the strategy to deliver "the best start for all our young people". The lead performance indicator in the SSS measurement framework is also NEET levels, and how these benchmark against other OECD countries.

In the current labour market, GRFW is of particular relevance to the wider SSS challenge which identifies the co-existence of employer shortages in filling some lower skill entry level jobs with continued and persistent high levels of economic inactivity. As indicated, NEET status between the ages of 16 and 19 has a high correlation with lifelong problems in connecting and sustaining labour market involvement. Addressing the issue at this early intervention stage has a clear role, and GRFW is the key enterprise network contribution in this regard.

A further question which SSS demands of the enterprise network is the evidence that interventions are based on "market failure". This is not a directly transferable term to GRFW but interpreted as intervening "to make something happen that otherwise would not", the theoretical justification for GRFW is rooted in (a) the relatively high and persistent NEET levels, and (b) the continued existence in some form of the guarantee to young people in the relevant age categories which was based on a training opportunity being available if all other "market driven" opportunities were not appropriate.

Other local employability related interventions for young people

GRFW does not exist in isolation, and in most areas it is one of a number of potential options for young people with additional support needs. This has two dimensions (a) the existence of what are effectively "competing" options, which may impact on GRFW numbers, and (b) the existence of other "employability" interventions which may complement and supplement GRFW participation – the latter may be explicitly focused on access to the labour market, or primarily address other issues which effectively block labour market progress such as homelessness, addictions, or mental health problems.

The nature of this infrastructure will vary between areas, and a key issue is the extent to which all service providers are aware of other provision, and connect in practical terms to each other. A further complicating factor is that this wider landscape is never static – services come and go with alarming regularity. Fitting GRFW into this context is challenging; it demands as a minimum some understanding by GRFW delivery organizations of the local map of provision. The implications of this are considered in later sections.

Local labour markets

The nature of local labour markets clearly impacts on the operation of the GRFW programme. These vary enormously across and within LEC boundaries - from areas where jobs are plentiful to those with limited opportunities, and where the general economic buoyancy has not filtered down. What these variations mean for GRFW, and its likely recruits, is not straightforward. These issues are considered later in the report, but in areas of economic buoyancy in particular, they demand considerably more focus on the sustainability of job outcomes from GRFW.

Lessons from elsewhere

Although GRFW is a distinctly Scottish approach, the problem it addresses is not unique and the challenge of engaging school leavers with additional support needs is shared by most other developed economies. The NEET Workstream identified the need for us to improve our understanding of approaches to tackling this problem elsewhere, and there are lessons that GRFW can learn from other areas. The two most relevant cases we know of are found quite close to home.

In England, the E2E programme is a pre-Level 2 intervention targeted at young people who are not yet ready to move onto apprenticeships. Launched in August 2003, following a period of local area piloting, it is jointly managed by the DfES and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Connexions Service is central to its delivery, and their staff assume much the same role as Careers Scotland's do on the GRFW programme.

At various points in the report we make reference to the E2E programme, as it closely resembles Get Ready For Work in a number of respects. We pull together these issues in appendix 3.

The other interesting model for this client group is the Youthreach service in Ireland. This national programme has recently been reformed and repositioned to offer 'second chance education' to school leavers who have not achieved their potential. Although in its early stages, Youthreach offers some interesting lessons for GRFW, particularly in relation to the question of consistent quality and the issue of its fit with the secondary education system.

SECTION 3 – PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Introduction

This section of the report gives an overview of the performance of the GRFW programme since its introduction in April 2002. It presents the headline trends over the years in terms of:

- inputs, relating primarily to the numbers and characteristics of participants
- outputs, looking at key elements of the programme, and
- outcomes, examining the progressions of young people from the programme

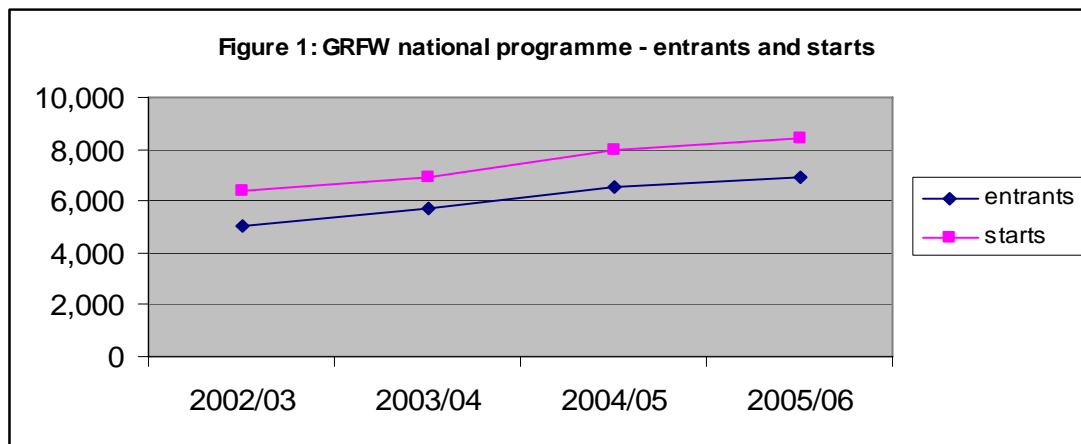
Where possible, we have presented the analysis in terms of the mainstream GRFW strands (combining core, personal and vocational strands) and the Lifeskills strand. For the purposes of this report these are referred to as “mainstream GRFW” and “Lifeskills”.

The information for this analysis has been provided by the Scottish Enterprise CTS performance management system. The annual figures relate to each of the financial years from 2002/03 to 2005/06.

Inputs - national

Overview

A total of **24,158** young people have participated in GRFW since it began in April 2002. This figure refers solely to the total number of “*first time entrants*” on the programme and is lower than the total number of “*starts*”, which includes those trainees who have left and returned to the programme. The total number of starts (or trainee episodes) on the GRFW programme, from its beginning has been **29,657**. The number of “*returners*” to the programme (which will include trainees who leave and return more than once) over the same time period was **5,476**.



Source: SE CTS

Table 1 provides an overview of the scale of the national programme by year, reflecting participant numbers by first time entrants, starts, and returners, and broken down by mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills.

Table 1: Total GRFW programme, including Lifeskills

Total	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/06	Total
1 st time entrants	5,029	5,721	6,525	6,883	24,158
Total starts	6,365	6,916	7,951	8,425	29,657
Returners	1,336	1,230	1,481	1,429	5,476
Mainstream GRFW	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/06	Total
1 st time entrants	4,706	5,148	5,918	6,255	22,027
Total starts	5,942	6,258	7,201	7,602	27,003
Returners	1,236	1,102	1,283	1,242	4,863
Lifeskills	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/06	Total
1 st time entrants	323	573	607	628	2,131
Total starts	423	658	750	823	2,654
Returners	100	128	198	187	613

Source: SE CTS

Key points from this are:

- During the most recently completed year of operation, from 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006, a total of 6,883 young people took part in the GRFW programme across the Scottish Enterprise Network area. 6,255 (90.2%) trainees were on the "mainstream" GRFW strands, and 628 (9.8%) on Lifeskills. In this period, there were 8,425 trainee episodes, or starts, on the programme, comprised of 7,602 starts on mainstream GRFW and 823 Lifeskills starts
- A number of the trainees who start on GRFW are not first time entrants, and are highlighted here as "returners", some of whom re-start the programme a number of times (which is why the number of starts is higher than the sum of the first time entrants and returners). In 2005/06, the number of returners to the programme was 1,429
- Since it began in 2002, the programme has grown considerably, with the number of participants increasing by just under 37% over the 4 year period. This meant a 33% growth in mainstream GRFW trainees taking part in the programme and significantly, an increase of 94% in the number of Lifeskills trainees
- In terms of the total number of starts on GRFW, the programme has grown by 32% since it began. Within this, the number of mainstream GRFW starts has increased by 30% and, again significantly, the number of Lifeskills starts by 95%. Lifeskills represented just under 10% of the total GRFW programme in 2005/06, having grown from 6.6% in 2002/03
- Over the 4 years of operation, around 18% of starts have been accounted for by returners to the programme. This has reduced from 21% in 2002/03 to just under 17% of starts in 2005/06. Perhaps not surprisingly, the percentage of returners is higher amongst trainees on the Lifeskills

strand, with just under 23% of starts accounted for by returners in 2005/06, compared to 16% of mainstream GRFW starts

Participant profile by gender and age

The split between male and female participants on the programme has remained fairly constant over the years, with 65.5% males and 34.5% females taking part. Table 2 gives a breakdown of participants by gender and Tables 3a and 3b provide a breakdown of the age of participants when they start mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills, and the proportion of each age-group as a percentage of the total number of starts.

Table 2: Gender of programme participants, mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills – total starts

Year	Mainstream GRFW		Lifeskills		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
2002/03	2008	3934	163	260	2171	4194
2003/04	2150	4108	265	393	2415	4501
2004/05	2437	4764	277	473	2714	5237
2005/06	2587	5015	335	488	2922	5503
Total & % of starts	9182 34%	17821 66%	1040 39%	1614 61%	10222 34.5%	19435 65.5%

Source: SE CTS

Table 3a: Age of programme participants, mainstream GRFW – all starts

Year	Age at start						
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-22
2002/03	424	3334	2017	129	20	16	2
2003/04	445	3544	2077	161	19	10	2
2004/05	474	4129	2418	148	25	7	0
2005/06	497	4456	2467	152	18	11	1
Total & % of all ages	1840 6.8%	15463 57.3%	8979 33.2%	590 2.2%	82 0.3%	44 0.16%	5 0.02%

Source: SE CTS

Table 3b: Age of programme participants, Lifeskills – all starts

Year	Age at start						
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-22
2002/03	24	221	151	24	2	1	0
2003/04	43	361	209	36	7	2	0
2004/05	62	391	255	30	6	2	4
2005/06	71	443	268	28	11	1	1
Total & % of all ages	200 7.5%	1416 53.3%	883 33.3%	118 4.4%	26 1.0%	6 0.2%	5 0.2%

Source: SE CTS

Key points:

- The vast majority of young people who start on both mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills are either 16 or 17, with over 50% aged 16 when they start. 6.8% of GRFW trainees and 7.5% of Lifeskills trainees are 15 when they join the programme. This has remained fairly constant over the 4 year period of operation
- A relatively small proportion of trainees are aged 18 and over when they start, with a higher percentage of "older" trainees on Lifeskills than mainstream GRFW

Participant profile by length of previous unemployment

Over 90% of young people have been out of work for under 6 months when they start on mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills, with just under 6% unemployed for 6-12 months, and a smaller proportion longer term unemployed for over 12 months. Tables 4a and 4b give a breakdown of duration of unemployment by year.

Table 4a: Total number of starts on GRFW by length of previous unemployment

Duration of unemployment	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total	%
0-6 months	5484	5729	6577	7048	24838	92.0
6-12 months	315	377	438	402	1532	5.7
12-24 months	134	140	173	137	584	2.3
> 24 months	9	12	13	15	49	0.2
Total	5942	6258	7201	7602	27003	

Source: SE CTS

Table 4b: Total number of starts on Lifeskills by length of previous unemployment

Duration of unemployment	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	Total	%
0-6 months	378	603	692	728	2401	90.5
6-12 months	23	46	35	56	160	6.0
12-24 months	20	8	20	27	75	2.8
> 24 months	2	1	3	12	18	0.7
Total	423	658	750	823	2654	

Source: SE CTS

Outputs - national

Programme Leavers

Reflecting the growth mentioned at the start of this section in relation to the number of starts on the programme over the years, the number of leavers has similarly risen, by 39% across the whole programme. This is shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Programme leavers – Total programme, mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills

	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/06	Total
Total	6,298	7,558	8,123	8728	30,707
GRFW	6,085	6,873	7,282	7833	28,073
Lifeskills	213	685	841	895	2634

Source: SE CTS

The number of leavers on mainstream GRFW has risen by 29%, and the number of Lifeskills leavers has increased, quite dramatically, by 320% - albeit from a low base in 2002/3. This is considerably greater than the increase in the number of Lifeskills starts.

Length of time on the programme

Tables 6a and 6b show the length of time spent on mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills by trainees. It should be noted that these figures refer to leavers from the programme rather than starts. In the next section of this chapter, we provide an analysis of length of stay on the programme in relation to outcomes achieved. This will give an indication of the optimum time spent on the programme to gain a positive outcome.

Table 6a: Duration of stay, mainstream GRFW - leavers

Length of stay	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	1-3 weeks	963	15.8	1053	15.3	1196	16.4	1077
4-6 weeks	840	13.8	938	13.6	968	13.3	1062	13.6
7-13 weeks	1505	24.7	1635	23.8	1901	26.1	2171	27.7
14-26 weeks	1549	25.5	1731	25.2	1742	23.9	1986	25.4
> 6 months	1226	20.1	1513	22.0	1473	20.2	1534	19.6
Total	6085		6873		7282		7833	

Source: SE CTS

Table 6b: Duration of stay, Lifeskills - leavers

Length of stay	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	1-3 weeks	70	32.9	117	17.1	150	17.8	149
4-6 weeks	41	19.2	117	17.1	140	16.6	144	16.1
7-13 weeks	69	32.4	184	26.9	234	27.8	249	27.8
14-26 weeks	29	13.6	175	25.5	201	23.9	213	23.8
> 6 months	4	1.9	92	13.4	116	13.8	138	15.4
Total	213		685		841		895	

Source: SE CTS

Key points from this are:

- About half of all GRFW trainees stay on the programme for between 7 to 26 weeks
- A higher proportion of mainstream GRFW participants remain on the programme for over 6 months, just under 20% in 2005/06, compared to just over 15% of Lifeskills trainees. The proportions of trainees staying on for between 1-6 weeks has dropped marginally since the programme began, with the proportions of mainstream trainees staying on for between 7-13 weeks rising slightly, and the proportions of Lifeskills trainees who stay for over 14 weeks increasing by a small amount

Outcomes - national

Overview

Positive outcomes for the GRFW programme are defined as progression to either Further Education, employment, or to mainstream Skillseekers. They are commonly measured as a percentage of the number of programme leavers rather than starts. Table 7 gives an overview of how the programme has performed in terms of the rate of positive outcomes achieved each year. It shows this as a proportion of total leavers from both mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills.

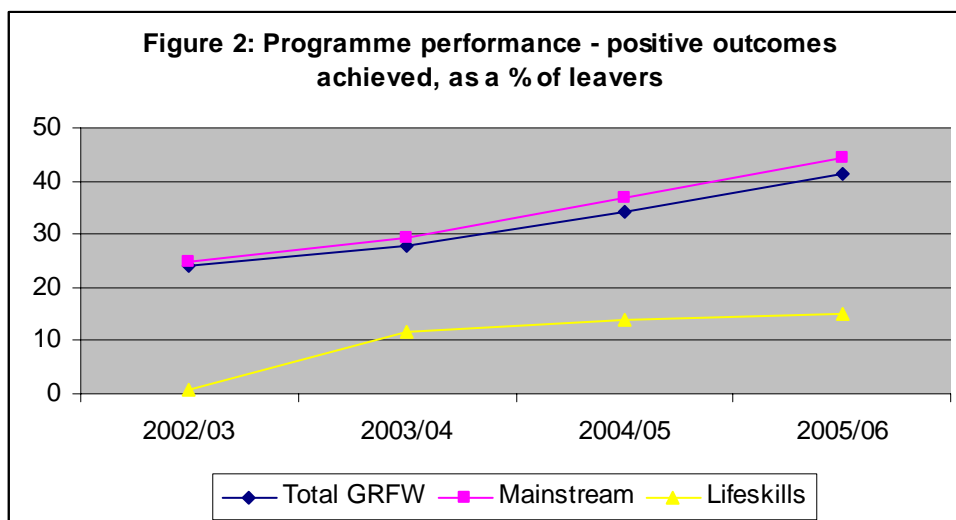
Table 7: Positive outcomes – number and as a % of leavers

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06		Total	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
Total	1522	24.2	2104	27.8	2783	34.2	3609	41.3	9882	32.2
GRFW	1520	25.0	2023	29.4	2671	36.7	3473	44.3	9823	35.0
Lifeskills	2	0.9	81	11.8	112	13.9	136	15.2	331	12.6

Source: SE CTS

Key points:

- Over the period that the programme has been in operation, participants have achieved a total of 9,882 positive outcomes on progression from GRFW - to either FE, Jobs, or onto Skillseekers. This represents 32.2% of the total number of leavers.
- Encouragingly, the rate of positive outcomes achieved has increased year on year since the programme began, from just over 24% in 2002/03 to just over 41% in 2005/06. Within this, positive outcomes have increased in both the mainstream strands of the programme and in Lifeskills, from 25% of leavers from mainstream GRFW, and 0.9% of Lifeskills leavers in the first year, to just over 44% of mainstream GRFW leavers and just over 15% of Lifeskills leavers in 2005/06



Source: SE CTS

Progressions

Looking at the outcomes achieved in further detail, Tables 8a and 8b detail the split between FE, jobs and Skillseekers.

Table 8a: Positive outcomes to FE, Jobs and Skillseekers - mainstream GRFW - number and % of total positive outcomes

Year	Total outcomes	FE	%	Jobs	%	Skillseekers	%
2002/03	1520	208	13.7	1021	67.2	291	19.1
2003/04	2023	273	13.5	1433	70.8	317	15.7
2004/05	2671	342	12.8	1925	72.0	404	15.1
2005/06	3473	488	14.1	2400	69.1	585	16.8
Total	9687	1311	13.5	6779	70.0	1597	16.5

Source: SE CTS

Table 8b: Positive outcomes to FE, Jobs and Skillseekers - Lifeskills - number and % of total positive outcomes

Year	Total outcomes	FE	%	Jobs	%	Skillseekers	%
2002/03	2	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0
2003/04	81	14	17.3	62	76.5	5	6.2
2004/05	112	23	20.5	80	71.4	9	8.0
2005/06	136	49	36.0	80	58.8	7	5.1
Total	331	87	26.3	223	67.4	21	6.3

Source: SE CTS

A number of observations are suggested from the above:

- The majority of young people achieving positive outcomes from mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills enter employment on leaving the programme. A total of 6,779 trainees went into jobs from mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills, representing 70% of mainstream GRFW positive outcomes and just over 67% of Lifeskills outcomes
- A higher percentage of mainstream GRFW trainees go onto Skillseekers after GRFW – 16.5% of those who achieved positive outcomes, compared to 6.3% of Lifeskills positive outcome leavers
- The reverse is true in terms of the progression to FE, with a higher proportion of Lifeskills leavers going onto FE than leavers from mainstream GRFW. Just over 26% of positive outcomes from Lifeskills have been into FE, whereas just 13.5% of leavers from mainstream GRFW who achieved positive outcomes went into FE
- As far as mainstream GRFW is concerned, the pattern of outcomes achieved has remained fairly consistent over the years. The first 3 years had shown a small, but continual increase in the proportion of outcomes into employment and a gradual decrease in the outcomes to FE and Skillseekers, however that trend reversed very slightly in the last year. The trend in relation to Lifeskills outcomes is different and has shown a steady increase in the proportion of outcomes into FE, with the rate of outcomes into jobs and Skillseekers dropping
- In addition to the traditional positive outcomes, a significant number of Lifeskills trainees also leave the strand and go onto mainstream GRFW, as shown in Table 8c below². Over the programme to date, 13.3% of Lifeskills trainees (296 in total) have left the programme and gone onto mainstream GRFW. This proportion has increased each year, and in 2004/05, almost 22% of trainees progressed from Lifeskills to GRFW

Table 8c: Progression from Lifeskills to GRFW

Year	Numbers	% of leavers
2003/04	55	8.0
2004/05	157	18.7
2005/06	181	20.2
Total	393	16.2

Source: SE CTS

Length of time on the programme

In assessing what the optimum length of time spent on the programme might be, we have detailed below the number and percentage of outcomes achieved by leavers, according to how long they have been on GRFW, again split by the mainstream strands and Lifeskills. Tables 9a and b show the number of positive outcomes, and as a percentage of the leavers in each of the time categories recorded.

² As considered in more detail in section 5, this was always recognized as the key immediate progression route for Lifeskills participants.

Table 9a: Outcomes achieved by leavers, by length of time on programme – mainstream GRFW

Length of stay	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
1-3 weeks	104	10.8	118	11.2	193	16.1	237	22.0
4-6 weeks	138	16.4	180	19.2	211	21.8	300	28.2
7-13 weeks	348	23.1	420	25.7	599	31.5	914	42.1
14-26 weeks	451	29.1	546	31.5	782	44.9	954	48.0
> 6 months	479	17.3	758	50.1	884	60.0	1086	69.6
Total	1520	25.0	6870	2022	2669	36.7	3491	44.6

Source: SE CTS

Table 9b: Outcomes achieved by leavers, by length of time on programme – Lifeskills

Length of stay	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
1-3 weeks	0	0	10	8.5	14	9.3	13	8.7
4-6 weeks	0	0	18	15.4	14	10.0	21	14.6
7-13 weeks	1	1.4	16	8.7	31	13.2	37	14.9
14-26 weeks	1	3.4	22	12.6	38	18.9	37	17.4
> 6 months	0	0	15	16.3	15	12.9	28	20.3
Total	2	0.9	81	11.8	112	13.3	136	15.2

Source: SE CTS

Key points suggested by this are:

- On average, the shorter period of time that a trainee stays on GRFW, the less likely they are to secure a positive outcome. Analysis shows that the rate of positive outcomes increases directly with the length of stay, with almost 70% of trainees on mainstream GRFW strands, and just over 20% of Lifeskills trainees who left the programme after 6 months or more, achieving positive outcomes in 2005/06

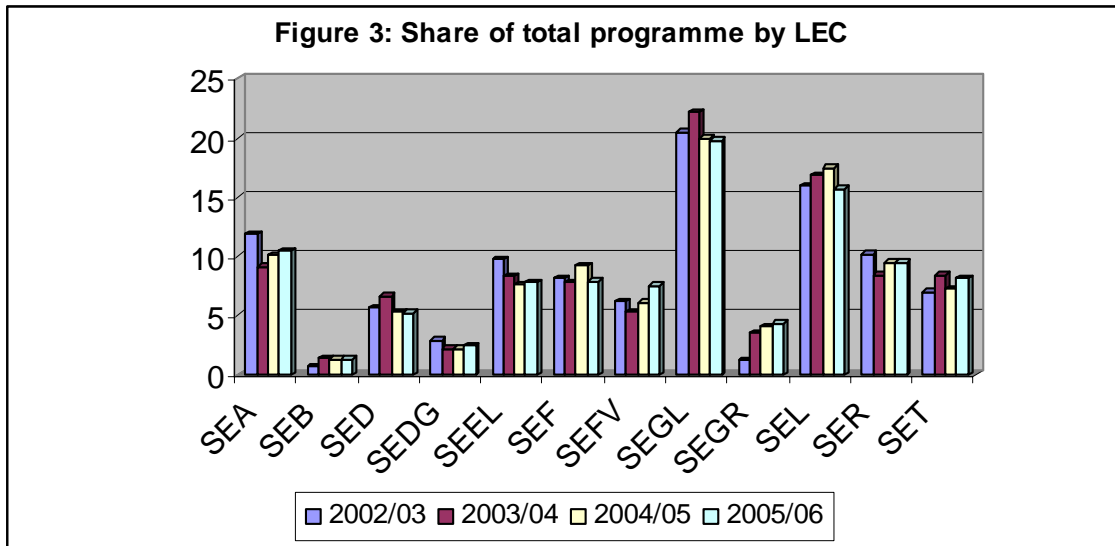
LEC Analysis

This section provides an overview of the GRFW programme at the LEC level since it began in 2002/03, again looking at the inputs, outputs and outcomes. It refers to analysis contained in a series of tables in Appendix 1, detailing LEC performance, broken down by both the mainstream, and Lifeskills strands of the programme.

Overview

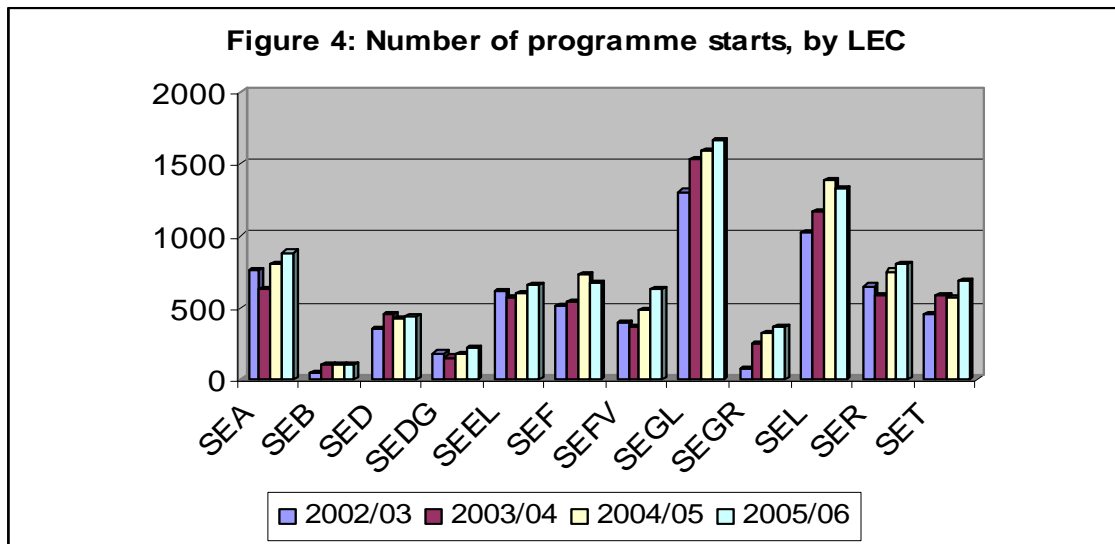
Scottish Enterprise Glasgow has consistently accounted for the greatest share of the GRFW programme over the 4 years of its operation. Just over 20% of all starts on the programme have been in Glasgow, although this proportion has dipped slightly in the last year. Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire represents the next highest proportion of the programme, with around 16.5% over the years, and again falling slightly in

2005/06. The smallest shares of the programme are found in Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, and Grampian.



Source: SE CTS

All areas have seen a growth in the programme over the last 4 years, as illustrated in Figure 4 below, and in Table A1 of Appendix 1.



Source: SE CTS

Nationally, the programme has grown by just over 32% since its first year of operation. Locally, although lowest in actual numbers, the greatest increases in programme growth have been in Grampian, where starts have increased from 77 to 362, representing a growth of 370%, and in Borders, from 47 starts in 2002/03 to 106 in 2005/06 (125%). Tayside and Forth Valley have also grown considerably, both by over 50%. Edinburgh and the Lothians have seen the smallest increase in the programme, growing by just under 7%

over the 4 years. Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway have also experienced lower rates of growth, both under 20% since 2002/03.

Looking separately at the mainstream and Lifeskills strands, Tables A2a and A2b show that with one exception, all LEC areas have experienced overall growth in both the number of mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills starts on the programme. SED alone has seen the number of Lifeskills starts fall, from 84 to 73 in the last year.

The figures indicate that:

- Glasgow and Lanarkshire have consistently represented the greatest share of the number of starts on mainstream GRFW. In 2005/06, 21% of starts were in Glasgow and just over 15% in Lanarkshire. Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Fife and Edinburgh & Lothians each accounted for between 8% and 10.5% of the programme
- In terms of trends, although almost all LECs have shown a growth in the number of starts on mainstream GRFW, the relative share of the programme has altered slightly over time. Although these shifts have not been very significant, Grampian, Forth Valley and the Borders have all increased their shares of programme starts
- By far the highest share of Lifeskills starts is in the Lanarkshire area, which in 2005/06 represented 21.6% of total starts on this strand of the GRFW programme. Ayrshire, Dunbartonshire, Tayside and Glasgow have had significant shares of programme starts, but within these, the proportions have shifted over the years
- Perhaps most surprising is the relatively low proportion of Lifeskills trainees on the programme in Glasgow, compared to the numbers on mainstream GRFW, and when we consider the scale and characteristics of the regional population. Glasgow displays by far the highest levels of NEET, youth unemployment and other indicators of relative poor labour market performance in relation to young people. On this basis, in the absence of considering the wider context, it is expected that the proportion of young people on the Lifeskills strand in Glasgow should be higher
- Glasgow has however increased its proportion of the total Lifeskills trainee starts from 5.7% in the first year to 8.3% in the last year. Other significant changes in the share of Lifeskills can be seen in Dunbartonshire, which in the first 2 years represented almost 20% of the proportion of starts, but declined to just under 9% in 2005/06. Tayside has seen a significant increase in its share of Lifeskills starts, from 5% in 2002/03 to 18.6% in 2005/06

In terms of each LEC's total GRFW programme, the share accounted for by provision of the Lifeskills strand varies considerably. Table A3 in Appendix 1 details the percentage of each LEC's programme that is represented by Lifeskills.

- Nationally, the Lifeskills strand accounted for just under 10% of the total GRFW programme in 2005/06, having grown from 6.6% of the programme in 2002/03

- Dumfries and Galloway has the highest share of Lifeskills provision within its programme, at just under 27% of its total starts in 2005/06. Tayside and Borders also had over 20% of their starts on the Lifeskills strand, with Dumbarton and Lanarkshire having 16.7% and 13.4% Lifeskills starts respectively. LECs with the lowest proportion of Lifeskills provision within their total programmes are SEEL and SEGL, with 2.9% and 4.1% of starts.

In terms of the programme's share of the national 15 – 19 year old population, coverage varies across the LECs, but not necessarily in line with the size of the local youth population, as shown in Figure 5 and Table 10. The 3 LECs with the biggest share of the national 15-19 populations are SEEL, SEGL and SEL, and indeed Glasgow and Lanarkshire's share of the national programme reflect this, but the programme penetration rates of the local populations is quite varied.

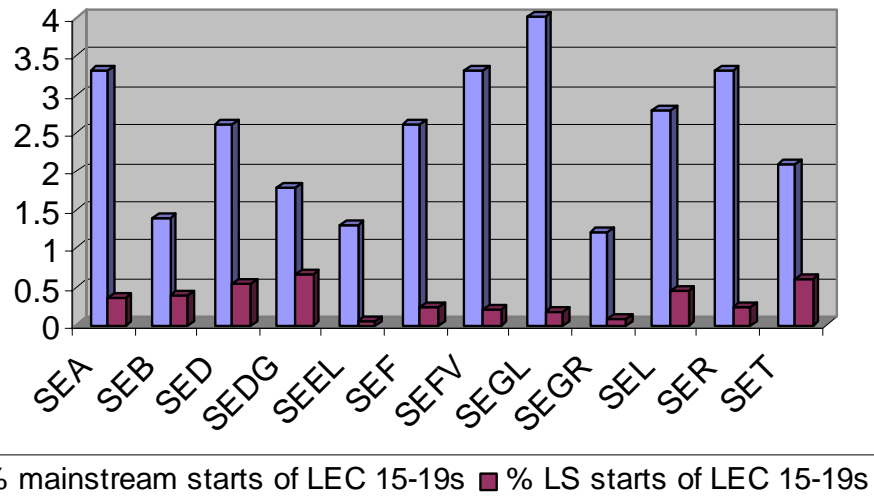
The average percentage of the local population of 15-19 year olds accounted for by mainstream GRFW clients is 2.5%, and 0.27% for Lifeskills clients. For the mainstream strands this varies considerably across the LECs, with lower programme penetration in Grampian, Edinburgh and the Lothians, and the Borders, and higher programme coverage in Glasgow, Ayrshire, Forth Valley and Renfrewshire. As a percentage of the local population, Lifeskills provision has been more dominant in Dumfries and Galloway, Tayside, Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire.

Table 10: LEC share of national 15-19 year old population – 2004, and 2005/06 programme share of LEC 15-19 population

	15 –19 population 2004/05	LEC % share	Mainstream GRFW starts	% of LEC 15-19 popn	Lifeskills starts	% of LEC 15-19 popn
SEA	23900	8.0	797	3.3	86	0.36
SEB	6100	2.0	83	1.4	23	0.38
SED	13800	4.6	365	2.6	73	0.53
SEDG	8800	2.9	157	1.8	57	0.65
SEEL	49700	16.6	637	1.3	19	0.04
SEF	23400	7.8	611	2.6	56	0.24
SEFV	18000	6.0	591	3.3	37	0.21
SEGL	40100	13.4	1598	4.0	68	0.17
SEGR	27600	9.2	341	1.2	21	0.08
SEL	41200	13.7	1147	2.8	178	0.43
SER	22700	7.6	747	3.3	52	0.23
SET	24900	8.3	528	2.1	153	0.61
Total	300200	100.0	7602	2.5	823	0.27

Source: Nomis: Midyear population estimates, 2004, and SE CTS

Figure 5: GRFW share of LEC 15-19 year old population



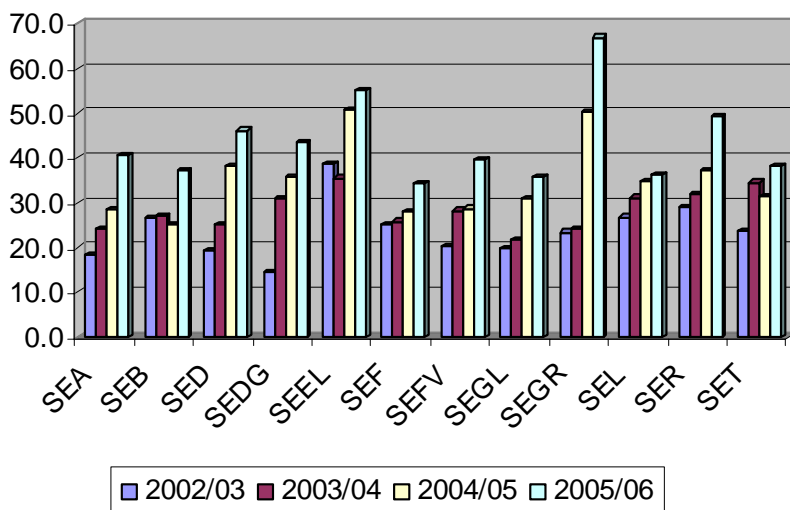
Source: Nomis: Midyear population estimates, 2004, and SE CTS

Outcomes by LEC

Overview

Across the network, positive outcomes achieved by trainees on GRFW have increased from a rate of 24.2% in 2002/03 to 41.3% in 2005/06. Table A5 in Appendix 1 and Figure 6 below show that over the course of the 4 year programme, the national picture has been mirrored at a local level, with the rate of positive outcomes similarly increasing across all the LECs:

Figure 6: LEC positive outcomes, % of leavers



Source: SE CTS

In 2005/06, LECs with the highest positive outcomes were SEGR, with a positive outcome rate of 67% of programme leavers, SEEL (55%), and SER (49.3%). The lowest outcome rates were found in Fife (34.3%), Glasgow (35.9), and Lanarkshire (36.1%), although these LECs had all significantly increased their outcomes from the first year. The greatest increases in positive outcomes achieved over the course of the programme have occurred in Grampian, Ayrshire, Dunbartonshire and Dumfries and Galloway.

Further detail on the performance of the LECs in relation to both the mainstream GRFW strands and Lifeskills, is provided in Appendix 1 (Tables A7a and A7b).

Key points emerging from this analysis are:

- Looking firstly at mainstream GRFW, the key point to highlight is that all LECs have significantly improved their rates of positive outcomes since the programme began. Outcomes in 2005/06 varied between 36.2% in Fife to 70.3% in Grampian, and the network average for this year was 44.3% of leavers
- In addition to SEGR, highest rates of positive outcomes as a percentage of mainstream GRFW leavers have been achieved in SEEL, SED, SER and SEDG, all with outcomes above 40%
- With regard to Lifeskills outcomes³, the variances are difficult to interpret, as in many cases a difference in one or two numbers can relate to apparently dramatic swings in achievements. In 2005/06, the highest rates of trainees achieving positive outcomes from Lifeskills were in the Borders (38%), Ayrshire (25.2%), and Dumfries and Galloway (19.3%). Lanarkshire has consistently had the highest numbers of Lifeskills starts and outcomes, and achieved an outcome rate of 17.5% in 2005/06. Along with SEDG, SEL has consistently achieved higher than average positive outcomes for Lifeskills trainees over the last 4 years
- In terms of Lifeskills trainees progressing to mainstream GRFW, the LECs with the highest proportions going onto the GRFW programme from Lifeskills are SET, SEL and SED (Table A8)

Tables A9 – A11 indicate the relative proportions of each LEC's positive outcomes to either FE, jobs or onto Skillseekers. Again, the numbers are quite small in some cases which means caution should be applied when interpreting the trends.

Key points from the tables indicate:

- in relation to mainstream GRFW, a few patterns can be highlighted. Reflecting the national picture, the greatest percentage of positive outcomes achieved is jobs, although this varies across the LECs, from around 51%-52% of outcomes in SEA and SEDG, to 71%-78% in Dumbartonshire and Lanarkshire. SEEL, SEFV, SEGL and SER also have job outcomes which represent over 70% of total outcomes. In terms of trends, the proportion of jobs outcomes looked to have "peaked" in 2004/05, with this year's average 69.1% slightly down from the previous 2 years

³ The measurement of LS performance has been the subject of some debate during the evaluation process. This is returned to in some detail in the next section. At this stage we would note that solely considering LS performance against progressions to jobs, training or further education outcomes does not entirely cover what the strand is seeking to do.

- Nationally, the proportion of outcomes achieved by mainstream GRFW clients to FE has risen in 2005/06, to 14.1% of all outcomes. LECs with higher percentages of FE outcomes are SEB, SEA, and SEDG, all with FE outcomes between 23% and 28% of total LEC outcomes. Low proportions of FE outcomes are found in SEEL, SEFV, and SER (around 9%)
- Progression to Skillseekers outcomes for mainstream trainees varied between 10.2% in SED to 27.7% in SEGR in 2005/06, compared to the network average of 16.8% of outcomes. This progression route has tended to have been consistently higher in Ayrshire, Dumfries and Galloway, and (apart from 2003/04) Grampian
- The numbers of Lifeskills outcomes when split into FE, jobs and Skillseekers are generally quite low and make it difficult to compare the relative percentages across the LECs. It can be seen however, that again jobs represent the greatest proportion of outcomes, and over the 4 years of the programme, SED, SEDG, SEFV, and SEL have consistently achieved relatively high jobs outcomes. Also evident, is a higher proportion of FE outcomes amongst Lifeskills trainees than amongst mainstream GRFW clients, with SEL, SEF, SEA, and SEDG performing better than average over the course of the programme. In terms of Skillseekers outcomes in 2005/6, only 7 across the network, representing 5.1% of outcomes were achieved by Lifeskills programme leavers

Recording mechanisms

Throughout our consultations numerous references have been made to the inadequacy of the CTS system in terms of providing robust information on programme performance. Some critical issues are raised – most notably that as a funding based system CTS fails to capture all positive outcomes. Repeatedly, both LEC staff and providers reflect that they believe GRFW in reality is performing better than the “official” figures suggest, but that the CTS’s demands for evidence mean some known positive progressions cannot be verified.

This is clearly very important – not only in potentially distorting considerations of future programme direction and design, but because in terms of promotion it may represent “underselling”.

However, at this stage, and in the absence of alternative data, we have no option but to report on the CTS results.

The other very apparent weakness in the data is the lack of information on the sustainability of outcomes, and on whether some young people not immediately progressing subsequently do engage in the labour market. We cannot underestimate the importance of improving our intelligence on this - a point strongly endorsed in virtually all of our consultations.

Statistical review “headlines”

We conclude our initial analysis of the data available by suggesting the following key headlines:

- GRFW is a growing programme in terms of participation levels. This is a consistent year on year trend with a 32% increase in starts between 2002/3 and 2005/6

- The Lifeskills strand remains a relatively small element of the programme – with approximately a 10% share across the network, but it has grown faster than GRFW as a whole. In terms of starts it grew by over 95% between 2002/3 and 2005/06
- Positive progression outcomes from the total programme as a percentage of leavers have increased from 24.2% to 41.3 % between 2002/3 and 2005/06
- Within this, positive outcomes achieved by trainees on the mainstream GRFW strands of the programme have risen from 25% to 44.3%
- Progressions from Lifeskills to other GRFW strands have increased from 8.3% to 21.7% between 2003/4 and 2005/6. Traditional GRFW positive outcomes within Lifeskills are considerably lower – averaging over the years between 10% and 15% - but as we explain in section 5 this was not originally considered to be the main initial destination from this strand
- By category, the share of positive outcomes which are jobs has increased – rising from 67% to 69% in 2005/06 of mainstream GRFW trainee outcomes and from 50% to 59% of Lifeskills outcomes. Progressions to Skillseekers are relatively low, and have fallen from 19% to 17% of mainstream outcomes, and from 6% to 5% of Lifeskills outcomes over the 4 years of operation
- Over 50% of participants are in GRFW for between 7 and 26 weeks, with nearly 20% of mainstream clients, and 15% of Lifeskills clients on the programme for over 6 months. Outcomes achieved have increased directly with the length of time a trainee spends on the programme, with almost 70% of outcomes achieved by mainstream trainees who remained on the programme for over 6 months, and 20% of Lifeskills trainees whose length of stay was over 6 months
- Approaching two thirds of participants are male, but a slightly higher percentage of females participate in Lifeskills – nearly 40%. 90% of all GRFW starts are 16 or 17 years old
- 4 key features of local level performance are highlighted here:
 - (a) positive outcome rates range considerably – from between 34.3% and 67% in 2005/06
 - (b) across the 4 full years of GRFW operation, with the exception of a few “dips” LECs have generally recorded year on year improvements in positive outcomes
 - (c) all LECs record lower outcomes for Lifeskills, but a few recorded considerable increases in 2005/06
 - (d) the percentage share of Lifeskills within each LEC’s GRFW programme varies significantly. In 2005/06, 3 LECs had over 20% of trainees on this strand, compared to the network average of 9.8% of the total programme. In terms of the share of Lifeskills across the network, SEL stands out with nearly 22% of total SE Lifeskills starts

SECTION 4 – PROGRAMME COSTS

Introduction

Information on programme costs has been provided by the CTS. In this section we detail these without any significant further comment; their implications in terms of value for money are considered further at the end of section 5.

Total programme costs

The total costs of the GRFW programme over the 4 years of operation are detailed in the table below:

Year	Mainstream GRFW	Lifeskills	Totals
2002/3	£14,021,818	£1,328,930	£15,350,748
2003/4	£16,793,702	£2,894,179	£19,687,881
2004/5	£17,023,852	£3,447,205	£20,471,057
2005/6	£18,355,839	£3,810,443	£22,166,282
Totals	£66,195,211	£11,480,757	£77,675,968

Key points from the table are:

- The cost of GRFW has gone up year on year, and by 2005/6 had increased by 44.4% from year 1 of operation
- Costs of Lifeskills have risen at a considerably more rapid rate – up by approaching a factor of 3 over the years of operation
- Over the period, the mainstream strands accounted for 85.2% of total programme spend, and Lifeskills for 14.8%

Cost breakdown 2005/6

In the most recent year of operation, expenditure items that make up the costs were as follows:

Strand/cost item	Provider costs	Direct trainee costs	Output costs	Costs (excluding trainee costs)
Mainstream GRFW	£8,125,442	£8,900,944	£1,329,450	£9,454,892
Lifeskills	£3,064,487	£694,603	£51,350	£3,115,837
Total	£11,189,929	£9,595,547	£1,380,800	£12,570,729
As % of total	50.5%	43.3%	6.2%	56.7%

Key points from this table are:

- Just over half of total programme costs go directly to providers, but this figure is much higher for the Lifeskills strand at over 80%
- Output costs are a relatively small share of total programme expenditure, and considerably less significant again for Lifeskills - only 1.3%

Costs by LEC 2005/6

For 2005/6, the costs per LEC were as follows:

LEC	Mainstream costs	Lifeskills costs	Total costs	Share of Network spend
SEA	£1,363,444	£312,145	£1,675,589	7.6%
SEB	£195,362	£114,393	£309,755	1.4%
SED	£963,434	£345,584	£1,309,018	5.9%
SEDG	£287,566	£221,912	£633,150	2.3%
SEEL	£1,992,541	£99,931	£2,092,472	9.4%
SEF	£1,603,953	£176,930	£1,780,883	8.0%
SEFV	£1,392,157	£286,308	£1,678,465	7.6%
SEGL	£3,849,848	£364,468	£4,214,316	19.0%
SEGR	£724,373	£74,465	£798,838	3.6%
SEL	£3,095,907	£1,029,263	£4,125,170	18.6%
SER	£1,880,515	£267,282	£2,147,797	9.7%
SET	£1,006,737	£517,761	£1,524,498	6.9%

SECTION 5 – PROGRAMME REVIEW

Introduction

To provide focus to the final evaluation report, the interim report submitted in December 2005 highlighted key themes in programme development to be considered in detail. These have been slightly rearranged in light of further reflection, and are considered below in the following headings. The themes addressed are:

- Programme targeting, rationale and NEET reduction
- Access and assessment
- The GRFW model and delivery
- The Lifeskills strand
- Promotion and image
- The role of Careers Scotland
- Outcomes and impact measurement
- Quality and accreditation
- Employer links and progression focus
- Programme resourcing and the financial deal for young people
- Progression routes, outcome focus, aftercare and tracking
- Value for money
- Economic impact

Within each heading we begin by outlining the nature of the issue and its importance, we then reflect on our evaluation findings, and conclude with our related recommendations for changes in future programme operation. These recommendations are then composited and prioritised in our concluding section.

Programme targeting, rationale and NEET reduction

The issue

The original prospectus introducing the programme defined GRFW as an intervention for:

"...young people who without additional support are unable to access other training, learning or employment opportunities."

This is a wide definition which in practice has been interpreted in varying ways across the SE network, and by the varying stakeholders key to GRFW delivery. "Who is GRFW for?" has probably been the critical question in the entire review process: many other issues depend on how it is answered. It is also a major factor causing significant regional variations in programme delivery.

We do not underestimate the challenge in bringing further clarity on the issue of targeting – a number of varying viewpoints, all with some legitimacy, have been expressed in our consultations. Moreover, we do not believe the answer can be provided solely by an "internal" examination of GRFW: a view of the wider context is essential. But we believe that SEN must seek to identify a more precise definition, and communicate it to all concerned in practical programme delivery.

GRFW is also recognised as a key part of the wider NEET strategy evolving through the Scottish Employability Framework process. But it is recognised within this as only one dimension of the support infrastructure. How it fits, and what reasonable contribution it can be expected to make, should be clarified and injected to the wider partnership debate – locally and nationally.

Current participant profile

At present, the nature of young people on GRFW varies enormously. At one end of a wide spectrum, young people with significant learning disabilities are recruited to GRFW, whilst at the other end young people with reasonable qualifications and no labour market barriers other than a lack of immediate progression options are engaged.

An obvious question arising from this is whether this diversity is any sense a problem, or is it simply reflective of the “broad church” target group implied in original GRFW promotion and design? On balance, we think the targeted groups are currently too wide and undefined. We return below to the reasons for this conclusion, and its implications.

Supply led, demand led and additionality tensions

Linked to the issue of who GRFW is for are some varying and fundamental issues in what the programme is trying to do. In summary, we believe 3 key issues interlink in this debate:

- A view that in the spirit of the Beattie Report and the youth guarantee, all eligible young people should be entitled to a GRFW opportunity – the “**client or supply side led**” position
- A view that as an economic development programme, a further criteria need apply – that participants entering GRFW must have a reasonable chance of positive labour market progression within a reasonable time frame – the “**demand side led**” position
- The need to ensure young people participating in GRFW have genuine “additional support needs” as opposed to simply having no other options - the “**additionality**” position

Ensuring the correct balance and complementarity of the former two viewpoints is the major challenge. It is argued that they represent “two sides of the same coin”, and should be reasonably easy to calibrate. We believe it not nearly as simple as this position suggests, which can be a convenient policy level fudge to avoid a tricky issue. In practical terms varying interpretations of the almost inevitable demand/supply tensions lead people to act differently, and this has been exacerbated by SEN’s aspiration to raise the bar on positive outcomes to 50%.

Stakeholder perspectives

Local tensions on who GRFW is for, what it is trying to do, and how we should measure success, are reflected in relationships between key partners. LECs, as the core programme funder and accountability agent for programme performance, favour a stronger focus on demand led programme operation. Careers Scotland tend to support a greater emphasis on a client led approach. Providers are not so readily

categorised, and tend to seek guidance from the LEC if particular tensions arise. Where the LEC funding contribution to GRFW operation is significantly enhanced by other resources the focus on the demand led model tends to reduce. This is commonly where the provider is a public sector or social economy organisation with wider inclusion related objectives.

The nature and interpretation of the Lifeskills strand is clearly an important factor in this debate. In design, and largely in operation, it is intended to assist young people with more chaotic lifestyles, and likely to be further from sustained labour market engagement. In consequence, positive immediate progression rates are lower than for the remainder of the GRFW programme, which was recognized from the outset in programme design.

Lifeskills is considered in more detail below, but we believe understanding its role and connection to the other elements of GRFW is a key part of resolving targeting tensions. In short, we believe this strand needs to be uncoupled, and separately marketed and promoted, allowing the other elements of GRFW a stronger demand side focus in terms of targeting. A number of reasons lead us to this conclusion:

- The current range of potential participants makes GRFW very difficult to market and promote
- It would provide “clear blue water” between the future operation of mainstream GRFW and historic and variable interpretations of the former “youth guarantee”. Ongoing interpretations that GRFW is a programme of last resort to honour this are now out of date, and have led to some confusion
- The programme image and credibility is potentially undermined by positive outcome rates below 50%. Whilst these have increased in recent years, including Lifeskills performance in these will always depress the figures. This may adversely impact on the perceptions of key influencers such as parents and teachers
- Many providers simply do not have the capacity or expertise to deal with the “harder” clients – and struggle to deliver a multi layered package of support with limited resources
- It makes SEN’s aspirations to increase positive outcomes and limit periods of client engagement more realistic
- It fits with the NEET strategy sub categorisations – and thereby provides a clearer focus on where mainstream GRFW fits with other interventions in the employability “pipeline”
- It will more clearly delineate mainstream GRFW provision from a range of other employability interventions – often area specific – which are funded and operated by other agencies. These should in part be feeder programmes to GRFW, similar to our later recommendations on the role of a revamped Lifeskills strand

NEET contribution

GRFW is recognised as a key part of the support infrastructure for young people either NEET or at risk of being NEET. But a review of NEET data at the national level clearly indicates that it is only a part of the response – NEET levels are estimated as around 35,000 at any point in time, but only just over 8,400 starts were recorded for GRFW in the most recent year of operation. It is probably reasonable to assume that without participation, many of the GRFW group would have swelled the NEET figures further, but equally GRFW is clearly a long way from being able to accommodate the entire NEET population.

This links back to programme targeting. The NEET strategy recognises that understanding the many sub divisions within the NEET group is necessary to framing a useful policy response. It also articulates the key importance of addressing “NEET avoidance” through early intervention. In this context, GRFW needs to position itself in response to a number of issues:

- The extent that it avoids NEET status through early engagement of participants on leaving school
- The degree to which its impact is with the so called “needy NEET” group of young people with major labour market related barriers, or young people with less severe barriers lacking in terms of direction, confidence etc
- The extent to which, *through sustained and longer periods of GRFW participation*, it ensures some young people on the programme do not become NEET
- The extent to which, *through sustained positive outcomes*, it avoids subsequent NEET status for former programme participants

We examine the historic impact on these issues elsewhere in this report. But in future, GRFW would benefit from a clearer statement on expected future contribution to the NEET challenge. Again the uncoupling of Lifeskills from the other elements of GRFW will be required.

Related recommendations

The recommendations in our concluding section which lead from this analysis of programme targeting are:

- Restated aims and objectives for GRFW should be agreed and comprehensively communicated to all stakeholders involved in programme delivery
- SEN should uncouple the promotion of the Lifeskills strand from “mainstream” GRFW, and more explicitly recognize the different groups targeted by each aspect
- Mainstream GRFW should in future be targeted at young people assessed as likely to progress to positive outcomes within the specified periods they are expected to be on the programme
- Outcomes for Lifeskills and the mainstream programme should be different, and measured separately

- SEN should, on the basis of this report, detail and define the anticipated future contribution of GRFW to the Scottish NEET strategy
- SEN should seek clarification on the implications of the revised targeting approach with future Scottish Executive decisions on the “youth guarantee”

Access and assessment

The issue

A key aspect of the GRFW programme, which was envisaged as a significant improvement on Skillseekers STN, was the introduction of new assessment processes. These increased the input of Careers Scotland, moving beyond the “endorsement” task in the predecessor programme. The new assessment process was viewed as critical to the entire client centred approach of GRFW - ensuring young people were progressed to the most appropriate GRFW option.

The process developed involved preparation of an Action Plan by Careers Scotland which was forwarded to the selected training provider. The provider would then put together an Individual Training Plan to meet the Action Plan goals.

Getting this element of GRFW right was seen as a central element of GRFW. It required a new level of partnership working between Careers Scotland and training providers.

Progress

As has been previously documented, the GRFW assessment role of Careers Scotland had a difficult “birth” in many areas. In retrospect, this was due in large part to the introduction of GRFW on the exact day that Careers Scotland was formally established. The GRFW task became one of a range of issues which required to be addressed in the early days of the new organisation, and the challenge was further exacerbated by significant staffing shortages in many parts of the CS set up.

These early difficulties have now largely been overcome. CS delivery mechanisms – considered in more detail later – are now established and understood, and there is a much greater appreciation of the respective inputs of CS staff and training providers in the assessment process. A key element of this has been increasing understanding by both partners of the limitations of the front-end assessment, which is inevitably based on quite limited contact with the young person. It has to be augmented by more in depth ongoing assessment once the young person is with the provider.

Limited CS time input is also reflected in the nature of Action Plans produced. In the early stages of programme development there were probably unrealistic expectations on the quantity of information these would contain, and providers were often disappointed by (a) the limited content, and (b) the fact that they were sometimes forwarded after the young person had joined the programme. Again, there is now a better understanding on this issue, and a sense that the quality and promptness of Action Plan delivery has generally improved.

A number of other improvements in the assessment and access processes over the period of GRFW are worth noting. They are indicative of initial problems overcome, which should be recognised as significant progress:

- Initially a number of providers were concerned that CS staff referring to the programme had inaccurate views on the content and nature of their training offer. This led to limited or inappropriate referrals. This problem was seldom cited in the current evaluation, with a growing understanding and appreciation of respective roles now apparent
- In a number of areas, CS referring staff were concerned about the limited choice of GRFW options available. Whilst this is not, and possibly never could be, entirely resolved, again there was a sense that the issue has lessened in significance. This is due mainly to (a) new or replacement provision in some areas (b) improved provision by existing providers, and (c) an increased understanding by CS of what providers offer
- In the 2003 evaluation, providers expressed concerns that in their view some “wrong referrals” were made by CS staff – either to the wrong provider, or more commonly, the wrong strand. Again the incidence of this has reduced, and generally there is now a sense of flexibility in changing strands if required
- The role of training providers in promotion and recruitment to the programme caused some initial uncertainty. Providers were reluctant and sometimes discouraged from direct promotion as the only formal referral point was CS. By 2006, this potential tension had largely been resolved, most providers now directly market their offer and are reasonably comfortable that CS fairly refer the young people initially engaged through their promotion

Overarching the resolution of many of these issues has simply been the increase in programme numbers. In some areas in the early days of the programme total referrals were very low. Consequently, unit cost funded providers were struggling to maintain viability. The year on year recruitment levels, detailed in section 3, have eased these tensions.

Development issues

In terms of assessment and access key future developmental issues include:

- The option to integrate the Action Plans and Individual Training Plans. Now these processes are well understood, many providers, and some CS staff, see this as a practical way to reduce paperwork in the system. Whilst this may not be straightforward, it is worthy of more detailed consideration by SEN
- There are very real opportunities to significantly enhance the flow of front end intelligence on potential GRFW recruits linked to the new requirements of the Additional Support for Learning Act. Local systems to manage these are still under development and will necessitate improved information sharing amongst partners for a large percentage of young people likely to subsequently progress to GRFW

- Rollout of the Client Achievement Summary (CAS) – Careers Scotland are rolling out this system across their activities and have prioritised the use of the CAS in the GRFW programme. This will further increase the information available on participants
- CS's introduction of a new proactive case management approach – this will enable front line CS staff more time to follow up NEET young people on their registers, based on school leaver destination returns. Many of them may consider joining GRFW if it is properly promoted
- Continue to build wider referral routes – it is recognised in much local good practice that the net of contacts required to engage all potential GRFW recruits needs to spread much wider than CS staff and records. A host of other agencies and organisations are relevant and potentially connected and involved with the young people for other reasons. Building linkages to these groups is an important and ongoing task. In particular, we suggest it should be a key element of the future promotional activity for Lifeskills
- The need to review the wider applicability of innovative local pilots. For example the SEL Access Worker Initiative which provides dedicated resources to ensure trainees referred actually start, and that those who drop out in the early stages are pro-actively contacted with a view to re-engagement

Related recommendations

Recommendations in our final section that lead from the above consideration of assessment and access issues include:

- SEN should consider in detail the option to integrate the Action Plan and Individual Training Plan documentation
- SEN should track national developments of the information sharing demands of the new ASL Act, and inform LECs of the new developments. LECs and CS should develop links between GRFW and local ASL related developments –possibly via the local GRFW Development Forums
- Careers Scotland should report on progress on the continued rollout of the CAS system within GRFW operation, and inform local LEC partners on the potential implications for GRFW of the new proactive case management approach

The GRFW model and delivery

The issue

GRFW introduced a significantly different model to the delivery of training for young people with additional support needs. Central to this was the introduction of 4 strands, which are briefly summarised as follows:

Vocational skills – focusing on “skills necessary to perform a job function” and heavily focused on work placements from an early stage.

Personal skills – focusing on the transferable/presentational skills that are often key to successfully gaining and retaining a job. This strand places considerable emphasis on issues such as self confidence and addressing the needs of vocationally uncommitted young people.

Core skills – such as communication, literacy and numeracy. These were intended to be delivered within the SQA Core Skills Framework to Access Level 3.

Lifeskills – for participants with more severe labour market barriers and further away from being likely to sustain traditional training type interventions.

The strands were intended to ensure participants received a training offer that met their individual needs. This recognised that the types of young people who would join the programme would vary significantly in terms of their needs and starting points. The strands were introduced as a way of ensuring all young people did not in reality receive the same GRFW experience. Different unit cost funding levels were established for the strands, and Lifeskills was core funded.

With the exception of elements of core skills, GRFW is not a defined, prescriptive programme; providers are invited to deliver flexibly within the broad framework established. In addition, GRFW removed the necessity for the trainee to work towards a recognised VQ. Whilst these are both considered general improvements from previous models, they make it harder at times to see what is actually happening within elements of GRFW delivery. There is a consequent need to try and tease out elements of generic good practice.

In design and practice, Lifeskills is recognised as significantly different from the other strands – increasingly consultees in our evaluation process referred separately to “mainstream” GRFW and “Lifeskills”. In recognition of this difference, we have separated out our reflections on the same basis. “Mainstream” GRFW issues are considered below, and the Lifeskills strand in the next section.

Overview of the model

Throughout our consultations the basic premises on which the GRFW model was designed have been endorsed. It is generally viewed as an improvement on previous approaches as being more customised, flexible, and client focused. It has encouraged innovation, although there remains some sense of unrealised potential in this regard. The relaxation of the need to work towards an accredited qualification is also welcomed, although there are some views that the pendulum may have swung too far in this respect. Initial programme intentions that the time people could spend on GRFW could vary dependent on need was also praised in principle, but as we point out below, there is a perception that this is changing in practice.

Commonly, stakeholders in the programme noted the danger of making further wholesale changes in future programme design. There was a weariness that this area of work had historically been subject to continual change, and that no sooner had a programme begun to bed down than it was replaced by a new model. Continuous improvement was correct, but radical overhaul could simply cause further disruption, and at a time when there was a fairly consistent view that GRFW was “getting better”. We have been mindful of the legitimacy of this point in our suggested recommendations, and within this the need to distinguish between where the model is apparently flawed, as opposed to problems that are in fact caused by poor practice.

The strands

Views on the ongoing appropriateness of the strands vary – often quite significantly. In breaking down the issues to reach our conclusions we have asked ourselves 3 questions:

- Do the strands significantly improve the delivery of GRFW?
- Are concerns on stranding based on - fact, misunderstandings of the strands' nature and purpose, or perceptions?
- How much does this debate matter in the bigger scheme of things?

We will start with the last question first: with the exception of the need to differentiate between Lifeskills and the rest of GRFW, the answer is “not really”. We see little evidence in practice of the distinction between vocational, core and personal skills as either improving or hindering the participant offer. Indeed we have been struck in our consultations by how often front line delivery staff are either unaware or uninterested in what strand a particular trainee is on. This does not mean that all trainees are necessarily offered the same package; rather that sometimes the customised nature of the approach has in effect moved beyond the stranding principle.

In this context, we believe the case has to be made to keep the current strands. We do not believe it is strong enough against a setting where: they are routinely irrelevant to providers in practice other than as a differentiated funding mechanism; they are still not commonly understood; arguably all GRFW participants have some degree of core/personal skills issues; they have been used on occasions as a way of avoiding employer placements; and where core skills in particular has in reality all but disappeared in some areas.

Consequently, we are persuaded by the majority argument expressed in our consultations that the 3 “mainstream” strands – having served their purpose in signalling GRFW intent - should now be phased out. We recognise that there are a number of potential dangers in this, which will need to be managed and monitored. These are detailed below in a standard risk analysis format:

Risk	Action to counter
1. In future all trainees on mainstream GRFW receive a standard non-customised training offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good assessment and review processes by CS• Analysis of Action Plans and ITPs and their practical implementation
2. Trainees all in effect end up on the vocational strand – which could migrate to become the new non employed Skillseekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As above
3. The specific needs of current core skills and personal skills clients will not be met in future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As above, plus recognition that some of the best practice in core skills is through vocational skills/project based activities
4. There will be a surge in demand for Lifeskills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong and repeated discussions with CS referral staff on the nature of mainstream offer• Scrutiny of provider plans/options within the mainstream strand & communication of this to CS

We think all of these issues are manageable given: proper monitoring, guidance and communications; good partnership working; and a sense of faith and trust in the new ways of thinking that 4 years of GRFW's operation has instilled.

Programme duration

GRFW was introduced as a flexible intervention, enabling young people – within reason - to be engaged for as short or long a period as possible. It signalled a step change from the previous idea of people on programmes for a year – often linked to VQ requirements. We believe this was and remains the correct approach.

However, in practice, this sense of flexibility in programme engagement is fading in many areas. Providers commonly talk of young people, for example, being on a “13 week programme”, and of how the squeeze to move people on in prescriptive timescales is reducing the customised nature of the GRFW package.

We understand the enterprise network's requirements to progress young people, and are aware of historic problems with young people on programmes for extended periods – creating “comfort zones” which potentially *decrease* their ability to realise sustained progression. We are also aware of potential provider attractions to this approach in a unit cost funded environment. But the “creeping rigidity” of GRFW is a cause for concern. Factored into this is also the finding detailed in section 3 that the longer young people are on the programme, the more likely they are to achieve a positive outcome on completion.

We suspect all partners – LECs, CS and providers - need to reflect on this development. We would articulate the key questions that should apply to each individual programme participant on mainstream GRFW:

- Is the young person on the programme for the minimum time period possible to ensure sustained labour market progression?
- Is continued participation clearly based on the young person working towards a detailed Action Plan goal which will lead to sustained labour market progression?

The answers to these questions cannot define the ideal length of the GRFW programme, and certainly run counter to the idea that it can become a 13 week programme – logically some need to be on longer and some perhaps for a significantly shorter period.

There are challenging operational questions for all stakeholders in avoiding GRFW moving in this direction:

For LECs – is this easier in terms of managing budgets? On occasions contract managers have suggested a defined programme duration is only “ a funding thing” – but in practice it is obvious that it has become more than this.

For Careers Scotland – does it fit more comfortably with client review schedules?

For providers – are there temptations to go along with “one dimensional” fixed programme developments ie all participants are on for at least 13 weeks, and few are actively progressed more quickly than this even if they could be?

These questions may be worth considering at future GRFW partner development meetings.

Good practice in programme delivery⁴

The diversity of GRFW delivery across the country is huge. This is generally a strength of the programme; trying to devise a rigid GRFW programme/blueprint would simply not work. But diversity inevitably brings problems in describing what the GRFW programme is. It requires as an alternative that aspects of apparent good practice are identified and shared. But even then, we are mindful that not all good practice is necessarily transferable to different areas and varying local contexts.

With these provisos we suggest that the following are aspects of good GRFW delivery which we have witnessed in our consultations and provider visits:

- Group-work sessions delivered with small trainer to trainee ratios – ideally no more than 1:6, and options for 1:1 support to augment this
- Employer engagement at the earliest stages of participant engagement and based on a full understanding of the reasons and motivations for employer involvement
- Mixing GRFW trainees where applicable with adult groups
- Linkages to health and sports related activities
- High profile, practical and meaningful project based work on activities of wider community benefit
- Use of accreditation and recognised awards for participants wherever possible (considered in more detail in a later section)
- Imaginative development of core skills through non classroom/“paper exercise” approaches. For example, through integration with practical project work or sports related activities
- Maximum use of wider and related interventions and services in the area, varying the range of contacts the participants have whilst in the classroom or other group settings
- Use of shared materials by providers – the Lanarkshire training resource bank is an example worthy of wider replication

On the flipside of this, we have seen delivery which does not meet many of these characteristics, and which have been and should continue to be weeded out of the GRFW portfolio:

⁴ SEN commissioned the Scottish Further Education Unit to review training provision within the programme in some detail. The report's findings are broadly confirmed and reinforced by the evaluation process. (Get Ready for Work- Helping Training Providers Get Even Better – SFEU 2005).

- Approaches which concentrate front end input on lengthy periods of classroom based activity, and which use paper based exercises and assignments
- Late introduction of placements – based on self fulfilling predictions that clients “aren’t ready”
- Training packages which involve little or no participant contact for extended periods with adults other than people employed by the training provider
- Static pre determined trainee programmes
- Programmes which involve no job/progression focus in defined time periods for participants

Related recommendations

Key recommendations leading from the review of model and delivery are to:

- Limit structural change to GRFW, but build on and amend the current model
- Phase out the mainstream GRFW strands and introduce a single strand model. Ensure an ongoing customised approach through good review processes, documentation review, and general contract management
- Review and monitor “creeping rigidity” in individual participation periods with all key stakeholders analysing their potential contribution to this process
- SEN should provide information on good practice approaches, and details of practices which should be phased out

Lifeskills

LS was originally introduced as the most innovative and challenging element of the GRFW programme. Its design recognised the relative inflexibility of predecessor schemes for a group of young people who needed a more holistic and sensitive range of support. As a result, it is perhaps not surprising that LS remains one of the most controversial elements of the GRFW package, with very different views expressed on its effectiveness and appropriateness as an enterprise network offer.

A number of issues spin off from the debate:

- is LS an appropriate part of GRFW or should it exist separately from the rest of the programme?
- who is it for?
- how does/should it relate to other GRFW strands?
- should it have different performance indicators?

- is it managed effectively?

Original rationale for LS

We believe this broad rationale for LS remains correct, but wider developments over the past 4 years have refined our understanding of this issue. These have reinforced that a partnership based response to the needs of particularly challenging young people is key. Quite simply, multi-dimensional issues require multi-dimensional responses. The best LS provision already appreciates this, but there are dangers that the GRFW programme alone is expected to do too much. This is not only unsustainable, but has the potential danger of negating the need to identify and engage all other related interventions.

This issue is central to redefining the role and contribution of the enterprise network to tackling the NEET challenge. We suggest GRFW needs to be a contribution for this age group, but not the sole panacea. At times, both the image and operation of LS can by default suggest the latter.

We believe it is essential to reconsider this issue: the demands of the Scottish Employability Framework will provide a good opportunity to do this.

Targeting and access

Over the network, we perceive some ongoing confusion on who the LS strand is for, and as a consequence what it can realistically expect to achieve. At one end of the spectrum, there are views that it is for all young people in the age group with significant barriers to labour market progression. This is countered by a view that as an employability programme, it should only be for young people with a chance of progressing within a reasonable timeframe. The latter view posits that some young people are “not ready” for any engagement in GRFW.

There are obvious tensions within the programme based on these varying interpretations. It is where we perceive the potential variance in programme objectives between LECs and Careers Scotland staff is greatest. In short, how do we reconcile “client centred” and “outcome focused” motivations.

In terms of targeting, our data analysis highlights very significant variations in the uptake of the LS strand between LEC areas. In 2005/6 it ranges from 27% of all programme participants to 2.9%. There are likely to be a range of reasons for this, one of which is the availability or otherwise of alternative interventions in the area. These are most commonly funded through local authorities, the Community Regeneration Fund, and the ESF. The local variations in this provision create a big challenge for a national programme, and there is much work to be done in some areas to identify and link to wider related developments.

Without clarification on targeting, there is a danger that LS can become a “dumping ground” for challenging young people – more focused on condition management than labour market progression. For the enterprise network this would be unsustainable, demanding far too much of LS, resulting in the continued questioning of its strategic relevance.

Performance and cost

There are big variations in local participation rates in the LS strand based on a combination of: LEC commitment; interpretations of client group; the legacy of previous programmes; and the availability/understanding of other relevant interventions in the area. This is then reflected in the number and scale of providers in each LEC area.

2005/6 data indicates that 15.2% of LS leavers progress to a job, training, or FE. This has increased year on year, but remains very significantly below the rate of 44.3% recorded for the other strands of the programme. Within the average there are significant local variations. Where there are meaningful numbers on the programme, outcomes range from approaching 38% to 12%.

Based on these figures, there are widespread concerns in LECs that LS depresses overall GRFW outcomes, and that it always will do if measured in the same way as other parts of the programme. But there is a fundamental and critical point which is central to this debate. From the outset the LS strand was never intended to be measured against the same indicators as the rest of GRFW – the main focus of progression was to be to other strands of the programme. This is articulated in an early SEN “Lifeskills Briefing” (December 2002) as follows “...it is anticipated that most Lifeskills trainees will progress into other strands of GRFW before progressing onto other options”.

Over the course of programme operation this key message has to an extent been forgotten. During the evaluation process we are not aware of a single consultee who clearly articulated that the key LS progression goal was to another GRFW strand. Revealingly, when asked about the SEN target to raise overall “traditional” positive outcomes on GRFW to 50%, no LEC contract manager thought this didn’t include Lifeskills – although many thought that this exception would be very helpful. We equally sensed that providers were unsure that progression to another GRFW was the main anticipated goal.

This uncertainty is a clear weakness, which needs to be resolved. It is complicated by a number of factors:

- a significant number of LS participants are still progressing to jobs, FE or training – 136 in 2005/6
- some LECs are making outcome payments for progressions from LS to these outcomes⁵
- LECs with the highest share of LS participants do not correlate with the areas reporting the weakest overall GRFW performance
- there has been no clearly articulated and separate reporting framework for the LS strand used within the ongoing GRFW MIS

Adding progressions to mainstream GRFW increases outcomes significantly to 35.4%. We think it is reasonable to register these, and moves the positive progression rate for the LS strand closer to the

⁵ In 2005/6 data supplied by SEN indicates that all but 1 LEC made some outcome payments from Lifeskills. These are mainly at a low level, but for SEA were over £10,000, and for SEL £20,000.

mainstream GRFW average of 41.3%. This is a fairer comparator between different aspects of the programme⁶.

A further measurement issue of particular relevance to LS is whether appropriate soft indicators of distance travelled should be given formal status in terms of performance. The case for this is less compelling. The key question for the Enterprise Network is "distance travelled to where?" As an employability programme, it is very likely that standard LEC outcomes will remain.

As we discuss further below, we would not wish to imply from this that soft indicator measurement is not important, but that in future it should be used as a mechanism for providers to measure progress and improve performance rather to **prove** impact. Distance travelled measurements may also be of more importance to non-LEC funders, who are not as directly focused on economic outcomes.

Unit costs per LS outcome are relatively high. Across the network, analysis of the 2005/6 data suggests against the traditional positive outcomes they were £22,911 compared with an equivalent figure of £3,483 for the other strands. The unit cost per outcome including progression to other strands – which we believe is a fairer comparison – is £9,829. This is to be expected to some degree, given the nature and targeting of the strand. The core funding of LS is also cited as a contributing factor for this higher figure, but we are not as convinced of this argument, which we believe is primarily connected to contract management and is discussed further below.

Delivery, quality and design

We have witnessed some excellent examples of LS in our fieldwork, confirming that it has been the most innovative strand of GRFW. Moreover, there is a sense of much positive development since the 2003 review. The key question from this is: can we see a pattern suggesting a blueprint for future delivery?

The main difficulty with this is factoring in that, as ever, the key determinant tends to remain the quality and commitment of the delivery staff. This cannot be underestimated. More structural good practice includes: a focus on progression from the outset; employer links and placements; variations in delivery and inputs; genuine identification and engagement of other partner interventions; and investment in staff training and development.

In terms of design, we believe the key issue is the nature of participant engagement and duration on LS. We have talked to young people on LS full time for a significant period who often refer optimistically to the prospect of future extensions. At programme level, this is confirmed in terms of the average time spent on LS, which is not significantly shorter than for other strands. As indicated above, LS is not about condition management, providing "whatever it takes" for all young people in the age category with complex needs. Operated in this way, and in isolation, it will be simply unsustainable.

For these reasons, we have concerns on the widespread use of LS as a full time programme over a significant period. If young people are able to demonstrate full time attendance, why are they not able to

⁶ SEN have recently produced figures suggesting the outcomes from Lifeskills reported until June 2006 have been significantly underestimated. These are labeled "additional Lifeskills outcomes" recorded on CTS but not verified through the traditional process of outcome payments. These figures are of interest, but produced too late to be examined in detail in this evaluation. More work is now required by the network on how these should be used in future.

progress to another GRFW strand? The whole of GRFW is, after all, an additional support needs intervention.

A further factor needs consideration. Full time LS pays a weekly allowance of £55 per week. Work spinning off the SEF NEET work-stream has begun to look closely at the equity of financial rewards across all potential post school progression routes. The allowance paid as part of GRFW has been questioned as being potentially out of kilter with other payment structures. The main argument for retention at this level has been that GRFW trainees are effectively “working”. This is difficult to sustain for full time LS engagement, and significant retention of this may undermine the whole basis for paying the GRFW allowance.

LEC contract management and commitment

The LEC commitment to LS varies significantly across the network and this is in part reflected in participation rates. At one end of this spectrum, SED stands out with 27% of all GRFW trainees on LS. For 3 LECs, however, this figure is under 6%.

It is no secret that a number of LECs would prefer not to operate the LS strand. It is viewed as very expensive and weak in terms of delivering outcomes. It is not perceived as the “real stuff” of economic development, and in some instances is increasingly difficult to justify to LEC boards. Overall, LS outcomes depress performance and lead to concerns on the increasing network wide outcome targets. Narrowly interpreted, these concerns have some legitimacy – the progression rates to traditional positive outcomes are much lower at barely a third of those for the other strands. In 3 LEC areas they are under 10%. But this relates to the need for much greater clarity on the intended role of the LS strand, and SEN's initial aspiration that it should primarily be a feeder to the main GRFW. It is critical that this is reiterated and fully understood within the LEC network – we believe this will ease some of the obvious local tensions which are apparent.

The question that follows is consequently: should individual LECs have the option not to operate LS. At this point, and after considerable reflection, our conclusion is no. This is based primarily on 2 related factors (a) that the need for some form of flexible LS provision remains in all areas, and (b) that the programme changes recommended in other parts of this report are implemented. In future, LS should become a flexible but part-time and ad-hoc feeder intervention to the main GRFW strands, and its performance should be measured separately.

Over time, and within the context of Employability Framework implementation, the ongoing provision of LS in all LEC areas should be reviewed. Improved mapping and local partnership development may indicate that relevant provision is available through the activities of other agencies. A strong and evidenced case would, however, be required.

The performance of LS in some areas is also linked to LEC contract management and commitment. Within this, a distinction is needed between performance and design. For example, the core funding mechanism should not be used as an excuse for why the LEC cannot improve performance. Quite simply, consistently high unit costs per positive outcome should be thoroughly investigated by the funding agency as a matter of urgency. They may indicate very significant weaknesses in access, delivery, and progression

arrangements. Without satisfactory resolution, a new provider should be engaged at the earliest opportunity. Further LEC training on contract management may be required to support this.

Related recommendations

- Retain LS provision in all LEC areas but on the basis of the following conditions/alterations:
 - (a) the reduction and, over time, elimination of the full time LS option – in future, participation should be either ad hoc or part time. Where any full time engagement is considered this should only be for very short periods of time. Extended full time LS is not consistent with the arguments detailed above, and undermines the case to retain a training allowance above College bursary rates
 - (b) reinforcement that progression to “mainstream” GRFW provision is a legitimate and likely positive outcome for many participants
- Report on LS outcomes separately from other strands of GRFW, recognising that different performance indicators/targets are appropriate. But also that LS remains a labour market focused programme that still needs to evidence some form of positive labour market progression
- Utilise the year commencing April 2006 as a transition year to the revised arrangements, through connecting to and informing the work of the local NEET partnerships
- Devise and implement a training programme for LEC contract management staff on challenges of core funding – and the opportunity to combine this with tight management of unit cost calculations
- Redefine who is and is not appropriate for participation in GRFW – acknowledging the likely replacement of the “youth guarantee” with a wider partnership based entitlement as part of the SEF
- Develop a template for joint LEC/CS training sessions on the redefined role of LS – addressing in particular the tensions between a client led and outcome focused perspective, and the need to identify alternative local interventions for young people not ready or suitable for GRFW

Promotion and image

The issue

The image and branding of GRFW remains a challenge. Overall we sense a relatively low profile for the programme amongst a key range of target groups, most significantly: parents, teachers and employers. In addition, it has been frequently suggested in consultations that Careers Scotland staff often have ambiguous views towards GRFW. The programme is not strongly marketed by Scottish Enterprise. This is a complex issue, it requires careful consideration of what message we want to communicate, to whom, and what the anticipated results of “successful” promotion would be. It is inseparable, and must follow, from clarification on who GRFW is for, and what outcomes it seeks to achieve.

The GRFW "brand"

Overall promotion of GRFW to date can only be described as "low key". This was a deliberate - and in our view correct - approach in the early stages of programme operation, when there was a need to see how it bedded down in practice, and to assess likely demand levels.

But four years this must be revisited. The profile of the programme is not high, with limited understanding of its purpose. In some areas there was a sense of drift in promotion, and a view that in this context increasingly negative views of the programme were creeping in, especially amongst teachers and parents.

We suspect at the heart of this is a difficult conundrum directly linked to targeting and outcomes: is participation on GRFW a positive engagement, or an engagement of the "last resort"? Connected to this: do we label young people on the programme as having "problems" or "unrealised potential"?

Future promotion

We believe the future approach must be based on the front end positive options in these questions. There are some excellent examples of positive programme promotion to build on, such as:

- Celebration of success events – including awards for young people participating in GRFW
- Innovative activities by providers – circulating positive promotional material in local community venues, shops etc
- Community based projects designed and delivered by GRFW trainees – often linking with other providers
- School based events to introduce the programme at an early stage
- The use of case studies to bring a "real life" dimension to the programme, often including employer endorsements

All of these examples have been designed at a local level. Alongside this SEN have produced national materials. There are varying views on the future balance of national and local promotional action. On one hand, national level promotion has the potential advantage of suggesting senior/high level "blessing" on the programme, which may increase the clout of the message with employers in particular. But equally, localised approaches can be more focused and relevant to circumstances on the ground.

We conclude that local approaches are generally more applicable at either provider or LEC level. It is where we have witnessed best practice. Moreover, and probably of greatest weight, the current diversity of the nature of GRFW delivery across the network means that designing national materials is hazardous; in practice a simple definition of the programme and who it is for may vary. We believe that, at this stage, a more useful national support role would be in capturing and sharing local good practice.

Two other conclusions are suggested in future programme promotion:

- The related recommendation to uncouple Lifeskills from other elements of GRFW should carry forward to the promotional strategy. This will make positively promoting the mainstream strands easier. We would not suggest in this that Lifeskills is promoted “negatively”, but we suggest as a separate entity it should in future be promoted on a lower key basis, with more niche level targeting to the sources of likely referrals
- Future positive promotion is inseparable from the issue of outcomes, and the targets set around these. As many consultees have commented, a programme called “Get Ready for Work” needs to “do what is says on the tin”. If less than 1 in 2 participants progress positively on completion, the long term marketing effort is likely to be significantly undermined

Related recommendations

Recommendations related to promotion and image are consequently:

- SEN should encourage an increased promotional campaign for GRFW based on the use of positive messages on participant potential. This should be led locally and based on existing local good practice
- SEN should establish support systems to collate and share ongoing good practice across the network
- Lifeskills should be separately promoted on a lower key basis, with activities primarily based on niche marketing to likely referral sources
- The ongoing promotional work must recognise and be reinforced by improved positive progression rates for GRFW

The role of Careers Scotland

The issue

Careers Scotland was given a pivotal role in the GRFW model through a “personal advisory service” input. This was intended to provide continuity of support to participants from programme engagement (via the assessment role), during involvement (via the review role) and on completion (through linking back to mainstream careers support and guidance service).

Careers Scotland was established as a national organisation within the enterprise network on the same day as GRFW was introduced. This wider context influenced much of the early development of their GRFW inputs, and overarching this was how a national and consistent support service could be established. This has continued to be an issue. There remain variant delivery approaches to GRFW across the country, and partner views on the nature, quality and priority given to the Careers Scotland input varies markedly. This in part relates to a concern that LECs and Careers Scotland may have differing interpretations of the programme’s objectives and, due to an increasing emphasis on hard positive outcomes, there is a danger that this gap is growing.

In late March 2006, the Scottish Executive announced that Careers Scotland would leave the enterprise network umbrella by April 2007. It is not yet determined where the service will then be located. This will provide a significant new challenge with wide ranging potential implications in the delivery of GRFW, and in the nature of the relationships that are key to its operation.

Service delivery

The nature of the GRFW support service delivered by Careers Scotland, like the programme as a whole, varies across the network. Given this diversity we are cautious about generic observations, which tend to require geographic qualification. Overall we sense from consultations across partner agencies that Careers input to the programme is stronger and more embedded in the west and south west, but less developed in the east and north east. A range of factors seem to account for this, the most significant being the legacy inherited from the activities and priorities of the predecessor Careers Service delivery arrangements.

Careers Scotland's inputs to GRFW can be categorised as:

- Initial assessment and access
- Ongoing participant review
- Progression and aftercare support

Access and assessment issues have been covered earlier in this section. To recap, this details that the Action Planning process has improved from some early difficulties, based in part on a recognition that it can only logistically involve limited initial assessment. It was also suggested that the Action Plan and Individual Training Plan documentation could be integrated.

The review role of Careers Scotland is also viewed as having generally improved. There is a much better understanding now of the respective roles of CS and training providers in the process. Where it works best: providers value the independent and external perspective offered by CS staff; LECs have confidence that participants are progressing at an appropriate pace; and the young people have an advocate for their interests. Careers staff also bring valuable and real time local labour market intelligence, which providers value.

It is not possible to define the frequency of the review process, which tends to link to milestones in the ITPs. Concerns from providers that the CS input is not sufficient have reduced considerably in incidence. We would also agree with the Careers Scotland viewpoint that a standard process of timetabled review sessions would not be appropriate – flexibility linked to client needs is a preferable approach.

In terms of programme progression, Careers tend to be central to the processes determining when a young person moves on from the programme, and in identifying progression options. Within this, a key issue is when a young participant should be eligible for an extension to their time on the programme. Overall we sense that decisions made in this regard are now widely seen as fair and reasonable, and that tensions on this issue have eased since the initial evaluation. There is often a constructive tension between LEC and Careers staff on this, balancing a client focus with the programme's need to progress young people as quickly as practicable. But, as we reflect further below, there are instances when young people perhaps stay on the programme too long based on different LEC/Careers Scotland objectives. Whilst on GRFW young people are by definition not NEET, thereby in the absence of other immediate progression options

continuation of participation can be viewed as a NEET avoidance mechanism, which stops participants returning to CS registers. But for most LEC staff this in itself is not a justification for extended GRFW engagement, rather the young person must also continue to develop and realise agreed Action Plan goals.

The intended role of Careers Scotland in aftercare support to former GRFW participants has not always been clear. This reflects a general lack of clarity in aftercare responsibilities in programme design, and perhaps a lack of distinction between the personal advisory service role, and the generic support participants can expect from CS on completion of GRFW. Some will continue, for example, to have Key Worker input. This support in future needs to be seen in the context of a wider aftercare policy, not as a part of the PAS.

Delivery model

In terms of the delivery of the PAS, the original GRFW design envisaged dedicated teams being established to deliver all aspects of the service. In practice, this has not happened in all areas, due to a combination of Careers Scotland resource constraints, and a view that a more generic delivery model – where a wide group of staff integrate GRFW duties within their general workload – is preferable.

As a consequence, across the network we see a mix of dedicated and generic models of CS delivery. Views on which is preferable vary, but there was a sense that CS management staff were more favourably disposed to the generic approach, whilst delivery staff favoured the dedicated model.

Each approach has pros and cons. Generic delivery spreads knowledge of the GRFW programme amongst a wider group of staff, is less vulnerable to disruption if a few key staff move on, and is simply the only practical option in rural and sparsely populated areas in terms of staff time and travel. Dedicated delivery, it is argued, enables more specific expertise to build up on GRFW, provides greater continuity in client contact, and ensures that time allocated to GRFW support within Careers Scotland is not redirected in practice to other forms of service delivery.

Based on our analysis for this review it is not possible to confirm whether one approach is preferable. But a number of issues around good practice are important in either model:

- Staff delivering the service are suitably skilled and comfortable in working with the GRFW client group – we do not believe this includes all Careers Scotland staff at present
- The time allocated to GRFW support must be clearly defined within staff workloads, and communicated and agreed to partner LECs and training providers. Given that CS will no longer be located in the enterprise network after 2007 means the need for clarity on this will increase further
- Maximum continuity in the support officer role is maintained with the client, and the transition from one staff member to another is properly managed
- Staff travel time is kept to a minimum

LEC/Careers Scotland relationships and common objectives

Relationships between Careers Scotland and LECs are generally strong and improving, and have benefited from the development in most areas of local forums to share GRFW experience and further develop the programme. Where this has happened GRFW has benefited, and the programme's development has also improved the wider understanding of the respective agency inputs. This, of course, all occurred against a backdrop of integration of the organisations within the enterprise network banner – a situation now due to be changed again.

It must also be acknowledged that in a few areas these relationships are not nearly as strong, and where in particular the LEC continues to have some doubts on the value of the Careers Scotland input to the programme. Often this was in response to issues raised by providers, and linked to a sense that Careers did not appear in practice to prioritise GRFW. This is of concern, and contrary to senior Careers Scotland commitment which views GRFW input as a key element of the organisation's strategic priority 2.

Unravelling the rights and wrongs of local situations where relationships are weaker is neither easy nor likely to be fruitful. And correlations between apparent "problem" areas and overall programme performance show no discernable pattern. We need to consequently have some caution in attributing too much significance to what may on occasions be simple personality clashes. But nevertheless simmering tensions seldom disappear, and in the long run perceptions can matter as much as reality. Consequently, action is needed where relationships remain less than ideal, and the new forthcoming working status of CS outwith the enterprise network set up places a further premium on resolving difficulties. We would make the following observations that may be helpful to improving relationships:

- Concerns should be expressed openly and in the spirit of constructive criticism
- There is a need to emphasise that these issues should seek local resolution – in some instances there is a sense that the problems stem from the imposition of a nationally flawed model, but positive experiences in many other areas suggest this is not the case
- There is a need to fully recognise that Careers Scotland's role is not simply as a sales force for GRFW – this is contrary to the spirit of independent guidance
- There is a need for more detailed local specifications of what the expected CS role is. This will become more important within the new separate organisational arrangements

A further structural issue is whether the Scottish Enterprise/LECs and Careers Scotland share common objectives for GRFW. This again returns to differing interpretations of who GRFW is for and what it is trying to achieve. In summary, the LEC agenda is increasingly demand focused – linked to the new outcome targets – and is led by maximising the number of young people who progress to the labour market. For Careers Scotland the focus is more on the supply side – providing a suitable offer to young people having difficulties progressing in other ways. These are not always easily reconciled in practice. The LEC perspective certainly requires some greater level of selection in programme recruitment.

Capacity and quality

The support service for GRFW has placed considerable demands on Careers Scotland resources; initial expectations that additional staff would be available to staff the PAS were not realised. This has meant that resources have had to be allocated from within mainstream service provision. Inevitably, this has then linked to the relative priority given to the programme, which as we have suggested appears to vary geographically.

Support to the GRFW programme requires to be placed in the context of wider demands on CS. This has placed very real pressures on organisational capacity, not only in terms of total resources, but also on staff with the skill sets to work effectively with the GRFW client group. Considerable and ongoing staff development and service redesign has attempted to address this, and some further key changes are now underway. Industrial action during the middle part of 2005 slowed some internal CS work which would have benefited GRFW.

A wider group of staff within CS is now engaged in supporting GRFW with greater input from employability advisors and Key Workers. In a number of regions joint training programmes have been organised for CS staff and training providers. The new competency framework for Employability Advisors will further develop and clarify their role in GRFW, whilst the forthcoming proactive case management approach is anticipated to enable more time to be allocated to GRFW support. The national introduction of the CAS within GRFW is a further addition to the CS input with a range of potential gains – this will be supported by further training, and the time implications of implementation will be closely monitored.

Careers Scotland additionality

In concluding this section, we reflect on a key and fundamental question that has been asked frequently in our process: does the nature of Careers Scotland input to GRFW maximise the additionality they bring to the programme and justify the resources invested? We would emphasise that in asking this we are not seeking to single out the CS input as a particular “problem”; the evaluation in effect asks this question of GRFW as a whole. It is simply a subset of this wider review considered at this point.

Properly delivered we believe the answer to this question is yes. Where GRFW operates as initially designed, CS inputs add:

- Front end assessment expertise
- Good links to wider local networks of related interventions
- An independent review role on progress which acts as an “honest broker” contribution to the pace of participant progression
- Specific local labour market expertise to assist identification and access to positive post programme options
- Ongoing post programme support through links back to wider careers guidance support, and where applicable, key workers

Developments are underway to add to this input in future through the provision of additional information on distance travelled, and a key role in producing sustainability data on outcomes.

This is an impressive list, which improves GRFW. But it is not yet fully realised in all areas. We believe the current organisational changes may present an opportunity for further positive development, by necessitating a much clearer and more detailed contract on the future expectations of Careers Scotland inputs. The bullet points above are suggested as a starting point from which to develop this.

Related recommendations

Recommendations which lead from our review of the role of Careers Scotland within GRFW are:

- Scottish Enterprise should restate the objectives of the GRFW in terms of recruitment and outcomes, agree these at a national level with Careers Scotland and implement a local programme of dissemination events involving LEC, Careers, and training provider staff
- Scottish Enterprise should establish a national template of the future expectations from Careers Scotland inputs, and support the development of detailed LEC service level agreements based on this
- Scottish Enterprise should lead early developmental work to consider the implications for the GRFW programme of the relocation of Careers Scotland outwith the enterprise network
- Scottish Enterprise and Careers Scotland should conduct a "health audit" of LEC level GRFW working relationships, and from this act in those areas where ongoing issues of tension remain
- Careers Scotland should continue to monitor the dedicated and generic delivery options to PAS delivery ensuring maximum practical delivery of the good practice features identified

Outcomes and impact measurement

The issue

Throughout the evaluation process a constant question has been what we should measure and evidence as GRFW "success". This is clearly linked to what information on programme performance is collected, and what SEN as the programme funder expects for its investment. The decision to raise the network target to 50% positive outcomes has provided a keener edge on this issue.

The relevance and importance of so called "soft indicators" or distance travelled measurements has also been subject to continual debate throughout the period of GRFW operation. These have been seen as key to gaining a full 360 degree picture of impact. But there is still a lack of clarity on their role, and on how these indicators are collected and evidenced.

What is currently recorded?

Section 3 and appendix 1 details the key information currently recorded and fed into the management information systems. It details a fairly comprehensive set of indicators available at SEN wide, LEC and provider level in terms of:

- Programme inputs - participant numbers and profile
- Programme outputs – participant duration on the programme
- Programme outcomes – participant destinations on programme completion, detailing positive outcomes in terms of the 3 accepted SEN destinations of a job, further education or further training
- Programme costs

This information is gathered through the SEN Corporate Training System (CTS). Its collation is driven by the management of programme funding.

Further impact measurement requirements

Given the nature of the GRFW intervention, and the wider context within which GRFW operates – most notably the developing NEET agenda – two key information gaps are left by this sole reliance on the CTS.

Firstly, there is no readily available information on the longer-term progress of GRFW participants, or on the sustainability of positive outcomes recorded at the point of programme completion. It is a major gap, which makes the process of evaluation somewhat incomplete. In addition to the obvious, it hampers related considerations on the role of soft indicators, and the case for improved aftercare provision. It also seriously limits the extent to which we can correlate GRFW impact and NEET levels – nationally and locally. A final and directly important issue for the programme is also worth mentioning – improved sustainability data may prove that GRFW is a considerably more effective programme in labour market terms than the existing analysis suggests.

Secondly, and linked to sustainability measurement, we have no significant intelligence on the type of jobs that people leaving GRFW enter. This would be useful in growing our understanding and could feed vital intelligence back to providers to further improve the programme. It would also provide important information in work to improve conversion rates from GRFW to Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeships.

The most immediately apparent way to gather this information would be through the Careers Scotland Insight system. The longer than anticipated development phase of this has been well documented, but it is now reasonable to expect that this is requested to produce regular sustainability information on GRFW – as a minimum trainee status 6 months from programme completion, and any information collected on job types accessed by participants.

Distance travelled and soft indicators

The information collected through the CTS is all linked to traditional “hard indicators”. It is argued that these only provide one – albeit critical – dimension in measuring programme effectiveness. Given the nature of GRFW, and the vulnerable client groups engaged, there is a strong view that the programme can also deliver very positive change for participants which is not necessarily captured in this way. Consequently, softer indicators of the distance the young people have travelled in terms of developing employability skills are needed. These can include personal development improvements related to issues such as confidence, time keeping, personal hygiene, and communication skills. Distance travelled can also include positive benefits in terms of other issues the participants face including – reduced offending; reduced alcohol or drug use; more secure housing etc.

In our initial evaluation of GRFW these issues were subject to a fierce debate, but we noted that whilst there was considerable force in the argument that soft indicators were important, there was very limited experience of the operation of systems that produced any tangible evidence of their impact. It was all based on primarily anecdotal comments of training providers or Careers Scotland staff.

Three years on, we believe little has changed in this debate. Distance travelled is still considered important but we still find it very difficult to evidence in any robust way. The current introduction of the Client Achievement Summary (CAS) by Careers Scotland offers the prospect of improvements in this regard, but as yet it is largely untested in practice.

It is now time to draw a line under the distance travelled debate. We believe a key reason for the lack of progress in the development of these indicators is a lack of clarity on their purpose. Some providers and Careers Scotland staff have suggested in effect that they may in certain circumstances be used as a justification for continued contracting with a provider producing poor harder outcomes. In practice, from SEN's perspective, this will never be the case – the only recognised performance indicators have (and will remain) the 3 traditional positive outcomes of jobs, training and further education. This needs to be very clearly articulated.

There is also a link between distance travelled indicators, hard indicators, and improved data on the sustainability of outcomes. This is not always fully appreciated. For an employment focused programme such as GRFW the key question is “distance travelled to where?” Across a group of participants if we are meaningfully measuring “distance travelled to the labour market” progress on soft indicators should over time be reflected in better hard outcomes. This is dependent, of course, on improving our knowledge of what happens to GRFW participants over a longer period following programme completion.

The above paragraphs are not intended to suggest measuring soft indicators is unimportant, or that GRFW does not produce wider benefits for some participants in addition to direct labour market gains. They are and it does. But the role of distance travelled measurement should be clarified as primarily twofold:

- to contribute to continuous programme improvement for providers and Careers Scotland staff – anything that helps increase understanding of the development of wider participant employability is of considerable value. But their function is to *improve not to justify GRFW*.
- to provide evidence to attract non LEC funding into GRFW. For example, if GRFW reduces drug or alcohol abuse or offending behaviour amongst participants this impact is of more immediate relevance to the objectives of other funding sources than to those of the enterprise network

Related recommendations

The following recommendations lead from this review of outcome and impact measurement:

- SEN should develop a specification for further information requirements in terms of the longer term labour market progress of former GRFW participants, including details on the types of jobs the young people enter

- Careers Scotland should be invited to develop and introduce systems linked to Insight to provide the identified MIS at national and LEC level
- SEN and LECs should clarify the role of soft indicators of distance traveled in the programme – indicating that these are linked to the continuous improvement of delivery as opposed to the justification for funding

Progression Routes: Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeships

The issue

We have discussed the role of GRFW within the context of the NEET problem in Scotland, where labour market participation rates for the 16-24 age cohort are comparatively low in OECD terms. The challenge, as we outlined in our Context section, is to create pathways into employment for young people and to ensure that they have the competencies to progress further once they are in work. It is therefore important to regard GRFW as one of the key interventions designed to tackle the NEET problem in Scotland.

Ideally therefore, we would expect to see a clear articulation of the programme's locus within the wider sphere of interventions. In particular, this would mean a close relationship between GRFW and the Enterprise Network's principal youth skills development programme, Skillseekers/Modern Apprenticeships.

The clarity and strength of the relationship between these two programmes is, in our view, extremely important. As SS/MAs have become a primarily employed status model, GRFW assumes an increasingly important role as an intervention that provides development and employment opportunities for those who are not yet in work, and who may face barriers making the transition from school into the labour market.

Evaluation findings

Our review of the GRFW data shows that over the first four operational years of the programme, the proportion of positive outcomes onto Skillseekers has been 16.3%. As the table below shows, this has declined from 19.1% in 2002/03 to 16.3% in the recently completed financial year, 2005/05.

GRFW progression to Skillseekers: Number and proportion of total positive outcomes		
Year	Number	Proportion (%)
2002/03	291	19.1
2003/04	317	15.7
2004/05	404	15.1
2005/06	585	16.8
Total	1579	16.5

Source: SEN CTS

Underneath these network wide figures, LEC data shows that the pattern of progressions from GRFW to Skillseekers varies both between local areas and within areas year on year – in some cases quite dramatically. The table below shows the breakdown for each of the four years to date:

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	23	18.3	34	18.4	62	28.1	91	25.2
SEB	0	0.0	4	16.0	8	28.6	4	12.5
SED	15	23.8	14	12.1	19	11.5	20	10.2
SEDG	4	16.7	8	16.3	10	21.7	21	25.6
SEEL	67	29.0	44	22.6	53	17.1	55	15.2
SEF	27	24.1	20	13.8	29	14.6	34	13.4
SEFV	11	13.4	18	15.8	20	15.4	42	18.3
SEGL	18	7.0	45	12.9	46	9.1	92	15.4
SEGR	9	20.5	3	7.5	34	21.3	59	27.7
SEL	74	28.0	56	16.8	58	12.7	54	11.0
SER	26	13.1	33	12.5	44	16.7	67	16.1
SET	17	15.7	38	18.4	21	11.3	46	19.3
Total SS	291	19.1	317	15.7	404	15.1	585	16.8

Source: Scottish Enterprise CTS

In some areas, such as SEEL, SEL and SED, overall output performance has improved but the trend of Skillseeker progressions has been downward. In other places progression rates have been consistently high, whilst SEGR and SEG provide examples of both. Our views on the reasons for this are discussed below.

Before doing so it is worth mentioning that the progression rate from the Lifeskills strand onto Skillseekers has been lower than for the mainstream strands, averaging 6% over the four years.

How can we interpret these figures?

The relationship between GRFW and Skillseekers must be considered against a dynamic background where neither programme has stood still. Over the period Get Ready for Work has established itself as a quite different programme from its network predecessor, and it is fair to say that the initial two years involved a lot of bedding in. This involved fully establishing the model and taking forward the issues arising from the local development plans.

In the meantime Skillseekers was undergoing a radical overhaul, largely as a consequence of the findings of the Scottish Executive's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee's enquiry. Rather than abolish the programme – as ELLC recommended – the decision was taken to re-engineer it to address the identified weaknesses. The key features of this process have been that Skillseekers is now strongly sector focused and largely based upon employed status participation. Its focus is on S/NVQ or equivalent qualification at Level 2 (SCQF Level 5) or above.

Our fieldwork indicates that one of the most significant consequences of these developments has been that there are fewer Skillseeker opportunities than before in many parts of the country. As a result, GRFW has become an option – and in some places the only option – for school leavers who would previously have

moved onto Skillseekers but who no longer can either because they cannot make the entrance criteria or because there are simply not enough places available.

Rising standards within Skillseekers is a positive development, but it has raised issues about the linkages with GRFW as a prospective feeder programme. Looking at the progression data, some stakeholders – particularly within the LECs – see these figures as being respectable, and a reflection of the ‘step up’ between these programmes. By way of comparison, it is worth noting that the rate from the English E2E programme to Apprenticeships is 10%. But others see room for improvement in these progression rates. Below we discuss some the reasons for the relatively low figures, and what might be done to address them.

A number of reasons have been put forward to explain the relatively low progression rates from GRFW onto Skillseekers. We can summarise these as follows:

- “The jump from GRFW to Skillseekers is too great”

Throughout our fieldwork we consistently heard stakeholders state that for many GRFW clients the step up to Skillseekers was too much for them to cope with. We do not accept that this is the case across the board, when four LEC areas had 1 in 5 GRFW clients progressing in 2005/06. Not all young people can make the step up, and there are sectoral and job issues as we discuss below, but it would be misleading to state that the gap between the programmes is too big for GRFW clients to straddle

- “Linkages between the respective providers are weak”

There is no doubt that where progression rates are highest the overlap between GRFW and Skillseekers providers is strong. Our provider survey suggests that this is patchy across the country, with around 60% of GRFW providers involved in delivering Skillseekers. Where a provider delivers both there is clearly going to be an understanding of the interface and a greater likelihood of clients being supported to move from one to another. In Grampian, where most GRFW providers are involved in Skillseekers, this is the case. At the other end of the scale, the provider market in Glasgow has traditionally been more split with something of a legacy from the old ‘STN SS’ days. Consequently, GRFW providers are less informed about Skillseekers and the progression rates are subsequently lower.

- “Linkages between the respective LEC teams are weak”

In some LECs the working relationships between those involved in the respective programmes could be stronger. This relates to the perceived positioning of the programme with Skillseekers being perceived as a demand driven programme whilst GRFW is labelled as a supply side vehicle. Within the Network culture this means that GRFW can be perceived as being the ‘poor relation’ rather than as a valuable pathway onto the Skillseeker programme. This reflects the lack of strategic articulation addressed above.

- “Opportunities to progress onto Skillseekers can be sector dependent”

It is the case that some of the entry level jobs accessed by GRFW clients are hard to link to

recognised VQs. At the same time it is clear that certain sectors – which include Engineering, Electrical and Care – more readily offer opportunities to progress from GRFW onto Skillseekers. Again, taking Grampian as an example, providers in the engineering sector are regularly successful at supporting clients to move into Skillseeker outcomes, although the buoyancy of the local economy is clearly a factor here.

We do believe that some sectors are therefore more bridgeable than others. The sector focussed pre-Skillseeker pilots⁷ in development, should provide further intelligence on how respective sectors can offer pathways onto Skillseekers from GRFW.

- “Employers have negative perceptions of GRFW”

We have already discussed the question of GRFW’s image and have concluded that the programme’s profile is low, particularly with employers. Stakeholder feedback suggests that employers can perceive GRFW to be less attractive than other programmes – most notably Skillseekers. However, the message coming from employers we interviewed suggests fairly high levels of satisfaction with the programme, so there is a need to promote these messages more effectively within a wider marketing campaign

- “CTS under-represents the flow from CTS onto Skillseekers”

As a financial management tool, CTS tracks and records the outcomes against which bonuses are paid. That means that if a GRFW client moves into employment then that is the outcome which is recorded. However, if that client then becomes a Skillseeker then this is not recorded as a ‘Skillseeker’ outcome on the CTS system. Consequently, there is a widespread belief that the current figures under-report the real progression rate onto the Skillseekers programme.

Conclusions and related recommendations

Overall, we conclude that the strategic articulation between GRFW and Skillseekers needs to be stronger. Within the Network we see a reluctance to recognise GRFW contributing to the Network’s core business of economic development in the way that Skillseekers does, and this deficit view of the programme is unhelpful. For although GRFW may not generate the same levels of impact, it nevertheless provides an important pathway into employment for many young people, as this evaluation shows.

More effective promotion of the programme’s successes will be important here, not only to the employers and other stakeholders we consider in the section above on promotion and image, but also to LEC staff and training providers engaged with Skillseekers. Where they are not involved in GRFW there is a need to sell the programme more effectively, and to celebrate the numbers of GRFW clients who are successfully progressing onto Skillseekers.

Part of this will be to learn more from those sectors where the flows between the programmes are strongest. Again, case studies can be developed here, and there may be opportunities for staff development and training amongst sectors.

⁷ Each sector pilot is being led by a LEC and is linked to the NEET target areas prioritised in the NEET strategy

In summary, recommendations leading from our review of progression include that:

- The Scottish Executive should ensure that the NEET strategy underlines the role that both programmes play in tackling NEET in Scotland.
- Scottish Enterprise should openly acknowledge the role of GRFW as a feeder programme into Skillseekers and promote this through:
 - ✓ Setting a rising annual target for Skillseeker progressions within the programme
 - ✓ Promoting GRFW alongside Skillseekers as a positive business focused vehicle designed to meet employer needs
 - ✓ Ensuring that LEC managers and training providers involved in Skillseekers have a positive and well developed understanding of GRFW
 - ✓ Ensuring that GRFW providers understand the Skillseekers programme and the opportunities it offers
 - ✓ Supporting the development of the sector-focused bridging pilots connecting the two programmes
 - ✓ Ensuring that the data fully reflects all of those GRFW graduates who become Skillseekers
- Careers Scotland should ensure that all of its advisers involved in GRFW fully understand the Skillseeker programme and the opportunities it offers.
- The finding of this report should feed into and be cross referenced with the current SEN evaluation of Skillseekers and MAS

Quality and accreditation

The issue

Four years into Get Ready for Work, the question of quality remains a high priority. It is likely to become more so as the NEET strategy highlights the need to ensure more consistent quality of provision across the country.

The helicopter view of GRFW is one where the programme has improved year on year and overall levels of quality have risen. Many of the poorer providers no longer have contracts whilst the investment in provider staff development has been welcome and effective.

However, the picture remains inconsistent. During the evaluation we have witnessed examples of excellent practice but have also encountered providers who continue to rely upon discredited and ineffective approaches, as well as some who are reliant on inexperienced and largely unsupported staff.

There remains much to do in order to drive up the overall quality of service on offer through the programme.

Evaluation findings

Looking firstly at the providers, it is hard to make generalised comments due to the highly diverse nature of the GRFW provider base. This extends from large providers – many of which are local authorities and colleges – to the numerous micro providers based within the private and voluntary sector. In some respects this diversity is a programme strength, but it also provides a challenge to the introduction of consistent standards across the provider network.

Overall, the improving quality of providers involved in the programme has been driven by two factors. The first has been the removal of poorer performing providers, largely motivated by the Network's rising expectations around achieved outcomes. In several parts of the country this has involved adopting a clear and tough stance with contractors who have not delivered. In those parts of the country where there has been greater reluctance to do this, performance has suffered – reflecting the quality of the provider base. The recently announced aim to achieve 50% of positive outcomes at programme level by 2008 has focussed the discussion around quality in those areas which have been slower to respond.

However, not all LEC areas have the luxury of choosing their suppliers. This is a particular issue in rural areas such as the Borders, where performance levels are low, the LEC has tried in vain to attract new providers to stimulate competition in the area. Limited resources and the perception of GRFW as administratively burdensome are some of the factors cited which deter new providers from coming in. In such circumstances improved performance will require partnership activity to develop existing capacity.

This leads onto the second driver for performance improvement which has been the ongoing investment in provider staff delivering the programme. In many LEC areas this continuous professional development input has been derived from the local area development plans and has been financed through the Innovation Fund. Alongside this, the training provided by the Post School Psychological Services (PSPS) has been widely praised, particularly the solution focused planning approach. PSPS's work with over 150 GRFW front line staff provides a good pointer for the future, particularly where it can be delivered to CS and provider staff together.

Staff delivering GRFW come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Survey feedback from providers indicates a clear set of competencies required to work effectively with these clients which routinely include:

- Commitment and energy
- An ability to empathise with the client
- Creativity and flexibility
- Patience
- Non-judgmentalism
- A sense of humour

Providers stress that attitude, far more than qualifications, is what they look for in a good front line trainer. Consequently, we see providers recruiting staff with a wide variety of backgrounds which include youth work, education and social work. Where these individuals work well they occupy a role akin to a facilitator, rather than a traditional trainer function.

At the same time, however, there remains a core of traditional vocational trainers delivering services within the programme, particularly within the local authorities. Providing craft skills in workshops these trainers know their subject area well, but often lack the interpersonal skills to provide a more rounded employability experience for these clients. Where providers understand this they often complement these trainers with colleagues who are more comfortable in the facilitation role. However, where organisations do not understand this dynamic the quality of provision on offer is poorer. For example we visited one local authority where craft trainers discouraged trainees from developing interviewing and CV skills because they deemed them to be a waste of time.

Staff consistently report back on the challenging nature of the GRFW client group and the fact that working with them, although rewarding, can be exceptionally difficult. During our fieldwork we saw several very inexperienced trainers working with demanding groups of young people with little professional support or guidance. In this respect GRFW is a programme which brings some of the worst paid and least experienced staff members together with some of the most difficult clients. Consequently, ongoing investment in staff is a priority for the programme.

The materials used with clients are also hugely varied. Much of the content we have seen is home grown or customised from other sources, and there is no bank of materials which can be drawn upon. Consequently, providers spend considerable time developing new content although little of this is shared. The culture of competition between providers continues to act as a barrier to this type of practical co-operation, although there have been some examples of joint work through the local development partnerships.

At present there is no quality assurance around this aspect of the programme. Neither LEC nor Careers Scotland staff appraise the quality of the materials or the in situ delivery of GRFW, relying on CTS and client feedback to alert them to any potential problems.

LEC monitoring and support systems for GRFW vary considerably, and in several local areas contract managers are frustrated that they have so little time to actively manage these relationships. However, on a positive note, many LEC staff are now closer to the detail of GRFW than was evident in the 2003 evaluation of the programme. Central to this is the emphasis on maximising time spent with providers on their premises, speaking to staff and clients. This is essential to complementing a review of CTS data, which by itself is very limited in terms of monitoring quality.

LEC staff increasingly interpret their role as developmental support as well as contract management – signalling a “partnership” approach to continuous GRFW improvement. This creates new capacity issues for LECs, and there is a need to ensure staff have the correct basket of skills to undertake this more demanding role effectively. This is particularly the case where LEC contract managers have been promoted from administrative roles and have little or no experience in the training field. The current development of a competence framework for contract managers is a welcome one in this respect, and will be of particular value to the GRFW programme.

Accreditation

Client achievement of qualifications can be perceived as a barometer of a programme's quality. As we have pointed out, GRFW's predecessor placed a stronger emphasis on the achievement of vocational qualifications, although this was laterally not identified as a programme strength. Too often, providers were

focusing on clients gaining pieces of paper which triggered bonus payments, rather than on the more important issue of equipping them with the skills needed in the workplace.

Consequently, GRFW does not reward the achievement of qualifications, although many providers continue to offer them to clients. Our survey of providers showed that of the 67 responses, only 14 do not support clients to achieve qualifications. For those who do the range is wide and includes, in order of popularity:

- SQA units
- ECDL
- ASDAN
- City and Guilds

The debate around awards is subject to pendular swings. During the initial evaluation in 2003 the consensus was that uncoupling GRFW from the achievement of qualifications had been a step in the right direction, signalling the Network's intent to focus on competencies rather than the acquisition of certificates. Three years on we have seen something of a shift in this position, primarily amongst providers and to a lesser extent Careers Scotland, with increased calls for awards to be more strongly promoted. In England we have also noted the recent introduction of bonus payments for the achievement of certain qualifications on the E2E programme.

We have examined the background to these developments in England, and have been interested to see the rationale for this change⁸. The extensive preliminary research⁹ that informed this decision considered the impact of non-formal education awards¹⁰ in eight pilot regions. It concluded that the use of these awards can improve the rate of positive progressions from E2E.

Researchers found that non-formal awards provide a useful framework for the delivery and accreditation of the personal and social development (PSD) element of E2E. Over 90% of providers reported that the use of an award had improved their PSD curriculum. This was partly because it raised learners' motivation (especially lower achievers), enhanced the status of PSD and ensured that providers recorded the full range of clients' achievements.

Finally, it was found that the adoption of these awards improved consistency amongst providers, and offered an improved interface with the pilot programmes being developed for 14-16 year olds. This is interesting because our discussions with the Education sector in Scotland indicate a lack of understanding about the core content of GRFW as a product.

These developments certainly provide food for thought, and they relate to our other observations around quality and consistency set out in this section. However, the E2E programme has a stronger inclination towards the learning as opposed to the skills dimension of this debate, so we do not suggest the introduction of award achievement as an outcome for GRFW. As we have already stated, the programme outcomes should remain as they are. This is not to say that the offer of qualifications should be discouraged.

⁸ A summary of our thoughts on E2E and its comparability with GRFW is attached as Appendix 3.

⁹ The positive contribution of non-formal Awards to learning: Final report on the action research project on the contribution of non-formal Awards to Entry to Employment – Learning and Skills Council and the National Youth Agency

¹⁰ ASDAN, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Fairbridge, Getting Connected, Trident, UK Youth, Weston Spirit and Youthtrain

On the contrary, they provide a structure for many providers and are rightly recognised as forming important progress milestones for clients who may have achieved little in school.

Having said this, very few young people involved in our process made reference to qualifications and their focus was very clearly on getting into work. Equally, none of the employers surveyed saw the achievement of qualifications as being important for them. Access to young people with the right attitude was viewed by them to be far more significant.

Conclusions and related recommendations

The NEET Workstream highlighted the issue of quality as being at the heart of improving the supply side offer to young people leaving school. For the GRFW client group there is huge variation in the quality of provision within this programme, not only amongst the providers but also in relation to the Careers Scotland input. For a programme moving into its fifth year this should not be the case.

Increasingly, GRFW's future is linked to the programme being able to make upstream connections with schools looking to support leavers with ongoing support needs. However, at present many of the key influencers around young people's choices are unconvinced about the quality of the programme. Raising outcomes will help, but building capacity will require ongoing investment in staff and frontline resources. It is a truism, but this programme is only as good as the people who are delivering it.

At present, the improvements in quality have been piecemeal and achieved in spite of the existing set up. For a programme aimed at the most vulnerable client groups, and employing some of the poorest paid and inexperienced staff, GRFW's lack of support infrastructure is striking. At the very least we should be putting the scaffolding in place to secure what we have achieved to date.

Looking at Skillseekers, we see a structured programme with accredited training and an army of verifiers employed to assure the quality of the product. In England the issue has also been addressed, as the partners recognised the need to build provider capacity and assure quality more transparently. Amongst the steps taken were the development of a competence framework for E2E delivery developed by the DfES Standards Unit and the involvement of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) on the E2E Steering Group and as programme reviewers.

In considering this issue we recognise that GRFW should never be an entirely regimented programme. We wish to avoid any cumbersome framework which means partners spend more time dealing with red tape and less time improving their service to clients. However, we think that there is a need for more structure than the current arrangements allow.

In summary, our related recommendations for future action linked to quality and accreditation are:

- SEN should establish a quality development group which assumes responsibility for the:
 - ✓ Development of a competence framework for staff involved in the delivery of GRFW
 - ✓ Design and development of an HR development process which complements this framework and offers a systemic support programme for front line staff
 - ✓ Creation of a on line resource bank of materials for use by GRFW staff

- Scottish Enterprise may also consider discussing the establishment of a specific inspection regime for the programme which might involve either SQMS personnel or HMIs.
- As well as examining the E2E programme, SEN should also have a closer look at the YouthReach programme in Ireland. This initiative, targeted at a similar client group, has recently been reformed into a national service which has acquired a good reputation for quality and consistency

Employer links and progression focus

The issue

GRFW is about preparing young people for working life. Unless the programme equips clients with the skills and aptitudes employers require then it cannot achieve its objective. Consequently, strong links with employers are an essential component of a successful programme.

Where GRFW works best, it is delivered by providers who have a strong focus on employers' needs and a commitment to moving clients through the programme and into work situations as early as possible. We are convinced that this focus on progression, and on the centrality of the placement experience are the most significant components of the programme.

Evaluation findings

As we have seen, there has been a positive upward trend in job outcomes year on year since the programme began. At the programme level these suggest that providers are improving their links with employers and that they are getting better at providing clients with the competencies they are looking for.

On the ground we have seen many GRFW providers who have developed excellent links with employers. They understand the local labour market, know the sectors where there are likely to be opportunities, and can prepare their clients to meet the needs of local employers. Organisations which do this well tend to have dedicated staff responsible for employer relations who work proactively and ensure that they are in regular contact with local businesses.

In rural areas, providers report that finding placements and employment opportunities is challenging and that they regularly have to rely on the same pool of employers. As these are often small firms with limited capacity this aspect of GRFW remains a challenge. Often, companies are motivated by a willingness to give young people a chance, with the expectation that if they add value then this is a bonus.

The competitive nature of the programme is a factor in providers' relationships with employers. These relationships are jealously guarded by contractors with the consequence that employers can be approached by several providers, on top of the demands placed upon them from other programmes. Although previously some local areas – such as Renfrewshire – operated shared employer pools, attempts to develop such practices under GRFW have failed to materialise.

Proactive outreach and word of mouth remain the key factors in engaging employers in the programme. However, from our employer consultations in this review a number of key messages are apparent:

- The programme's profile amongst employers remains low, as we have already mentioned, and very often the first employers know about it is when they are approached by a training provider. Many are contacted directly by providers, although a few had come onto the programme as a consequence of recommendations from other employers. Even amongst those who are involved in the programme, awareness of the 'Get Ready for Work' brand is not highly visible, and employers often had to be prompted before realising that this was the programme that their trainee was on. A high proportion of the sample employers were 'repeat business' in that they had come across the programme by chance but had remained involved as a consequence of their positive experiences. There was a clear view amongst participating employers that the programme could and should raise its profile. In particular, the point was made that many of these young people are employable but employers may be reluctant to take a chance with them. The sample employers also reported a perception amongst employers that 'national programmes' raise concern amongst employers because they focus too much on the fact that the clients have a variety of problems. Small employers in particular are wary of assuming staff whose support needs cannot be met. Several of the interviewees suggested that the way in which the programme is sold should be revisited, with greater emphasis placed on what the clients are capable of.
- Employers gave a number of reasons for becoming involved. The majority were very small businesses, without an HR function for whom the recruitment and screening of new staff can present challenges. For many of them, Get Ready for Work is attractive because it is a more reliable source of new staff than direct advertising. Several explained that they had spent large sums of money advertising in local newspapers with very poor results. Candidates were hard to come by and the process was regarded as something of a lottery. GRfW is attractive because it provides an opportunity to recruit through training providers to their own specification. This has proven to reduce the risk, particularly as the programme allows employers to observe the trainee in a work situation without making any contractual commitment. Amongst some of the larger firms the rationale was a little different. For them, recruitment was less of a problem, but for at least one high profile national chain, local area involvement was driven by a desire to give these young people a break. This sense of 'putting something back' was a motivating factor amongst most of the sample employers.
- In terms of their requirements, none of these employers was looking for 'the finished' article from trainees on this programme. There was a clear consensus amongst them that finding young people with the right attitude was more important than whether they came with a handful of qualifications. Most employers made reference to the growing difficulties they face in finding school leavers who have what they are looking for. Most often, these are cited by employers as being a willingness to work learn.
- Several of the employers singled out the training provider staff as being the key to a successful relationship. Their ability to understand the needs of the organisation and their work in overseeing the process were seen as being especially important. Where these relationships work well, training providers make much of the running, developing and maintaining the relationship. At their best, providers anticipate the needs of these businesses – who are in effect key clients – and they work hard to ensure that their needs are met. Although there had been a few negative experiences, the

majority of the placements had worked well and had in most of these cases led to an offer of work.

The need for employees with the right attitude is not peculiar to the private sector, and across the country there are also good examples of public sector employers seeing GRFW as means through which they can provide pathways into employment for young local residents. There are still too few of these examples – which are mainly within the NHS – and we envisage that pressure to widen opportunities here will continue, in line with the recommendations of the NEET Workstream and the directive within Closing the Opportunity Gap.

Although recently developed and still in its early stages, the Falkirk Council model offers an interesting version of GRFW. As part of its anti-NEET strategy the local authority has declared a commitment to providing 300 Skillseekers/Modern Apprenticeships and the GRFW programme is seen as the pathway into these opportunities. The Falkirk Council model combines GRFW funds with other financial sources – including ESF and Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) monies and operates under the Council's own, rather than the GRFW, brand. Controversially, the model also includes a commitment to pay trainees the minimum wage. The initial consequence has been a dramatic upturn in performance since its introduction earlier this year, and the long term impact will be awaited with interest.

Good training providers are keen to move clients towards a work placement at the earliest opportunity. This means constantly looking to stretch them and expose them to new learning experiences, the most critical of which is frequently an employer placement. Moving away from their peer group, working with people from all age groups and coping with the demands of the workplace are at the heart of the successful GRFW experience.

However, we continue to see training providers who have a much less proactive role and who persist with keeping GRFW clients in classroom type settings for too long and who will resist requests – often from Personal Advisers – to get them out into the workplace. We have also seen old style 'workshop' provision with a craft orientation – particularly within local authority providers – which are introspective and lack focus on external work placements. Again, in these settings GRFW clients – primarily young men in these cases – are cocooned from real work settings, enabled to continue their social groupings and - in short – prevented from growing up. As we discuss earlier, one of the programme goals must be to move away from this type of provision entirely.

Conclusions and related recommendations

A lot of change has taken place within GRFW since our initial evaluation in 2003. Overall, the programme now has a stronger employer focus, which is reflected in its performance. Many of the organisations which were poorly equipped to move clients into work have been removed from the programme, as the LECs have promoted the importance of this message. The rising expectations from SE National in relation to outcomes has reinforced this expectation, and has clarified any lingering misconceptions about where the programme's focus lies.

It is clear from our work however that in some parts of the country residual problems remain with providers under contract who clearly lack the type of employer links and progression focus that GRFW needs. The introduction of the 50% target is forcing LECs to address this and we are aware of intense discussions

across the country in relation to provider performance. In this sense SE's raising of the bar has been a helpful intervention.

Our understanding of this aspect of the programme is hindered by the fact that the data does not provide any intelligence on the profile of employers taking on young people from the programme. This is not ideal, and we recommend that where employment outcomes are secured providers are required to provide basic details of the employer in relation to organisational type, size and sector.

The sectoral pilots, linked to Skillseekers will also provide a potential source of useful information around ways in which specific sectors relate to the programme. The lessons from these pilots could be combined with some good practice case studies of employer engagement to provide a toolkit in this area linked to the HR developments proposed in the previous section.

Consequently, related recommendations include:

- The need to improve tracking data on the sustainability and nature of outcomes
- The need to continue to set outcome targets, and follow through all the implications flowing from these
- The need to track the lessons of the pre Skillseekers sectoral pilots and spread good practice from these across the network

Programme resourcing and the financial deal for young people

The issue

Money always matters and the issue of resource allocation remains a major consideration around this programme. Two financial aspects are of particular importance. The first is around the resourcing of the programme itself. The second pertains to the financial offer made to programme participants.

The initial GRFW programme evaluation underlined the partnership nature of the programme and illustrated this through the fact that around half of the programme providers supplemented their LEC resources from other sources. In some cases they did this significantly. We interpreted this positively, seeing it as an indication of the sense of shared ownership generated by the programme, and we noted that this made GRFW distinctive from other Network products – most obviously Skillseekers. Three years on we were keen to investigate how this agenda had developed, particularly as there is an increasing focus on the need for partners to collaborate more strategically around the NEET challenge.

In the intervening period the landscape around financial instruments for young people has also shifted. A number of developments – most notably the roll out of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and ongoing anomalies around benefits – have prompted a wider discussion around the way in which financial incentives are used. In England the consequence of this has been that from April 2006 all post sixteen learning and skills participants have been required to apply for a means-tested EMA. This includes clients on the E2E programme where training allowances have been scrapped.

The question of individual financial support was raised by the NEET Workstream which recognised the existing anomalies and the way in which post-sixteen choices can be skewed by the funding tags carried by the various options. Consequently, the Scottish Executive convened a working group to investigate this issue and it is anticipated that there will be further scrutiny and consideration of the current set up.

Evaluation findings

Over the past four years Scottish Enterprise has invested £77.7 million in the GRFW programme, averaging nearly £19.5 million per annum. This is a significant level, but it is important to bear in mind that in terms of post-sixteen interventions it is less than that being invested in Skillseekers, and is dwarfed by the levels of resource being invested in the FE sector.

Our provider survey shows that delivery organisations continue to draw in additional resources from elsewhere. This is particularly the case with local authority and further education providers where in some cases the LEC resources can account for a minority share in the overall project budget. Voluntary sector organisations also manage to supplement their GRFW income from a wide range of sources which include European funds, Futurebuilders and trust funds. For example, our provider survey suggests one public sector provider covers only 35% of the total costs incurred from the LEC contribution, another estimated this figure as 43%. The level of additional resources levered by the social economy organizations is normally lower, and are commonly time limited from sources such as the ESF.

It is predominantly private sector providers who continue to deliver the programme with LEC funds alone, and many explain that they can only do so by running GRFW in tandem with other publicly funded programmes like New Deal and Training for Work (TFW). As we discuss below, this provides a number of challenges with identifying unit costs and considering the value for money offered by the programme.

A universal message from GRfW is that the remuneration rates to providers and participants being invested by the Enterprise Network is extremely tight, and that they have not risen since the programme was introduced in 2002. Obviously this particularly affects private sector providers, and to a lesser extent those in the voluntary sector. However, from a network perspective there would be little incentive to invest more in public sector providers when it would only displace funds coming from other sources.

It is worth noting however that in some areas, most notably Glasgow, far from complementing GRFW resources, the local authority's funds are being used to support alternative provision aimed at the GRFW client group. This competitive dimension is unhelpful and instances like this were identified by the NEET Workstream as contributing to the confusing and uncoordinated service map confronting service users.

Looking at the financial offer for young people, the rate of training allowance (£55 per week) has not risen since the programme started. Feedback from many of the stakeholders – particularly amongst CS Advisers, training providers and GRFW participants is that the allowance should be increased.

The allowance is currently paid at a flat rate. It does not rise if the trainee is on a placement or reward them if they perform particularly well. Although some providers are creative about ways to incentivise trainees¹¹, there is little discretion in the financial levers available to them. For example, there is little scope to support

¹¹ For example, we have heard from providers who give a £10 bonus to client if they introduce another trainee to the programme

trainees to buy new clothes for an interview, unless they can access discretionary funds via Careers Scotland or other sources.

In rural areas there are real challenges around travel. These relate not only to the costs for clients, but also to the time it may take them to get to and from home to a provider or employer's premises. This has been particularly identified as a serious issue in the Borders, but has also been flagged up in our discussions elsewhere, including Lanarkshire, Grampian, parts of the Lothians, and Forth Valley. There is a specific rural dimension to supporting these young people post-school which is currently not reflected in the financial model.

It is therefore important when considering the issues around funding that we take a step back and view GRFW within its wider context, that is as one of a number of post-school development interventions. The NEET Workstream correctly identifies the need to look at the wider offer for young people at the local level, and this is important in considering the scale and nature of the allowance.

For although the GRFW Training Allowance has not risen since 2002, it is still considerably more generous than any of the other options available to this client group. Certainly, it pays more than the EMA for those remaining at school or going onto college. And although some have claimed that "it is not sufficiently higher to get out of bed for than the benefits young people are already getting". It is subject of increasing debate whether the solution to this lies in the allowance level or the benefits system..

It is also an issue around the realism of school-leavers' financial expectations. For example, young people on the Falkirk Council GRFW programme, where the training allowance is uniquely topped up to reach a minimum wage level of just under £100 per week¹², cited that the biggest programme change should be to increase their rate of payment – suggesting it be raised to £300 per week.

There is also evidence from our evaluation that in some cases the GRFW training allowance influences young people's decisions in ways that can be unhelpful. This is most notable in the cases of young people with learning disabilities, where GRFW is clearly not always the most appropriate option, but their choice is influenced by the fact that for some young people it pays £20 per week more than the local FE college¹³.

There are also cases where GRFW clients on particular benefits have had to withdraw from the programme after a benefits review. This seems to most frequently occur with young parents. Given that this group is one of the priorities amongst the national NEET population this is ironic and undesirable. Recent changes to the E2E Programme have introduced greater flexibility around priority groups including teenage parents and ex-offenders.

Conclusions and related recommendations

As a network programme GRFW continues to be distinctive in the way that it attracts financial input from other sources. Given the need for this to be a partnership approach, and the cross-cutting nature of the programme, we see this as being appropriate and one of the programme's continuing strengths.

¹² It should be noted the trainees on this level of remuneration are working on commercial contracts.

¹³ For example, Kilmarnock College's Vocational Access Programme for young people with learning difficulties changed from GRFW funding to a College bursary scheme. Staff indicate a significant number were worse off as a result. This issue is complicated, however, and depends on a range of individual circumstances.

Considering the direction of travel set out by the NEET Workstream around better shared use of resources, this is an asset upon which the local service offer can be built.

In some quarters this has raised questions about the profile and 'ownership' of the programme. We touch upon this in our section on the profile and image of GRFW. However, we believe that although it is important that the programme's contribution to the NEET agenda is recognised, we are ultimately interested in making the best available offer for young people and should encourage creative ways to do this. These should include mixing funds to add value, and we envisage that the anticipated NEET strategy will provide further encouragement for this.

Looking at the financial deal for individuals, we also think it is important to look at this within a wider context. Although we hear the voices calling for a rise in the level of training allowance we believe that they are misplaced. The agenda here is about moving young people through the programme and into work as quickly as possible. The positive outcome is the reward, rather than the financial benefit of the training experience. In our view raising the allowance would simply provide more of an incentive to stay on the programme for longer than necessary. It also continues the anomalies that currently exist in relation to other post sixteen options.

Again, looking at the issues raised by the NEET Workstream we welcome the recommendation to review the wider question of financial instruments and would expect the GRFW allowances to be a core part of this.

Related recommendations on programme resourcing and the financial deal for young people include;

- SEN and LECs should continue to encourage wider funding inputs to the resourcing of GRFW
- SEN should contribute to and be informed by the wider Scottish Executive led debate on financial rewards for young people in post school progression

Aftercare and tracking

The issue

Aftercare and tracking emerged as key issues from the original programme evaluation in 2003. Three years on there is consensus that our ability to track these clients still leaves much to be desired, and that we have not made the progress we anticipated in this area. This is not a problem that is confined to GRFW, as the NEET Workstream report highlights, and the difficulties here are shared across many interventions aimed at the 16-19 age group.

Nevertheless, GRFW is not just about moving young people into work but is also about equipping them with the skills to stay there and to move on within the labour market. Presently, we have limited intelligence around the sustainability of the programme's outcomes, so the need to improve our tracking methods remains a high priority.

The role of aftercare in improving the sustainability of outcomes remains a contentious issue. Three years ago there was a widespread request for enhanced aftercare, and we concluded that this was an area worthy of further investigation. Calls for enhanced aftercare – particularly amongst providers and Careers Scotland

staff – remain high and the local area pilots supported through the Innovation Fund have offered further insight into how these might be handled nationally.

Evaluation findings

Our evaluation has clearly highlighted the ongoing problems related to programme tracking. The existing systems offer us nothing in relation to clients' post-programme experience. This is a problem in relation to the 41% of clients who have gone into positive outcomes, as we know very little about the types of jobs, the industrial sectors or the types of employers they are engaging with. It is perhaps even more of a problem with the majority of young people who go through GRFW and who leave without a positive outcome. We know nothing at all about any lasting impact the programme has had on their future development. Although we have another chance with the 18% that rejoin the programme, we have no intelligence on the others. Since the 2003 evaluation we have seen the introduction of the Client Achievement Summary (CAS) and the INSIGHT system. The latter was widely touted as being the solution to the tracking problems identified in the initial GRFW evaluation. However, our study shows that it has failed to live up to expectations and senior CS managers accept that these were perhaps built too highly around this software programme.

CS staff have struggled to introduce both CAS and INSIGHT across the board and its usage remains uneven across the country. Feedback suggests that staff have found it difficult to implement the new system alongside the IAPs, although some areas are more advanced than others. As well as capacity issues other factors which have interfered with INSIGHT's widespread usage have included the period of industrial action and teething difficulties with the system itself.

CS staff continue to report on difficulties with the system and the organisation has failed to produce any intelligence from INSIGHT as part of this evaluation process. Consequently, it is difficult for us to comment on the programme's ability to address GRFW's tracking shortcomings in the short term.

In spite of the lack of intelligence around sustainability, there remains widespread support for the principle of enhanced aftercare. This is based on a number of assumptions. Firstly the relatively high proportion of clients returning to the programme and secondly the view that at the point when they enter the workforce few of these clients are 'the finished article' and therefore may need support to progress once in employment.

Before discussing the issue of aftercare further we would stress that without any intelligence on the sustainability of programme outcomes the starting point for this debate remains anecdotal. As ever, the ideal is to have a clear idea of the problem we are trying to solve. As yet, this is unconfirmed.

As things currently stand provision of aftercare within the GRFW programme is ad hoc and piecemeal. There is no clearly defined responsibility for it within the programme model, nor any financial allocation for this aspect of service delivery. There are few examples of providers offering systematic post-programme support to clients although many stress that they encourage clients to keep in touch with them on leaving. In reality this is as much driven by providers' desire to ensure they manage to claim the full extent of their output bonuses as to a commitment to provide ongoing support. Similarly, Careers Scotland advisers will encourage clients to drop in if they need further assistance, but in reality the bond between GRFW participants and CS staff is rarely so strong that clients would see them as a first port of call.

It is also interesting to note that in focus group discussions clients make it clear that they would not automatically look for post-programme support. On the contrary, once in work it would appear that many clients wish to look forward rather than back, and will look for workplace sources if they hit a problem once in a job.

This highlights one of the most important issues about aftercare, which is how it is defined and how it is targeted. Any development of formal aftercare support within the programme model would have to address this, as well as being clear about how such support would relate to existing ongoing support models – albeit ad hoc. Finally, we would need to be clear about who is best placed to deliver such a service.

Two local aftercare pilots have been delivered with support from Scottish Enterprise's Innovation Fund. Although not yet complete, they do address some of these issues and offer some information as to the potential benefits and value for money of a structured approach to post programme support.

The Lanarkshire pilot supported an independent third party organisation to provide post-programme support for a number of GRFW clients who were identified as possibly benefiting from it. Participation was voluntary and support was provided in a number of ways, with an agreed Action Plan being produced by both parties. The review of the pilot provides very positive feedback on the approach, estimating that the support provided to clients represented a net annual saving to the LEC of between £315,000 and £472,500¹⁴.

These figures are based on the reduction of trainees returning to the programme multiplied by an assumed unit cost. However, it is difficult to attribute sustainability of outcomes purely to the input of aftercare support. Other programme changes – including improved front end assessment and higher quality of training delivery – are elements which are equally as likely to have this level of impact.

Conclusions and related recommendations

There is clearly a need to improve the tracking mechanisms currently in place for the GRFW programme. The current arrangements are inadequate and tell us little about the sustainability of the outcomes. As we have said, this is not a failing which is peculiar to GRFW, and it represents a wider problem for the NEET group that is picked up by the Workstream and addressed in the NEET strategy. It is not an impossible task, and developments in England offer pointers whilst our own experience of improving post-programme tracking on Training for Work shows that it can be tackled successfully.

However, as things stand there are questions about CS's ability to provide this role and specifically about the functionality of INSIGHT. Scottish Enterprise should address this as a matter of urgency, possibly within the context of ongoing discussions with the Scottish Executive about tracking mechanisms for the NEET group.

With regard to aftercare we are wary of recommending that there be a universal roll out of any structured post-programme support. There is probably a role for an aftercare element in the GRFW programme, but it must be based around evidence of need and would have to be carefully targeted and packaged. A blanket support offer would be unaffordable and be subject to high levels of deadweight. In the short term, if local LECs wish to restructure their existing funding models or to complement national funds through discretionary budgets in order to develop an aftercare element then this should not be discouraged.

¹⁴ A Review of SEL's Aftercare and Supported Level 2 Pilot: Insight Collective 2005

Recommendations linked to this issue include:

- SEN and Careers Scotland need to significantly improve the sustainability data available on post GRFW progressions
- SEN and LECs should only support the development of further aftercare support based on a clear understanding of the baseline position on sustainability, and what additionality increased investment is expected to achieve

Value for Money

The issue

The value for money provided by the Get Ready for Work programme is an important element of the evaluation, but assessing it provides a number of challenges. These are discussed below. However, despite these it is important that the evaluation comments on the return on Scottish Enterprise's investment at both the national and LEC levels. It is also useful to make some comparative analysis and this is also contained within this section.

Evaluation findings

Before discussing the financial data and the issues around vfm it is worth setting out some of the difficulties GRFW poses. These can be summarised as follows:

- Diversity of the client group – and lack of data around sustainability

Throughout this report we have stressed the diversity of the GRFW client group. We have seen that participants are a heterogeneous group which spans the entire NEET spectrum. Our views on this, and on future programme targeting, are set out earlier in this section, but our review shows that the GRFW throughput has ranged from clients with high support needs – for example young people with learning disabilities – to those who are almost job ready.

It has also shown that not all of the clients with higher support needs are on the Lifeskills strand. For example, in Fife young people with learning disabilities have been routinely referred onto the Core Skills strand.

As a consequence it is very difficult to arrive at any meaningful wider savings figures from clients being supported into employment. For example we may know that keeping a young person out of Polmont YOI saves the public £28,000 per annum, but we cannot prove that GRFW has prevented a specified number of clients with behavioural problems to stay out of that institution.

Ideally, improved assessment and tracking systems should be able to provide some data around this in future, but in the meantime our vfm analysis is somewhat two dimensional.

- Presence of additional resources

We have seen that in many cases the Enterprise Network resources are complemented by funds from other sources. This is particularly common in the public sector where European structural funds, ROA, the Scottish Further Education Funding Council, and other resources are commonly applied. In some cases the LEC contribution accounts for less than half of the overall expenditure. We see a similar pattern – although on a much more modest scale – within the voluntary sector where organisations creatively enhance their budgets from other sources.

These additional resources are rarely ringfenced and are often mixed into a single generic funding pot. Consequently, when we look at the programme outputs we are rarely comparing like with like. A positive outcome attained by a public sector organisation may have been secured with double the resources available to a private sector provider. However, one perspective on this is that the former scenario leverages additional investment in the target client group, which should in turn provide a higher quality service.

- Benchmarking the data

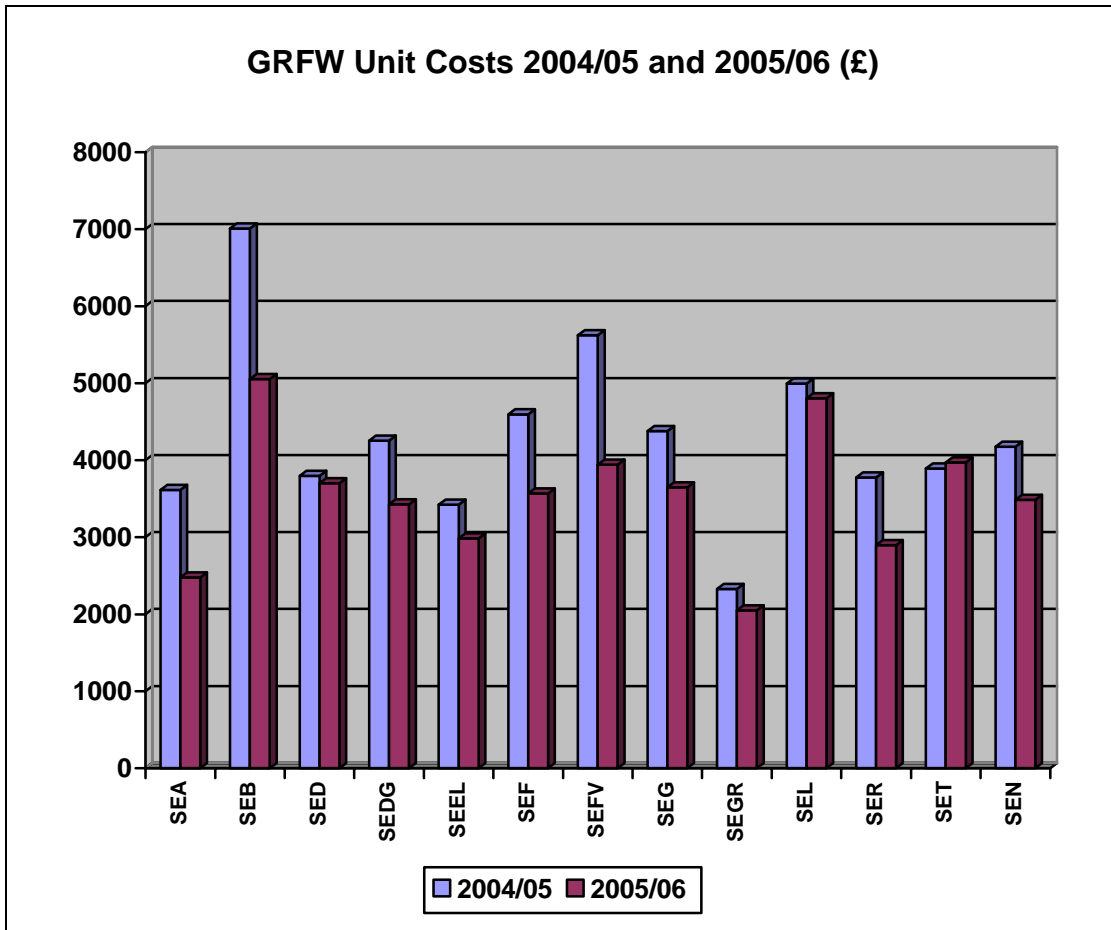
When assessing value for money it is always helpful to have a benchmark against which performance can be assessed. During the initial evaluation in 2003 it was difficult to find another programme for the purposes of comparison. This time we tried to address this in two ways. Firstly we have looked at the unit costs from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise GRFW programme. Our evaluation of this programme has been separate from but parallel to the SEN exercise, and is interesting as the two programmes have acquired their own distinctive features since 2003. Secondly, we set out to look at the unit costs of the E2E programme in England, which is aimed at a similar client group to GRFW. However, as these are not available in a comparative format this has proven to be unsuccessful.

- The Lifeskills dimension

Assessing value for money for the Lifeskills programme is particularly challenging as the programme is core funded but the stated outputs for these clients are the same as for the mainstream strands. As we have seen, where outputs have been achieved they have been in small numbers. As we discussed earlier a more appropriate target for these clients may be progression onto the mainstream programme strands.

In the meantime, we must assess value for money for Lifeskills clients on the basis of the available output data, although we would place a major health warning about interpreting these too simplistically.

Our analysis of costs per outcome at SEN and LEC level for 2004/05 are shown in the graph below. SEN have requested that these are presented net of trainee costs. This enables a better comparison with related network interventions which do not include this unavoidable GRFW cost element.



Source: Scottish Enterprise

The chart illustrates the patterns relating to value for money across the programme. The trend shows the cost per output decreasing, with all LECs reporting lower unit costs in 2005/06. This is reflected in the Network wide figure of £3,483 for 2005/06.

In the most recent year the range was from a cost per positive outcome of £2,047 in SE Grampian to one of £5,053 in SE Borders. This is perhaps surprising, given our earlier observations around provider choice. It is also useful to note that the areas with the higher unit costs are not those which top the performance tables in terms of outcomes.

Comparison with the HIE GRFW figures provides some indication of the respective unit costs for the two most recent years, as the table below shows:

Comparative GRFW unit costs: SEN and HIE 2004/05 and 2005/06 (excluding allowances)		
	2004/05	2005/06
SEN total GRFW costs (£)	11,666,425	12,570,729
SEN Total outcomes	2671	3609
SEN unit costs (£)	4,368	3,483
HIE total GRFW costs (£)	688,361	902,554
HIE total outcomes	192	252
HIE unit costs (£)	3,585	3,581

Sources: Scottish Enterprise and HIE

The trend between the last two years is of significant downward trend in unit costs in the SEN area – 17.9%. We would stress, however, that these figures only provide a snapshot and cannot be read as a trend on the basis of just two years.

Conclusions and related recommendations

Any conclusions around the programme's value for money must carry a health warning linked to the lack of any data on sustainability. Securing a positive outcome for £3,483 may be seen positively if it is sustained and leads to continued labour market engagement. However, we cannot say this, and the fact that almost one in five GRFW participants are re-starts suggests that there is an issue here. As we have already stated, it is important that this position is confirmed through improved tracking mechanisms.

What we can say is that GRFW unit costs are moving in the right direction, reflecting the harder negotiations driven by LECs combined with improved performance by providers. The Network drive for higher achievement rates will increase this improvement trend, although in some LEC areas there are clearly residual issues around weak provider performance and poorer return on Network investment. This issue will require close scrutiny over the coming year if targets are to be achieved.

The comparison with the HIE data is helpful, although clearly the numbers are on a much smaller scale. In reality however, more meaningful intelligence around return on investment is only likely to come from local partners being better placed to share data on levels of investment and outcomes, and this must be the way ahead for GRFW as it will be for other programmes. Defining a clear understanding of the Network contribution to reducing the NEET figures across Scotland is the emerging objective here, in line with the Executive's stated objectives.

The sole specific recommendation from this section is that:

- Scottish Enterprise define and agree with the Scottish Executive the specific future NEET related targets for the GRFW programme

Economic Impact

We close this section with some thoughts on the economic impact of the Get Ready for Work programme. In looking at this we would raise two questions:

1. Is the Get Ready for Work programme moving young people out of NEET?
2. If so, is it doing so in an efficient way?

In relation to the first question, our evaluation shows that the trend in positive outcomes is upward and that the programme now supports 44% of clients to move into employment, training or education, with a 2008 target of 50% set by Scottish Enterprise. In gross terms, this suggests that the programme is currently moving almost half of participants into education, employment or training. However, a number of factors make it difficult to assess the net impact of this. Key amongst these are the following issues:

- The diversity of the client group makes it very difficult to confidently attribute outcomes to the programme alone. From our work with these clients, we have seen many who have considerable barriers and amongst these it is fair to assume that if they progress then GRfW could rightly claim some of the credit. However, we have also seen young people who are on the programme simply because there is nothing else available, and because the local labour market opportunities are limited. Some of these young people are job ready, or very near it, at the point of programme entry, so attributing progress entirely to the programme would be wrong. Finally, for a number of these young people, the initial post school period on Get Ready for Work gives them a period for reflection and, frankly, some space to grow up. We have seen that more than half of all GRfW clients are sixteen year olds, who will mature at different rates. For a proportion, it is the time and space in a post-school environment that is key, and this might as well be college as the GRfW programme. So, again, in these cases, their progress may be less attributable to Get Ready for Work as it is to their own emotional and personal development
- Our work with the client group shows that many of them would struggle to definitively track the elements of their experience which had supported them to cross the line into a positive outcome. As we have suggested above, this is not a clear cut process, and when facilitating discussions with this group we see that few of them have the analytical skills at this age to determine what factors in their life have made a difference to their outcomes. Our process, which has relied upon focus group discussions, has not allowed us to get sufficiently close to individual trainees to explore their views on this issue. Although other methods - a large scale participant survey or a longitudinal comparison with a control group - may provide an opportunity to do this, we remain sceptical of the practicality of these approaches, given the issues around the client group set out above. We may have to accept that assessing the impact of this type of programme through traditional means - net additional employment or GVA/GDP - is not possible. We touched upon this in our metrics workshop with the steering group, and it may be something that the Network will wish to explore further, within the wider context of NEET

The second question is no easier to answer. We have shown that the levels of funding going into the different types of GRfW provision varies greatly, with local authorities and colleges likely to enhance their product with additional resources. We have also seen that in rural areas there are high additional costs - most notably around transport provision - which mean that Get Ready costs more to run in those areas. It is therefore not possible to obtain comparable costs across the country which are meaningful, although we have set out the basic unit costs in the previous section.

The other issue here is the availability of alternative provision, which comes back to the question of entitlement and the local post-school offer. At a local level, determining whether this programme is efficient relies on a comparative study of costs and outcomes which is beyond the scope of this work. However, it is an issue of growing importance, which relates to some of the points emerging in the NEET strategy about having an improved understanding of what is available locally. We see this as an issue which could be picked up by the local partnerships as they take forward the NEET agenda at the local level.

SECTION 6 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Process

The GRFW evaluation process was conducted in the autumn and winter of 2005/6; its conclusions are based on performance data on the first four years of GRFW operation. The methodology applied was designed to include the views of a wide range of stakeholders key to GRFW's effectiveness, and sought to complement data analysis with more qualitative inputs.

For a range of reasons we have found the best way to manage much of our process has been to separate out consideration of the Lifeskills strand of the programme from the other 3 "mainstream" strands. This has led us to consider the appropriate relationship between them in future programme operation.

Context

The context within which GRFW has, and will continue to operate, is changing rapidly. It is not sensible to review programme performance in isolation from this wider picture, and the evaluation process has been used to position the intervention in anticipation of forthcoming changes. The NEET issue, the Scottish Employability Framework, and related changes in pre-16 support are of key relevance. We have also reflected at points on the English E2E model, which has similarities to GRFW.

Performance and costs

Section 3 and appendix 1 analyse the range of statistical data available on programme performance.

In terms of inputs this indicates significant growth in the programme over the 4 years of operation, with just over 8,400 recorded starts in 2005/6. This represents an increase of 32% since the initial year of operation. Just over 1,400 (17%) of these starts, however, were young people returning to GRFW after previous involvement.

The Lifeskills strand accounted for just under 10% of all starts, but it has been the fastest growing part of the programme in recent years.

Positive outcomes were 41.3% in 2005/6 – up from 24.2% in the initial year of operation. These have risen consistently year on year. As anticipated, Lifeskills outcomes have always been lower, and in 2005/6 were 15.2% and 35.4% when progressions to other GRFW strands are included.

In terms of the type of positive outcomes, progression to jobs is the most popular, and this popularity has grown in recent years. Participants on the programme for longer periods of time have, on average, a higher incidence of positive progression.

There are very significant variations between LEC areas in terms of performance. These are detailed in the report appendices.

GRFW costs over the 4 years of operation have totalled £77.7 million, and in 2005/6 were £22.17 million. Total costs have increased by 44.4% since 2002/3. In 2005/6, 85% of total costs were spent on the mainstream strands, and 15% on Lifeskills.

In 2005/6 costs per positive outcome on the mainstream strands of GRFW were £3,483, and for Lifeskills £9,829 (when progressions to other strands are included).

Targeting, assessment and access

GRFW has engaged a wide and diverse group of young people under the banner of "additional support needs". Who the programme is targeted at has been the subject of significant regional and agency variation. At the heart of this is whether GRFW is a supply or demand led programme, and how easily the tensions between these perspectives can be reconciled in practice. Increasing network outcome targets have sharpened the focus of this debate. In this context there is a need for greater precision on what GRFW should, and should not, be expected to do. Further clarifying the distinction between Lifeskills and the other 3 strands of GRFW will help in this regard.

Assessment and access arrangements have generally improved as the programme has settled down. Understanding of the respective roles of Careers Scotland and training provider staff has improved, as has the need to recognise the connection between initial CS assessment and ongoing assessment processes once the trainee has started with the provider. Action Plans have improved, they are now commonly completed at the start of the training period, but they are limited in scope. There may be options in future to integrate the Action Planning and Individual Training Plan documentation.

The GRFW model and delivery

The basic tenets of the GRFW model have been confirmed in practice, and were widely viewed as an improvement on previous programmes. It was generally seen as a more flexible and client focused programme – but "creeping rigidity" in practice was also apparent. Overall consultees stressed the adage "if it ain't broke" in discussions on further redesign. There was a sense that GRFW had now bedded down and we should let partners continue with ongoing improvements. We have taken this on board in our recommendations, and sought to distinguish between structural flaws and operational weaknesses.

On balance, we believe the strands should be rationalised, and that there should in future be a single "mainstream" strand and Lifeskills. The previous four-strand approach has served its purpose in terms of distinguishing client needs, but now adds limited ongoing value. In practice it can be confusing and can increase rigidity - it is now time to have faith in the new culture of working 4 years of GRFW operation has fostered.

GRFW is not, and should not be, a standard programme – flexibility and innovation have been facilitated by allowing local provision space to operate. But it makes defining what happens in the programme at a national level harder. In section 5, we suggest generic good practice which should continue to roll out across the network.

Lifeskills

Lifeskills has been the most challenging and innovative strand of the programme. It was intended, and is, distinctive. Its fit within the enterprise network at times seems uncomfortable. We conclude that in future it should remain within the GRFW umbrella but that its difference should be recognised more in practice. It should be separately marketed, and have much more clearly articulated separate performance indicators. In particular, these should accept progression to a mainstream GRFW option as a legitimate positive outcome – something envisaged at the outset of GRFW but “lost” to a degree in programme operation and management.

Full time participation on Lifeskills is the most common option, and participation periods do not vary significantly from the rest of the programme. But positive outcomes rates remain a third of the other strands. This is a cause for concern as Lifeskills is still meant to be an employment focused programme. This pattern of engagement suggests that it may in fact take on characteristics of “condition management”. In future, we believe Lifeskills should become a shorter term, part time and ad hoc intervention.

Promotion and image

GRFW has had a low profile as an enterprise network product. This has been linked to promotional complexities connected to programme objectives and targeting. We believe it is now necessary to more positively promote the programme. This process should be led at the local level, and build on identified good practice detailed in the report.

Careers Scotland input

Careers Scotland input to GRFW has continued to improve in most areas, after a difficult start. In both the initial assessment and review roles a number of initial areas of confusion have been clarified. But there are still significant regional variations in delivery. Where the process works well, added value is apparent in: assessment; wider linkages; independent review; local labour market expertise; and post programme support.

Relationships are generally positive, but in a few areas some issues remain which need to be worked through and resolved. A more fundamental point is whether there is a growing gap in Careers Scotland and LEC views on programme objectives - based on the former having a stronger connection to the supply side motivations in programme operation. The implications of two issues need to be tracked to avoid this potential gap widening (a) the raising of the network positive outcome targets, and (b) the forthcoming relocation of Careers Scotland outwith the enterprise network umbrella.

Careers Scotland deliver the Personal Advisory Service through a mixture of dedicated and generic models. There are a number of geographical and historical reasons for this. Each approach has advantages and drawbacks, and we do not feel that the evaluation should conclude definitively in favour of one or the other. Rather we outline a specification of good practice that either approach should aspire to.

Impact measurement

A review of the performance indicators recorded for GRFW reveals two major and related weaknesses: the lack of ongoing tracking data on participant progress on programme completion; and the lack of any information on the types of jobs young people progress to. These gaps have wide reaching implications, and significantly limit the ability to evaluate the full programme impact. They should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The importance of soft indicators of distance travelled has been raised repeatedly in our evaluation process. They are without doubt of importance to understanding the full impact of the programme, but the development of robust systems to evidence these remain limited. We believe the reasons for this may stem from a lack of clarity on the purpose of these indicators. A clear line now needs to be drawn in this debate – in future we think it is important to clarify and communicate that soft indicators contribute to programme improvement by providing vital ongoing intelligence, but they do not in themselves justify ongoing programme operation.

Progression linkages to Skillseekers and MAs

Progression rates from GRFW to Skillseekers or MAs were 16.3% in 2005/6 - this figure has fallen over the years of GRFW operation. It is a cause of some concern. A number of reasons are put forward to explain this which we have considered in some detail – in our opinion these vary in legitimacy. In future we believe this performance level must rise, and that SEN should set targets in this respect and monitor progress. This will require changes in both programmes and improved intra LEC working. It also challenges the “deficit mindset” we detect in aspects of GRFW delivery, which focuses on what participants “cannot” as opposed to “can” do.

Quality and resources

From our consultations there is a general sense that the quality of GRFW has improved significantly over the 4 years of programme operation. A number of weaker training providers have been removed from the programme, and Careers Scotland’s input has generally improved. Increasing positive outcome rates provide further evidence of progress.

A number of other positive quality related developments are encouraging, including the growing input of Post School Psychological Services training inputs, joint provider/CS training, and the sharing of training materials in some areas. There is also a growing understanding of the characteristics of a “good” trainer. But again these are commonly framed in terms of attributes that are not linked to evidenced qualifications.

Evidencing quality within GRFW is difficult. Whilst there is no enthusiasm for GRFW moving towards a regimented assessment process - the strengths of the programme would be undermined as a result - some level of partner system for introducing more formalised quality standards would be of value.

Participant offer

The level of participant allowances has been frequently raised in our consultations, with a common view it is too low, and has not risen in line with inflation. Not surprisingly this has been a particularly strong message

from the participant focus groups. It is an issue where we believe there is a danger of GRFW losing focus and contact with wider debates on remuneration levels on post school options. It also reflects prevailing views on why some young people are and should be involved in GRFW. The main gain cannot be on the rewards on the programme, but in the rewards beyond. We note that in the English E2E programme allowances have now been replaced by means tested EMAs.

Aftercare

Aftercare provision has been a contentious issue for some stakeholders in GRFW, with a view that its importance is not recognised in the funding model. Respective responsibilities are considered unclear.

On examination we believe this issue is considerably more complex. The definition of an aftercare model, and how we avoid significant “deadweight” in support, has to be factored. In addition, the absence of good sustainability data makes it difficult to fully understand the problem a dedicated aftercare service will necessarily resolve. Local pilot experiences require to be further examined, but at this stage we do not conclude that the case has been made to specify and introduce a network wide aftercare service.

Value for Money

Our process has sought to consider value for money by detailing some key unit cost outcome figures. But this is limited, and we have sought to augment this with some wider comparisons. These are restricted by a number of key factors: the sheer diversity of the client group; the fact significant non LEC resources enhance LEC support; the lack of data on the sustainability of outcomes; and the shortage of any directly comparable interventions. With these limitations we suggest some indicators that may be of some interest at the end of section 5 – the comparative costs of GRFW in the SEN and HIE areas, and the costs comparisons between recent years of programme operation.

Recommendations

Our recommendations primarily suggest action for the enterprise network, but given the importance we attach to the programme’s fit within the wider operating context, we have also suggested some areas where other agencies need to contribute – most fundamentally in terms of Scottish Executive guidance on the future of the youth guarantee.

This is an extensive package of action and it is essential that SEN use the year 2006/7 to manage the changes. A related action plan to achieve this should be developed by the Skills and Learning Team. This should recognise this will be a sensitive process demanding clarity and good communication.

Recommendations are grouped into the following categories:

- Targeting and programme objectives
- Programme design, operation and delivery
- Partnership and strategic linkages
- Recording programme impact
- Programme progression
- Quality

- Funding and resources
- Promotion

Targeting and programme objectives

1. Scottish Enterprise should seek clarification as to whether the implications of the proposed revised targeting approach aligns with future Scottish Executive decisions on the “youth guarantee”, and receives clear and unambiguous advice in this regard
2. Scottish Enterprise should restate the objectives of GRFW in terms of recruitment and outcomes, agree these at a national level with Careers Scotland and implement a local programme of dissemination events involving LEC, Careers, and training provider staff
3. Scottish Enterprise should ensure mainstream GRFW is in future targeted at young people assessed as likely to progress to positive outcomes within the specified periods they are expected to be on the programme

Programme design, operation and delivery

4. Scottish Enterprise should limit structural change to GRFW, and rather build on and amend the current model
5. Scottish Enterprise should phase out the mainstream GRFW strands and introduce a single strand model. An ongoing customised approach should in future be ensured through good review processes, documentation review, and general contract management
6. Scottish Enterprise should continue to provide information and advice on good practice approaches, and details of practices which should be phased out
7. Scottish Enterprise should retain Lifeskills provision within the GRFW programme on the basis of the following conditions/alterations:
 - the strand should be separately reported on and promoted, but retain a tangible connection to some form of evidenced labour market progression
 - the reduction and over time elimination of full time LS option – in future, participation should be either ad hoc or part time, where any full time engagement is considered this should only be for very short periods of time
 - a clear restatement that progression to “mainstream” GRFW provision is a legitimate and likely positive outcome for many participants
 - the year commencing April 2006 is used as a transition year to the revised arrangements
8. Scottish Enterprise and Careers Scotland should develop a template for joint LEC/CS training sessions on the redefined role of LS – addressing in particular the tensions between a client led and outcome focused perspective, and the need to identify alternative local interventions for young people not ready or suitable for GRFW

9. Careers Scotland should continue to monitor the dedicated and generic delivery options to PAS delivery ensuring maximum practical delivery of the good practice features identified
10. Scottish Enterprise should consider in detail the option to integrate the Action Plan and Individual Training Plan documentation
11. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should only support the development of further aftercare support based on a clear understanding of the baseline position on sustainability, and what additionality increased investment is expected to achieve

Partnership and strategic linkages

12. Scottish Enterprise should, on the basis of this report, detail and define the anticipated future contribution of GRFW to the Scottish NEET strategy
13. Scottish Enterprise should track national developments of the information sharing demands of the new ASL Act, and inform LECs of the new developments. LECs and CS should develop links between GRFW and local ASL related developments –possibly via the local GRFW Development Forums
14. Scottish Enterprise should establish a national template of the future expectations from Careers Scotland inputs, and support the development of detailed LEC service level agreements based on this. CS's national guidelines and revised statement of services should be used as a starting point for this process
15. Scottish Enterprise should lead early developmental work to consider the implications for the GRFW programme of the relocation of Careers Scotland outwith the enterprise network
16. Scottish Enterprise and Careers Scotland should conduct a "health audit" of LEC level GRFW working relationships, and from this act in those areas where ongoing issues of tension remain

Recording programme impact

17. Scottish Enterprise should separately record outcomes for Lifeskills and reinforce that formally recognise progression to the mainstream programme is the main intended progression route
18. Careers Scotland should report on progress on the continued rollout of the CAS system within GRFW operation, and inform local LEC partners on the potential implications for GRFW of the new proactive case management approach
19. Scottish Enterprise should develop a specification for further information requirements in terms of the longer term labour market progress of former GRFW participants, including details on the types of jobs the young people enter
20. Careers Scotland should be invited to develop and introduce systems linked to Insight to provide the identified additional MIS on national and LEC level

21. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should clarify the role of soft indicators of distance traveled in the programme – indicating that these are linked to the continuous improvement of delivery as opposed to the justification for funding
22. Scottish Enterprise should continue to set outcome targets, and follow through all the implications flowing from these. This must link to the different measurement indicators applied to the Lifeskills strand

Programme progression

23. Scottish Enterprise should openly acknowledge the role of GRFW as a feeder programme into Skillseekers and promote this through:
 - Setting a rising annual target for Skillseeker progressions within the programme
 - Promoting GRFW alongside Skillseekers as a positive business focused vehicle designed to meet employer needs
 - Ensuring that LEC managers and training providers involved in Skillseekers have a positive and well developed understanding of GRFW
 - Ensuring that GRFW providers understand the Skillseekers programme and the opportunities it offers
 - Supporting the development of the sector-focused bridging pilots connecting the two programmes
 - Ensuring that the data fully reflects all of those GRFW graduates who become Skillseekers
 - Linking action from this report with corresponding action from the forthcoming SEN evaluation of Skillseekers and MAS
24. Careers Scotland should ensure that all of its advisers involved in GRFW fully understand the Skillseeker programme and the opportunities it offers.
25. Scottish Enterprise should continue to track the lessons of the pre Skillseekers sectoral pilots, and spread good practice from these across the network

Quality

26. SEN should establish a quality development group which assumes responsibility for the:
 - Development of a competence framework for staff involved in the delivery of GRFW
 - Design an HR development process which complements this framework and offers a systemic support programme for front line staff
 - Creation of an on line resource bank of materials for use by GRFW staff
27. Scottish Enterprise should investigate the establishment of a specific inspection regime for the programme which might involve either SQMS personnel or HMIs.
28. Scottish Enterprise should also have a closer look at the YouthReach programme in Ireland

29. Scottish Enterprise should implement a training programme for LEC contract management staff on challenges of core funding – and the opportunity to combine this with tight management of unit cost calculations

Funding and resources

30. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should continue to encourage wider funding inputs to the resourcing of GRFW
31. Scottish Enterprise should contribute to and be informed by the wider Scottish Executive led debate on financial rewards for young people in post school progression

Promotion

32. Scottish Enterprise should encourage an increased promotional campaign for GRFW based on the use of positive messages on participant potential. This should be locally based on existing good practice
33. Scottish Enterprise should establish support systems to collate and share ongoing good practice in promotional activities across the network
34. Scottish Enterprise should separately promote Lifeskills on a lower key basis, with activities primarily based on niche marketing to likely referral sources

APPENDIX 1 – LEC COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

These tables in this appendix relate to Section 3 of the main report which discusses the relative performance of the LECs over the 4 years of operation of the GRFW programme.

Table A1: Total programme starts, 2002/03 – 2005/06 – number and % total SE starts

	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		Total	
	starts	%	starts	%	starts	%	starts	%	starts	%
SEA	757	11.9	630	9.1	807	10.1	883	10.5	3077	10.4
SEB	47	0.7	99	1.4	100	1.3	106	1.3	352	1.2
SED	354	5.6	456	6.6	425	5.3	438	5.2	1673	5.6
SEDG	183	2.9	151	2.2	177	2.2	214	2.5	725	2.4
SEEL	615	9.7	571	8.3	602	7.6	656	7.8	2444	8.2
SEF	515	8.1	539	7.8	733	9.2	667	7.9	2454	8.3
SEFV	392	6.2	364	5.3	484	6.1	628	7.5	1868	6.3
SEGL	1308	20.5	1532	22.2	1592	20.0	1666	19.8	6098	20.6
SEGR	77	1.2	244	3.5	321	4.0	362	4.3	1004	3.4
SEL	1021	16.0	1169	16.9	1388	17.5	1325	15.7	4903	16.5
SER	649	10.2	582	8.4	753	9.5	799	9.5	2783	9.4
SET	447	7.0	579	8.4	569	7.2	681	8.1	2276	7.7
SE Total	6365		6916		7951		8425		29657	

Source: SE CTS

Table A2a: Total starts - mainstream GRFW, by LEC - number and % of total SE mainstream GRFW starts

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	Number	%	number	%
SEA	703	11.8	566	9.0	724	10.1	797	10.5
SEB	30	0.5	80	1.3	83	1.2	83	1.1
SED	270	4.5	331	5.3	330	4.6	365	4.8
SEDG	160	2.7	129	2.1	110	1.5	157	2.1
SEEL	601	10.1	552	8.8	582	8.1	637	8.4
SEF	479	8.1	500	8.0	664	9.2	611	8.0
SEFV	369	6.2	338	5.4	448	6.2	591	7.8
SEGL	1284	21.6	1465	23.4	1518	21.1	1598	21.0
SEGR	75	1.3	238	3.8	315	4.4	341	4.5
SEL	916	15.4	955	15.3	1224	17.0	1147	15.1
SER	629	10.6	550	8.8	706	9.8	747	9.8
SET	426	7.2	554	8.9	497	6.9	528	6.9
Total	5942		6258		7201		7602	

Source: SE CTS

Table A2b: Total starts - Lifeskills, by LE - number and % of total SE Lifeskills starts

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	54	12.8	64	9.7	83	11.1	86	10.4
SEB	17	4.0	19	2.9	17	2.3	23	2.8
SED	84	19.9	125	19.0	95	12.7	73	8.9
SEDG	23	5.4	22	3.3	67	8.9	57	6.9
SEEL	14	3.3	19	2.9	20	2.7	19	2.3
SEF	36	8.5	39	5.9	69	9.2	56	6.8
SEFV	23	5.4	26	4.0	36	4.8	37	4.5
SEGL	24	5.7	67	10.2	74	9.9	68	8.3
SEGR	2	0.5	6	0.9	6	0.8	21	2.6
SEL	105	24.8	214	32.5	164	21.9	178	21.6
SER	20	4.7	32	4.9	47	6.3	52	6.3
SET	21	5.0	25	3.8	72	9.6	153	18.6
Total	423		658		750		823	

Source: SE CTS

Table A3: Lifeskills share of LEC total programme, % of total LEC starts

	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/06
	% LS	% LS	% LS	% LS
SEA	7.1	10.2	10.3	9.7
SEB	36.2	19.2	17.0	21.7
SED	23.7	27.4	22.4	16.7
SEDG	12.6	14.6	37.9	26.6
SEEL	2.3	3.3	3.3	2.9
SEF	7.0	7.2	9.4	8.4
SEFV	5.9	7.1	7.4	5.9
SEGL	1.8	4.4	4.6	4.1
SEGR	2.6	2.5	1.9	5.8
SEL	10.3	18.3	11.8	13.4
SER	3.1	5.5	6.2	6.5
SET	4.7	4.3	12.7	22.5
Total	6.6	9.5	9.4	9.8

Source: SE CTS

Table A4a: LEC proportion of mainstream GRFW starts who are returners

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	184	26.2	134	23.7	151	20.9	170	21.3
SEB	4	13.3	7	8.8	19	22.9	13	15.7
SED	78	28.9	66	19.9	53	16.1	68	18.6
SEDG	34	21.3	22	17.1	15	13.6	20	12.7
SEEL	62	10.3	56	10.1	47	8.1	61	9.6
SEF	87	18.2	86	17.2	131	19.7	102	16.7
SEFV	90	24.4	79	23.4	100	22.3	80	13.5
SEGL	250	19.5	237	16.2	244	16.1	235	14.7
SEGR	8	10.7	15	6.3	41	13.0	51	15.0
SEL	194	21.2	207	21.7	264	21.6	214	18.7
SER	132	21.0	96	17.5	128	18.1	138	18.5
SET	113	26.5	97	17.5	90	18.1	90	17.0
Total	1236	20.8	1102	17.6	1283	17.8	1242	16.3

Source: SE CTS

Table A4b: LEC proportion of Lifeskills starts who are returners

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	14	25.9	18	28.1	26	31.3	26	30.2
SEB	0	0.0	2	10.5	3	17.6	5	21.7
SED	23	27.4	27	21.6	22	23.2	18	24.7
SEDG	5	21.7	6	27.3	26	38.8	9	15.8
SEEL	1	7.1	2	10.5	2	10.0	0	0.0
SEF	6	16.7	8	20.5	18	26.1	12	21.4
SEFV	13	56.5	8	30.8	9	25.0	7	18.9
SEGL	3	12.5	11	16.4	19	25.7	22	32.4
SEGR	1	50.0	3	50.0	4	66.7	5	23.8
SEL	28	26.7	36	16.8	39	23.8	44	24.7
SER	5	25.0	2	6.3	15	31.9	12	23.1
SET	1	4.8	5	20.0	15	20.8	27	17.6
Total	100	23.6	128	19.5	198	26.4	187	22.7

Source: SE CTS

Table A5: LEC total programme outcomes, number and % of leavers

	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
SEA	126	18.2	195	24.1	227	28.4	387	40.6
SEB	9	26.5	25	26.9	30	25.0	40	37.0
SED	63	19.3	120	25.1	186	38.1	206	46.2
SEDG	24	14.4	63	31.0	61	35.9	93	43.5
SEEL	231	38.5	196	35.4	316	50.6	368	55.0
SEF	112	25.2	148	25.8	202	27.9	263	34.3
SEFV	83	20.3	118	28.2	133	28.7	235	39.6
SEGL	258	19.7	352	21.7	509	30.9	601	35.9
SEGR	44	23.4	40	24.2	160	50.3	215	67.0
SEL	265	26.8	376	31.1	503	34.7	531	36.1
SER	199	29.1	263	31.7	264	37.2	419	49.3
SET	108	23.7	208	34.6	192	31.5	251	38.0
SE Total	1522	24.2	2104	27.8	2783	34.3	3609	41.3

Table A6a: mainstream GRFW programme leavers

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	656	10.8	743	10.8	706	9.7	850	10.9
SEB	28	0.5	72	1.0	101	1.4	87	1.1
SED	271	4.5	373	5.4	362	5.0	374	4.8
SEDG	156	2.6	177	2.6	112	1.5	157	2.0
SEEL	597	9.8	544	7.9	601	8.3	641	8.2
SEF	440	7.2	506	7.4	662	9.1	699	8.9
SEFV	388	6.4	391	5.7	426	5.9	527	6.7
SEGL	1302	21.4	1537	22.4	1556	21.4	1590	20.3
SEGR	185	3.0	161	2.3	312	4.3	303	3.9
SEL	946	15.5	998	14.5	1245	17.1	1244	15.9
SER	669	11.0	797	11.6	660	9.1	793	10.1
SET	447	7.3	574	8.4	539	7.4	568	7.3
Total	6085		6873		7282		7833	

Source: SE CTS

Table A6b: Lifeskills programme leavers

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	35	16.4	66	10.0	94	11.2	103	11.5
SEB	6	2.8	21	3.2	19	2.3	21	2.3
SED	55	25.8	106	16.1	126	15.0	72	8.0
SEDG	11	5.2	26	4.0	58	6.9	57	6.4
SEEL	3	1.4	9	1.4	23	2.7	28	3.1
SEF	5	2.3	68	10.3	63	7.5	68	7.6
SEFV	20	9.4	28	4.3	38	4.5	66	7.4
SEGL	10	4.7	86	13.4	92	10.9	85	9.5
SEGR	3	1.4	4	0.6	6	0.7	18	2.0
SEL	41	19.2	211	32.1	203	24.1	228	25.5
SER	16	7.5	32	4.9	49	5.8	57	6.4
SET	8	3.8	28	4.3	70	8.3	92	10.3
Total	213		685		841		895	

Source: SE CTS

Table A7a: Positive outcomes - mainstream GRFW – number and % of leavers

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	126	19.2	185	24.9	221	31.3	361	42.5
SEB	9	32.1	25	34.7	28	27.7	32	36.8
SED	63	23.2	116	31.1	165	45.6	197	52.7
SEDG	24	15.4	49	27.7	46	41.1	82	52.2
SEEL	231	38.7	195	35.8	310	51.6	363	56.6
SEF	112	25.5	145	28.7	199	30.1	253	36.2
SEFV	82	21.1	114	29.2	130	30.5	229	43.5
SEGL	258	19.8	350	22.8	506	32.5	599	37.7
SEGR	44	23.8	40	24.8	160	51.3	213	70.3
SEL	264	27.9	334	33.5	457	36.7	491	39.5
SER	199	29.7	263	33.0	263	39.8	415	52.3
SET	108	24.2	207	36.1	186	34.5	238	41.9
Total	1520	25.0	2023	29.4	2671	36.7	3473	44.3

Source: SE CTS

Table A7b: Positive outcomes - Lifeskills – number and % of leavers

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	0	0.0	10	15.2	6	6.4	26	25.2
SEB	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.5	8	38.1
SED	0	0.0	4	3.8	21	16.7	9	12.5
SEDG	0	0.0	14	53.8	15	25.9	11	19.3
SEEL	0	0.0	1	11.1	6	26.1	5	17.9
SEF	0	0.0	3	4.4	3	4.8	10	14.7
SEFV	1	5.0	4	14.3	3	7.9	6	9.1
SEGL	0	0.0	2	2.3	3	3.3	2	2.4
SEGR	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	11.1
SEL	1	2.4	42	19.9	46	22.7	40	17.5
SER	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.0	4	7.0
SET	0	0.0	1	3.6	6	8.6	13	14.1
Total	2	0.9	81	12.3	112	13.3	136	15.2

Source: SE CTS

Table A8: Progression from Lifeskills to mainstream GRFW

	SEA	SEB	SED	SEDG	SEEL	SEF	SEFV	SEGL	SEGR	SEL	SER	SET
2003/04	2	2	5	0	0	1	3	5	0	37	0	0
2004/05	10	2	38	5	6	7	5	17	0	48	2	17
2005/06	8	0	19	4	1	10	6	9	1	50	4	69
Total	20	4	62	9	7	18	14	31	1	135	6	86

Source: SE CTS

Table A9a: FE outcomes - mainstream GRFW – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	38	30.2	34	18.4	37	16.7	84	23.3
SEB	1	11.1	0	0.0	4	14.3	9	28.1
SED	3	4.8	22	19.0	19	11.5	36	18.3
SEDG	8	33.3	10	20.4	11	23.9	19	23.2
SEEL	9	3.9	17	8.7	20	6.5	32	8.8
SEF	19	17.0	31	21.4	41	20.6	49	19.4
SEFV	22	26.8	18	15.8	23	17.7	21	9.2
SEGL	58	22.5	48	13.7	84	16.6	78	13.0
SEGR	5	11.4	5	12.5	13	8.1	23	10.8
SEL	33	12.5	27	8.1	30	6.6	53	10.8
SER	3	1.5	32	12.2	27	10.3	38	9.2
SET	9	8.3	29	14.0	33	17.7	46	19.3
Total FE	208	13.7	273	13.5	342	12.8	488	14.1

Table A9b: FE outcomes – Lifeskills – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	0	0.0	3	30.0	2	33.3	12	46.2
SEB	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	12.5
SED	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	23.8	3	33.3
SEDG	0	0.0	4	28.6	5	33.3	4	36.4
SEEL	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	2	40.0
SEF	0	0.0	1	33.3	1	33.3	6	60.0
SEFV	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0
SEGL	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	2	100.0
SEGR	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SEL	0	0.0	4	9.5	3	6.5	14	35.0
SER	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
SET	0	0.0	1	100.0	4	66.7	4	30.8
Total FE	1	50.0	14	17.3	23	20.5	49	36.0

Source: SE CTS

Table A10a: Jobs outcomes - mainstream GRFW – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	65	51.6	117	63.2	122	55.2	186	51.5
SEB	8	88.9	21	84.0	16	57.1	19	59.4
SED	45	71.4	80	69.0	127	77.0	141	71.6
SEDG	12	50.0	31	63.3	25	54.3	42	51.2
SEEL	155	67.1	134	68.7	237	76.5	276	76.0
SEF	66	58.9	94	64.8	129	64.8	170	67.2
SEFV	49	59.8	78	68.4	87	66.9	166	72.5
SEGL	182	70.5	257	73.4	376	74.3	429	71.6
SEGR	30	68.2	32	80.0	113	70.6	131	61.5
SEL	157	59.5	251	75.1	369	80.7	384	78.2
SER	170	85.4	198	75.3	192	73.0	310	74.7
SET	82	75.9	140	67.6	132	71.0	146	61.3
Total Jobs	1021	67.2	1433	70.8	1925	72.1	2400	69.1

Source: SE CTS

Table A10b: Jobs outcomes – Lifeskills – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	0	0.0	6	60.0	3	50.0	12	46.2
SEB	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	7	87.5
SED	0	0.0	4	100.0	15	71.4	5	55.6
SEDG	0	0.0	10	71.4	8	53.3	7	63.6
SEEL	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	100.0	1	20.0
SEF	0	0.0	2	66.7	2	66.7	4	40.0
SEFV	0	0.0	4	100.0	2	66.7	6	100.0
SEGL	0	0.0	2	100.0	2	66.7	0	0.0
SEGR	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
SEL	1	100.0	34	81.0	39	84.8	26	65.0
SER	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	2	50.0
SET	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7	8	61.5
Total Jobs	1	50.0	62	76.5	80	71.4	80	58.8

Source: SE CTS

Table A11a: Skillseekers outcomes - mainstream GRFW – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	23	18.3	34	18.4	62	28.1	91	25.2
SEB	0	0.0	4	16.0	8	28.6	4	12.5
SED	15	23.8	14	12.1	19	11.5	20	10.2
SEDG	4	16.7	8	16.3	10	21.7	21	25.6
SEEL	67	29.0	44	22.6	53	17.1	55	15.2
SEF	27	24.1	20	13.8	29	14.6	34	13.4
SEFV	11	13.4	18	15.8	20	15.4	42	18.3
SEGL	18	7.0	45	12.9	46	9.1	92	15.4
SEGR	9	20.5	3	7.5	34	21.3	59	27.7
SEL	74	28.0	56	16.8	58	12.7	54	11.0
SER	26	13.1	33	12.5	44	16.7	67	16.1
SET	17	15.7	38	18.4	21	11.3	46	19.3
Total SS	291	19.1	317	15.7	404	15.1	585	16.8

Source: SE CTS

Table A11b: Skillseekers outcomes – Lifeskills – number and % of total LEC outcomes

	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005		2005/06	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
SEA	0	0.0	1	10.0	1	16.7	2	7.7
SEB	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SED	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.8	1	11.1
SEDG	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	13.3	0	0.0
SEEL	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	40.0
SEF	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SEFV	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SEGL	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SEGR	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
SEL	0	0.0	4	9.5	4	8.7	0	0.0
SER	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
SET	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7	1	7.7
Total SS	0	0.0	5	6.2	9	8.0	7	5.1

Source: SE CTS

APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPANT VIEWS

Background

90 young people were interviewed in focus groups during visits to training providers. Around 75% of these participants were male and 25% female, all of whom were GRFW trainees at the time of the interviews, and had been participating in the programme for a range of time periods. Clients from both mainstream GRFW and Lifeskills strands were represented in these interviews.

Most clients had been referred to the programme through Careers Scotland, and around a third had come through other routes, for example through the training providers own marketing efforts, word of mouth referral, friends or family etc.

Generally, overall feedback from the young people spoken to during the course of the consultations was positive, with most citing recognised benefits from participation.

A number of key points emerged from the focus group discussions which are summarised below:

- The key motivation that most young people interviewed gave for participating in GRFW, was to get a job at the end. Money was also mentioned as a driver, but the main long term goal tended to be employment
- Most young people generally enjoyed the programme, particularly where there were more practical/inventive elements. The “paperwork” side was less popular, and sometimes referred to as a bit boring
- Participants responded well to the more adult environment and liked the fact that they “didn’t get treated like kids”. Related to this though, some clients found the “strictness” a bit difficult to adjust to, but most of these recognised that this would prepare them for working in a proper job
- The element of the programme that trainees generally liked best was undoubtedly the placement. There were however some mixed views around the choices available, with a number of young people suggesting that placement options were limited. More placements linked to a range of trades that young people might want to enter was commonly felt to be an area of the programme worth improving on
- In terms of how GRFW had benefited young people, a range of examples were given, from confidence building/self esteem, to greater skills, knowledge and experience which would help in getting a job at the end of the programme
- Most young people were quite confident that they would get a job after GRFW or progress to some sort of positive outcome, although a number were not optimistic about the availability of employment in their local areas

- Some clients coming towards the end of their time on the programme seemed confident that they would get an extension if nothing had turned up

APPENDIX 3 – LESSONS FROM THE E2E PROGRAMME

Introduction

As part of the evaluation the consultancy team has examined the E2E programme in England which provides a useful comparative model with Get Ready for Work. Although not a comparative study, we have made various references to E2E within the main report, and have recommended that the Enterprise Networks invest time developing closer links with colleagues in England in order to share joint experience.

In this appendix we set out a short summary of the E2E programme and, where appropriate, draw out some comparisons with Get Ready for Work. The content of this paper draws on several sources including:

- Discussion with DfES
- The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) survey of E2E of 2004
- The national evaluation of E2E published in September 2004

Background

Following the introduction of Modern Apprenticeships at NVQ levels 2 and 3, the DfES continued to fund post-16 programmes for young people who were not yet ready to undertake learning at that level. A number of alternative routes were available to this group, but the Modern Apprenticeships Advisory Committee (MAAC) advised the government to phase these out due to concerns around quality and coherence. The government followed the committee's recommendation to establish a new unified programme pre level 2, and the result was the E2E programme, launched in September 2002.

In terms of delivery, the Learning and Skills Councils were responsible for contracting delivery with the Connexions Service providing a key role in terms of referral, assessment and client support.

Rationale and targeting

The rationale of the E2E programme was to provide a service for the 47% of school leavers who complete school education without achieving equivalence of a level 2 qualification. In doing so it helps meet the government's commitment in the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper to increase participation in learning amongst 16-18 year olds (from 75% to 90% over the next ten years).

The programme is squarely addressed at targeting the problem of NEET, and it acknowledges that the barriers many of these young people face post school are complex.

In terms of the target group, Learning and Skills Council National Office states that E2E may be an appropriate programme for:

- young people with a profile of low or under achievement who have or are experiencing multiple barriers to learning (including disaffection and disengagement) and have the capacity to work towards level 2 positive destinations;

- young people at entry and level 1 who have or are experiencing multiple barriers to learning (including disaffection and disengagement) and have the capacity to work towards positive destinations;
- young people entering E2E at below entry level but who have the aspiration and capacity to work through entry and towards level 1 (the role of E2E for these learners, and their progress and achievement through the programme will need to be carefully negotiated); and
- young people who have the capacity to achieve from entry to level 1 but not to immediately progress to level 2 positive destinations; in this case progression to identified and agreed outcomes (which may encompass other learning provision with evidence of distance travelled), or sustainable or supported employment must be facilitated along with encouragement to work towards onward progression when appropriate.

Key features of the E2E model

The stated objectives of the E2E model are to:

- engage in learning young people who are not yet ready or able to undertake learning at level 2 or above;
- provide high quality, flexible work based learning meeting the needs of the young people not ready for level 2 learning;
- enable progression onto apprenticeships, other forms of learning and employment for young people.

The four elements of the model are identified as:

- initial and ongoing assessment, guidance and support, including aftercare;
- core learning components of basic/key skills, personal development, work/vocational tasters based around entry/level 1 achievement;
- optional additional specialised work-related learning; and
- preparation for and transition to level 2 learning opportunities and/or employment, with continued but diminishing support.

In terms of success factors, the critical aspects of the programme are identified as being:

- Progression rates onto other forms of learning/and or employment
- Progression onto Apprenticeship starts
- Quality of provision compared to predecessor programmes

Performance and outcomes

The E2E Programme has an annual client throughput of around 60,000 young people. 97% of these are between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. 61% of E2E clients are male and the average duration on the programme is around twenty weeks, although there is no prescribed length.

The programme has established a reputation for working with the most disadvantaged clients. 17% of these are from black and minority backgrounds whilst 33% are disabled or have a learning disability.

Since it was introduced in 2003 the percentage achieving a positive outcome has risen from 32% to 43% and currently:

- 10% of leavers enter a work based learning option (Apprenticeships)
- 12% enter FE
- 21% move directly into employment

Although qualifications are not the focus of E2E, at least 11% have gained qualifications at entry level or level 1.

Strengths and weaknesses

The national evaluation of E2E identified a number of strengths and weaknesses within the programme which were defined as follows:

Strengths

- E2E has been successful in respect of engagement and participation of young people;
- attractive to providers: no shortage of providers, particularly the voluntary and community sector wanting to get increasingly involved;
- focuses on the most difficult and hardest to reach category of young people;
- flexibility in design of the programme. It is customised training and not time bound;
- E2E has established itself in the training spectrum very quickly; and
- progression rates, generally (given the nature of the client group) are considered good.

Weaknesses

- there is a continuing need to improve achievement and progression;

- progressions to apprenticeships is only around 10%;
- achievement of the learning plan could be stronger;
- comparatively expensive;
- there is no data available to show the destination of the 57% who do not progress positively; and
- too open - E2E has been used for a significant number of individuals for which the programme was not originally intended.

Development issues

E2E is regarded by DfES as being a key element of 14-19 reforms designed to tackle the problem of NEET by providing a route to re-engage for those disaffected by formal learning. A comparable programme is currently being designed by the DfES to pilot a related option for young people aged 14-16.

A huge amount of development work is being undertaken in relation to the E2E programme. The most salient of these are identified as:

- Links to the new PSA target to reduce the proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET by 2 percentage points between 2004 and 2010
- The joint development of a framework of provision below level 2 by the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the LSC. The vision is for a unit-based credit framework which will form the first two levels of the framework for achievement (FfA) which will have the capacity to include other qualifications
- Reforms to learner financial support, brought about by Supporting Young People to Achieve which saw the abolition of training allowances in April 2006 and their replacement by means-tested EMAs for all post sixteen learners
- The development by the DfES Standards Unit of an E2E Competence Framework. Developed in partnership with over 120 providers, this capacity building framework sets out the skills, activities and knowledge needed by tutors working with the E2E client group

Areas of particular interest for GRFW

As E2E moves ahead, a number of challenges have been identified by the DfES and other partners. The most important of these refer to the lack of appropriate provision for this client group and the problems around targeting. Clearly these are also issues of major concern in Scotland, and there is scope for joint activity in considering ways to tackle these.

In England, the ALI review and the national evaluation have also identified questions around the patchy quality of provision, as well as concerns around the financial sustainability. Again, these are points which have arisen in relation to our work in Scotland.

A number of other areas identified by the GRFW evaluation which link into development themes south of the border include:

- Building provision capacity
- Engagement of employers
- Quality assurance
- Links into early school intervention

Overall we see very strong parallels between these two programmes. The delivery infrastructure in England is very different – particularly as the LSCs hold financial responsibility for all post-sixteen learning provision. However, the shape of the two programmes is very similar, as are its target groups and its defined outcomes. We have also seen that its outcomes rates are also broadly comparable.

Consequently, in taking our recommendations forward Scottish Enterprise may wish to examine the scope for further learning from the experience of our colleagues in England.