

Pupil Support Assistant Traineeship for lone parents – employment placement and support for lone parents in Fife.

How-to Guide

This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Pupil Support Assistant Traineeship for lone parents – employment placement and support for lone parents in Fife.



Title	Pupil Support Assistant Traineeship for lone parents – employment placement and support for lone parents in Fife.
Lead Organisation	Fife Gingerbread.
All Organisations	• Fife Gingerbread. • Life Chances. • Direct Partners. • Fife council – Education.
Category	Promising.
Poverty Impact	Direct reduction.
Introduction to the Project	
The Pupil Support Assistant Traineeship aims to tackle poverty in lone parent households. They do this through the provision of targeted support and training to enable lone parents to enter the workplace as Pupil Support Assistants. Such positions provide a working environment which fits around lone parents' child caring responsibilities.	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?	Fife Gingerbread management.	
How did the idea for the project come about?		
Conversations with the education services at Fife Council revealed a gap in recruiting and retaining people to work as pupil support assistants. The idea then came about to support lone parents into these positions.		
Were plans informed by any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice from elsewhere?	No	
Was anyone else involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	Yes	
- Fife Council Education services. - Life Chances.		
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?	No	
Was funding required to support the development of the initial idea of the project?	No	

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Were specific resources – other than funding - needed when developing the initial idea of the project?		Yes
Staff/Volunteer Time	- Staff were needed to identify parents who might benefit from the programme. - Staff were also needed to run the 4-week training programme the parents, or trainees, attended before starting as pupil support assistants.	
Facilities / Workspace	A workspace was needed for the 4-week training programme.	
Equipment	No	
Local Knowledge	Local knowledge of the area and a relationship with the schools has become important to the success of the programme.	
Food and Drink	No	
Did any barriers have to be overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?		Yes
- Making sure funding could be established for the project after the initial idea was finalised. - Making sure potential trainees meet the criteria for Life Chances.		
Did anything in particular enable development of the initial idea of the project?		No
How long did it take between having the initial idea and starting the project?	2-3 months.	
Who made the decision to introduce the project?	Fife Gingerbread collective decision.	

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Early Development

Was there a pilot project or feasibility study or test of change?	No
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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Are potential users referred to your Initiative.?	Yes
• Potential users must be a Fife gingerbread registered parent. • The parents can self-refer to Fife Gingerbread. • Referrals from agencies such as the job centre, health visitors, or schools.	
Are there ways, other than referral, that are used to make potential users aware of your Initiative.?	No
What is the most common way through which users typically access your Initiative?	
Do you take steps to keep in touch / reach out to users?	No
• By phone - Lousie keeps in regular contact with service users once they have finished the placement.	

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project?	Yes
Many people involved in running the project have lived experience of being a lone parent and associated poverty.	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or in project <u>governance</u>?	Yes
Louise has lived experience of being a lone parent.	
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project?	No

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?	
Louise Park. Fife Gingerbread.	
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project?	No
Engaging with employers to establish guaranteed interview pathways for lone parents. Job crafting - meeting one-on-one with parents to match them with jobs.	
What proportion of the manager's overall workload is given over to this project?	
About half of it.	
Is there a Project Steering or Advisory Group?	No
Are any other governance arrangements in place to review strategy and performance?	Yes
Quarterly reports to funders (Opportunities Fife).	

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

To the best of your knowledge, is the project aligned with national and/or local anti-poverty strategies and priorities (e.g., local authority or health board priorities)?	Yes
Lone Parent Positive Workplaces Scotland.	
In your opinion, has the project benefitted from being part of this anti-poverty strategy?	Yes
• The project aims to tackle poverty through the provision of targeted support to help lone parents access the workplace and adequate care for their children during working hours. • While the pupil support traineeship is a small project, it is also part of a wider programme which many employers have heard of. • Evidence collected from the project is also utilised to help other projects that are a part of the lone parents' positive workspace.	
Is the project part of any other strategy?	No
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment?	No

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Funding

Is funding used to support the work?	Yes
Has external funding been secured to support the work?	Yes
Which organisation provided funding?	Life Chances.
What was the specific funding stream/source/scheme?	Life Chances funding pays the trainees wage for the 26 weeks placement.
How much funding was secured?	Not specified.
For how long has funding been secured?	Year-on-year basis.
Is future funding from the same external source a possibility?	No
Has a specific sum been secured from your organisation to support this work?	No
Is future funding from your organisation a possibility?	No
What are the future - longer-term - prospects for this work if existing funding sources were no longer available?	
Not specified.	

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Staffing and Resources

Do existing staff from your organisation contribute toward the work of this project?		Yes
Role: Louise worked on the Lone Parent Positive Workplaces as a co-ordinator before filing the role as the projects' Pupil support programme Co-ordinator.		
Are existing staff from the host organisation paid extra (for example, taking on extra hours) to contribute toward the work of this project?		No
Have additional paid staff been employed to contribute toward the work of this project?		No
Are volunteers involved in delivering the project??		No
Are specific resources – other than staff/volunteer time and money - needed to support the delivery of the project?		Yes
Facilities / Workspace	Space was needed to conduct training sessions.	
Equipment	No	
Local Knowledge	No	
Food and Drink	Tea/coffee provided during training.	
Are any of the resources needed to deliver the project provided in-kind, rather than budgeted from project funds?		No
Were new IT systems, additional software, or upgrades existing software (databases, Apps) required to deliver this project?		No
Was additional training – for staff or volunteers - required to deliver this project?		No

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Do you – or other organisations - collect data on the project for monitoring or evaluation purposes?		Yes
Is there baseline data to describe what things were like before the start of the project?		No
Is the difference that the project is making measured or monitored by the host organisation?		Yes
Who within the host organisation is responsible for monitoring the impact of the project	Louise Park and Laura Miller.	
How often is the impact of the project monitored or measured by the host organisation	Monthly feedback.	
What methods, techniques or strategies are used by the host organisation to impact of the project	How many traineeship placements are secured.	
What information is collected by the host organisation about the project?		
Number of users		Yes
Profile of users		Yes
Experience of users		Yes
Outcomes for users		Yes
Anything else		Yes
No		
Has the data that has been collected by the host organisation been used to adapt the way the project works?		Yes
Regular contact with service users regarding any barriers they may be experiencing related to employment continuation helps to influence future project development.		

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Has an external organisation been employed to formally evaluate the project?	No
Has the data that has been collected from this evaluation been used to adapt the way the project works?	No
Is there an intention to employ an external organisation to evaluate the impact of the project in the future?	No
Is there an intention to undertake your own formal evaluation in the future to estimate the impact of the project?	No

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Impact

To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?	Fully met.
What difference has the project made?	
Employability- the project is helping support parents who previously struggled to find work into employment by removing barriers such as access to child-care. It is also contributing towards building their Curriculum Vitae's by filling employment gaps and providing a recent reference should they wish to work elsewhere. Working as a pupil support assistant has many transferable skills such ability to communicate, patience, teamwork and can show a willingness to be flexible. Tackling child poverty- Lone parents can find it much more difficult to find work that is flexible and well-paid due to demands of childcare. This impacts child poverty as they parents cannot work, removing these barriers can help parents find work that is flexible and well paid.	
Have conditions or demand changed since the project was introduced?	Yes
As more parents here about the programme many are keen to take part.	
Has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand?	Yes
Capacity is based on available placements and funding.	
Has the project changed through time?	No
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes?	No
In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling poverty?	Yes
Removing barriers many lone parents face when seeking employment. The project so far has a high rate of success with almost all parents in work or training since completing the initial programme. As word spreads many parents are eager to get themselves on the programme which is an indicator of how keen lone parents are to find flexible work.	

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?	
High rate of success.	
What, if anything, is working less well?	
Demand for PSA can change year on year and so, employment can change each year. The school receives its funding allocation in March so parents, who have been kept on after the initial 26 weeks, will not know until then if they have a job in the August.	
What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners?	
• Key to engage the candidates within the schools as they start their learning journey – completing visits during induction weeks so they are familiar with the setting and who they will be working with. • PVG's are required for placement, there can be system delay's that are out with anyone's control.	
Are there plans to develop or expand the project in the future?	Yes
Aim to replicate the project in care homes and leisure centres.	
How easily do you think this project could be replicated in another setting?	
Very Easily.	

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