

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: PROJECT SEARCH: CARRONGRANGE SCHOOL**  
**Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**  
**Date: 28 May 2013**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of 'Project Search', involving Carrongrange School, to explain the anticipated impact of the programme for young people with additional support needs in Falkirk and to seek approval for the introduction and development of the project.

**2. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 During the past thirteen years, a pioneering programme titled: Project Search based at Children's Hospital Medical Center of Cincinnati has provided education and on-the-job training opportunities, leading to permanent employment for over seventy individuals with disabilities. This model of supported employment has now been replicated in Norwich Hospital and Leicester City Council. In 2012, the Scottish Government introduced Project Search sites across the country after the success of a Project Search site in South Lanark involving Motherwell College and Wishaw General Hospital.
- 2.2 In May 2012, local authorities were invited to bid for funding to set up a Project Search site in their area. The proposed bid from Falkirk Education Services involved Carrongrange School, Real Jobs Falkirk, a service from the Action Group, SERCO and the Forth Valley Royal Hospital (FVRH). The bid was successful mainly due to the fact this was the first school based application and the partnership bid reflected publically funded services. The Scottish Consortium for Learning Disabilities (SCLD) will monitor and support Scottish Project Search sites and have been involved in discussions from the outset.

**2.3 The Project Search**

The Falkirk Council Project Search programme is a nine month school-to-work internship for students with disabilities that will take place entirely at the Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job training and support. The goal for each student is competitive employment somewhere in the community using the skills they have acquired at the FVRH. The internship provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youths with disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life. Young people will build communication and problem-solving skills, as well as job-specific skills, through worksite rotations. These are unpaid student internships - analogous to the clinical rotations that are part of every medical school curriculum. Potential student worksites are identified through a continuous collaborative process involving the Project Search educator, the FVRH liaison, and specific worksite supervisors.

### **3. TRANSITIONS TO ADULT LIFE/EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

- 3.1 Nationally, the unemployment rate for adults with learning disabilities is 90%. In the Skills Development Scotland School Leaver Destinations Report (SLDR) Follow Up in March 2012, Falkirk Council had approximately 48% of leavers with additional support needs in negative destinations. This is an increase of almost 24% from their initial leaving destination, which for many was a part-time course at college, not leading to a sustained destination. The Action Group is currently supporting almost 1000 young people claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) across Central Scotland towards meaningful positive destinations.
- 3.2 In Scotland, Project Search have a very successful partnership with three hospital trusts in South Lanarkshire. Initially beginning in Wishaw General, there are now projects in Monklands and Hairmyres hospitals, with a 100% success rate for the participants/interns into sustained employment within the NHS and the private sector.
- 3.3 A significant priority for Carrongrange School is to ensure that pupils are well prepared for post school opportunities. The Senior Phase of the Curriculum for Excellence in particular has a focus on providing 'Opportunities to move into positive and sustained destinations beyond school.' (Building the Curriculum 3, Education Scotland).
- 3.4 Carrongrange School pupils face a major challenge in accessing the increasingly competitive employment market. Project Search would give a valuable opportunity to develop work skills that will allow them to compete on a more equal basis, while raising awareness of potential employers, of the important contribution that they can make.

### **4. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 An initial Falkirk meeting was set up and attendees included representatives from:
- Project Search, UK
  - Carrongrange School
  - Education Services
  - Real Jobs
  - ETU
  - Forth Valley College
  - Social Work
- 4.2 Following from the initial multi-agency meeting a Steering Group has been established and agreed the following aims:
- If approved, Interns would come from current Carrongrange S5 pupils (up to 12). If places are available, these will also be open to Denny High (Northfield Unit and Grangemouth High (Autistic Unit) S5 pupils, and/or Carrongrange Leavers who would otherwise move on to College.
  - Partner(s) will ideally be Forth Valley Royal Hospital (requires both SERCO and NHS engagement).
  - Job Coach will be supplied by Real Jobs.
  - Educator will be supplied by Education Services.

- 4.3 There have been 5 steering group meetings between October 2012 and February 2013; additional attendees to these meetings include a representative from Project Search UK, and two representatives from Cincinnati Project Search. Members of the steering group visited Motherwell College and discussed Project Search progress in South Lanark which now has 3 sites, Wishaw General, Monklands and Hairmyres Hospitals.
- 4.4 Members of the steering group also met with a representative from SERCO. Her initial response was very positive and she then met with a representative from NHS, Forth Valley Royal Hospital to progress the partnership.
- 4.5 If approved, the first group of students would commence the project in August 2014. If agreement can be secured with the NHS there is the possibility of bringing this date forward to August 2013. This will be pursued following the decision of the Education Executive.
- 4.6 In the interim, SERCO has offered work experience opportunities to Carrongrange pupils, with the support of Job Coaching from Real Jobs Falkirk. Final details have yet to be agreed, but this would significantly enhance the work experience opportunities available to Carrongrange pupils during S6.
- 4.7 Although the support in 4.6 will not be 'Project Search', a number of strategies will be included based on the Project Search model: for example, pupils will be supported to complete a vocational profile, and go through a recruitment process. Job Coaches from Real Jobs Falkirk will be trained in the various jobs available in order to support the pupils on site. This also gives the opportunity for all staff (and patients) within the Forth Valley Royal Hospital to witness young people with additional support needs making a positive contribution to this workplace. All of these young people by the end of June 2014 will have developed strong employability skills to support a positive transition to employment.

## **7. FINANCIAL COSTS**

- 7.1 Project Search will require limited extra financial cost as the roles of educator will be covered within Carrongrange School and the role of job coach will be performed by Action for Real Jobs Falkirk, already funded by Fairer Falkirk funding. It is anticipated that there may be funding implications regarding adaptations to support the interns but again this could be covered by core funding at Carrongrange School.
- 7.2 The cost to the partner employer would be accommodation of one classroom area, uniforms etc. and the employment opportunities. A grant of £23,000 has been awarded to Falkirk Council for this project from the Scottish Government to finance set up costs and liaison with Project Search.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 The Education Executive:

- (i) approves the work of the Steering Group to introduce Project Search in partnership with NHS Forth Valley; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of this report.



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Director of Education

Date: 16 May 2013

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### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL