



Borders

Community Action

Scottish Borders Employability Services Request for Consultancy Services: Employability Mapping and Gapping Exercise

1. BACKGROUND

Borders Community Action, the Third Sector Interface in the Scottish Borders. We are a one-stop point for the third sector and work with charities, social enterprises, community groups and volunteering. Our work is underpinned by four main objectives:

- Support and develop volunteers, Third Sector Organisations and social enterprises via a responsive range of services, including training, information, advice and access to resources.
- Be a catalyst for community empowerment, enabling a culture of collaboration that maximises the influence and impact of the third sector across communities.
- Amplify the voice of volunteers and Third Sector Organisations representing their collective needs locally, regionally and nationally.
- Be an exemplary Third Sector Organisation with its members at its heart.

2. THE PROJECT

Identified need

We are looking to develop a third sector employability pathway in the Scottish Borders. Poverty is alleviated by having sustainable well-paid employment. Helping people to become employable, avoid underemployment and stay in work is a priority for third and public service agencies in the Scottish Borders.

As the third sector representative of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), Borders Community Action supports the aims and objectives of the LEP Improvement Plan and those of “No-one Left Behind”. Overall, our goal is to raise the profile of the third sector as a key partner in delivering employment outcomes in the Scottish Borders.

Borders Community Action is developing a new employability offer seeking consultancy services to conduct an Employability Mapping and Gapping Exercise to help us better understand the services and activities currently available and, identify gaps where it exists.

The outcomes we will work towards by developing an employability response across the third sector are:

- Strengthening the third sector employability offer across the Scottish Borders.
- Championing the third sector as a key partner in delivering employment outcomes in the region.
- Enabling positive pathways for volunteers, looking to develop skills in order to enter or re-enter the job market.
- Third sector organisations gain a better understanding of the policies that affect their work, enabling them to make more informed decisions.

Borders Third Sector Interface Ltd, trading as Borders Community Action.

Company No. SC758752. Scottish Charity No. SC052612

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- Third sector organisations are better equipped with skills, services, and resources to deliver and meet community needs.
- Increase participation from 3rd sector employers in Fair Work.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this consultancy are as follows:

- Conduct a detailed analysis of the current employability landscape by identifying projects and organisations across the Scottish Borders that provide employability-related services and activities across the Scottish Borders that support employability pathways.
- Identify gaps in provision across the region, in terms of service availability and quality of provision available across localities.
- Provide recommendations for improvement based on findings of the mapping and gapping exercise conducted.

Key Deliverables

The scope of work for the consultancy services includes:

- Review existing employability services and provisions available across the Scottish Borders, providing a detailed inventory of third sector activity supporting employability pathways, including grassroots community activity, local, regional and national provisions currently available.
- Work with Borders Community Action teams and the new Employability Lead to design and conduct surveys and interviews to gather information about activity/ service provision, target beneficiary group characteristics, location and Fair Work compliance.
- Create a databank of provision ensuring a description of services and activities are being provided in the Scottish Borders to support employability pathways.
- Provide a report with an analysis highlighting current provisions and work with BCA Employment lead and LEP partners to identify gaps.
- Use data-gathering tools in line with the systems used by Borders Community Action to capture and retain data.
- Produce a final report with the findings and key recommendations.

Timeline

The anticipated timeline for the consultancy services is 3 months, beginning April 2024 and concluding by the end of July 2024.

Cost

To be Agreed

Desired Outcomes

This mapping and gapping exercise will provide detailed information on employability services and activities across the Scottish Borders. It will enable partners of the LEP to have a better understanding of what is currently being offered and develop an investment case to strengthen third sector provision and work with the sector to develop new activities, where gaps have been identified. This piece of work will also be used to guide the third sector Employability project delivered by Borders Community Action.

Risks and Assumptions

Risks

Inability to recruit a consultant with relevant expertise

Lack of third sector response to surveys and engagement

Staff time and availability

Third-sector organisations often operate with limited resources, including funding, staff, and technical expertise. Third sector organisations staff and volunteers' availability and willingness to take part in surveys and interviews.

Projects/ services can sometimes be temporary due to funding arrangements.

Assumptions

The existing network can facilitate the development of the mapping and gapping exercise.

The current knowledge and expertise that currently exists as part of the LEP New approaches such as participatory mapping techniques and digital tools to engage with organisations.

Improved relationships with third sector organisations and other partners delivering employability services/ activities.

Project Plan

Map all employability services/ activities in the Scottish Borders – **April - July 2024**

Develop and agree set of questions for the survey and interviews – **April 2024**

Engage with LEP members and identified third sector organisations – **April - July 2024**

Present report analysis of the Mapping and Gapping activity – **July 2024**

Project Management

This project will be managed by Borders Community Action's Chief Executive Officer with support from the Borders Community Action Team and members Leadership group of the Local Employability Leadership.

3. OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Further relevant information such as BCA strategic plan, Local Employability Partnership plan and Borders Community Action Employability plan can be provided upon request.

4. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Consultants interested in this work should submit a one-page proposal demonstrating how they would approach this work and outlining costs. A CV with references should also be included. Please send this to john@borderscommunityaction.org.uk, no later than **noon on Monday, 8th April 2024**. Decisions will be communicated by 8th April 2024.