

From: Tim Green

Sent: 02 February 2015 16:30

To: Committee Services; Louise Williamson 2; Allan McCartney

Cc: Andrew Burns; Steve Cardownie; Alasdair Rankin; Bill Cook; Paul Godzik; Cathy Fullerton

Subject: Council Budget Setting Meeting

Dear Committee Services,

I would like to make a deputation to the Council Budget Setting Meeting on February 12th on behalf of Worker's Educational Association, Scotland. There is a proposal to cut our workplace literacies funding by 100% which equates to a saving of

£44, 000 to City of Edinburgh Council. This disproportionate cut will have a massive impact on our small but high performing front line Workplace Literacies Team. The cut will severely limit the Council in:

1. supporting Council staff to get the qualifications they need to maximise their employability particularly necessary in light of the Coalition's no compulsory redundancies policy
2. attracting additional funds for learning in the workplace and community, averaging a further £100,000 that WEA lever in each year
3. achieving its vision of Edinburgh as "... a thriving, successful and sustainable capital city in which all forms of deprivation and inequality are reduced".
4. meeting CEC's Lifelong Learning Agreement
5. meeting the recommendations of the Wood Commission
6. achieving Scottish Government national outcomes for: employment, skills, inequality, and improved public services
7. achieving national and local policy outcomes, including: Strategic Skills Pipeline; Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2013-2016; CLD (Scotland) Regulations 2013; Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth 2010; Curriculum for Excellence.
8. providing core skills learning to low-paid workers across Edinburgh

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you.

Best faithfully,

Tim

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Appendix 1

The funding from CEC enables WEA to **attract further funds** for learning in the workplace and community, averaging **£100, 000 each year** over the last two years. The cut will compromise our capacity to draw these funds in to the City.

Feedback from managers demonstrates the impact we are making in the workplace:

“Our work with WEA has transformed how this training is delivered and if WEA were no longer able to deliver this, we would have to commission exactly the same training model – we simply cannot deliver this training without this support. I have been delighted with the excellent working relationship we enjoy with WEA and with the flexibility, expertise and professionalism of the staff we work with and I hope a way can be found to allow this excellent relationship to continue.”
Don Naismith, Senior People Planning and Development Officer, CEC.

“The Bitesize courses have given staff more confidence, once they do one course they want to enrol onto the next one. Some staff, who may want more confidence in their reading and writing skills, can see Bitesize as a stepping stone to other learning. It gives them an opportunity to think about personal development in the workplace and perhaps applying for a Supervisory Post.”
Joanne Cook, Royal Edinburgh Hospital

“I have already recommended this service to a number of colleagues and I will be letting more know more about this and how they can access it.”

Keith Speirs, Services for Communities, CEC

WEA developed an innovative life-story course for CEC care staff, using reminiscence to build communication skills.

“It was absolutely amazing. Staff were very impressed. They enjoyed it and stated they would do it again. Tutor took it back to basics, covered spelling and grammar, and also gave them homework which staff got involved with and fully embraced. Have passed this on to our SVQ assessor and other care homes.”
Maggie Johnstone, Inchview Care Home Manager

WEA empathise with the financial difficulties that City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) is facing, but this proposal is a highly disproportionate response. It will have a significant impact on the WEA as an organisation but also on the **social value** that the WEA brings to the City. Such a cut will prevent the Council achieving its vision of Edinburgh as “... a thriving, successful and sustainable capital city in which all forms of deprivation and inequality are reduced”.

The budget supports 1.2 full-time equivalent posts. Our two Workplace Literacies Tutor Organisers and sessional tutors are front line staff engaging with the City’s low paid workers. In the last five years WEA have worked with more than 40 employers and 12 Council departments, and engaged with over 1500 employees in Edinburgh workplaces. A 100% cut will mean **no workplace core skills learning** for low-paid workers across Edinburgh. The WEA has been providing this since 2003.

Our workplace literacies programme helps employers to: increase productivity and efficiency; reduce costs; improve staff loyalty and flexibility; and reduce absenteeism.

A more competitive economy in Edinburgh with higher skills, productivity and pay can be achieved by improving core skills in the City’s workplaces. The Employability Pipeline is strengthened when workers gain confidence with their literacy, language, IT and numeracy skills: it helps to sustain their existing employment, to take up learning opportunities, and engage in development in their workplace.

Continued funding of workplace core skills is, therefore, a key factor in delivering the recommendations of the Wood Commission. WEA already encourage and support employers to recruit more young people, by supporting them in work and on Modern Apprenticeships. For example, we have worked with an Edinburgh roofing company and an outdoor education organisation. Improved literacy, IT, numeracy and language in the workplace also benefits workers' families, with workers feeling more confident to support their children, some of whom are dyslexic, with school work.

Our workplace literacies team have initiated strong partnerships with Council departments, particularly Health and Social Care, and Services for Communities, and also Community Wardens, Young Persons' Centres, Day Centres, Community Centres, where we supported staff with a variety of needs. WEA have worked with small and large employers, including NHS Lothian, Tesco, Bethany, Saheliya, Citizens Advice, Police Scotland, Lothians and Borders Fire Service, Royal Mail, National Library for Scotland, HMRC, John Lewis, and many hotels and restaurants.

WEA's workplace learning provides high quality teaching and learning programmes tailored to the needs of employers' and staff. In developing training, WEA use the "social practices" approach adopted by the Scottish Government (Scottish Curriculum for Adult Literacy and Numeracy). For example, CEC asked for our help when a high percentage of staff were failing their Pesticide Application test. WEA wrote an introduction to the calculations necessary, and the result of WEA's involvement was an increase in the pass rate to over 90%.

The workplace literacies team have developed a programme of specific learning needs (including dyslexia) training which is helping managers to recognise and address the challenges faced by workers with these needs.

Because of the workplace focus of our core skills work, we can draw in funding from STUC, Unison and Unite. The proposed cut will jeopardise WEA's partnership working with Unison and Unite, to fulfil CEC's Lifelong Learning Agreement.

The team has developed skills in using tablet computers and MiFi connections for learning in workplaces with no internet connection and/or access to ICT. This enables workplace learners to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of the Internet and mobile devices that are essential in "future-proofing" their employability skills.

Feedback from learners shows the difference we are making to work, family, community and personal lives.

"If it wasn't for WEA I wouldn't recognise I had dyslexia and I would not have pushed for an assessment. Doing the courses has given me the confidence to keep my job, speak out and be who I am. I can now stay in my job and get better at it. I got my SVQ with flying colours."

June Primrose, Support Worker, CEC

"It has been one of the best experiences of my life. I have learned so much in the past year and I want to keep on going." Mike Polowyi, Concierge, Services for Communities, CEC

"It's been fantastic, brilliant – can't recommend it enough. It meant I could finish my SVQ."

Jamie Gordon, Project Worker, Bethany Christian Trust

"A better understanding of grammar and structure of writing. I am now more methodical and plan things more than I used to, I have improved my IT skills and have enjoyed working in a group and exchanging ideas. The skills that I have acquired are helping me in the workplace and also in my personal life. I'm still using the skills I learned 2 years later."

Jim Lewis, Community Care Worker, CEC

WEA make a significant contribution to CEC's undertaking to meet Scottish Government national outcomes:

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The small, highly efficient and effective Workplace Literacies team enables CEC to achieve national and local policy outcomes, including:

- Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance
- Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (Wood Commission) 2013
- Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition
- Strategic Skills Pipeline
- The Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2013-2016
- The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013
- Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth 2010
- Senior phase of the Curriculum for Excellence

The Workplace Literacies team is a flexible, responsive, professional and high-performing team that supports CEC in the renewal of public services in Edinburgh, by reflecting the four pillars recommended by Dr Campbell Christie in his report on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011).

We work in partnership with CEC to deliver adult learning that reaches people with whom CEC find it difficult to engage. This is vital work in prevention of the poverty and inequality that accompany literacy, IT, numeracy and language needs in the workplace. The curriculum we offer is negotiated with employers and workplace learners, an example of co-production of learning based on the assets of learners and their workplace. We bring strong partnership-working, based at local and national level, utilizing established contacts, and building on our flair for proactively seeking out new, highly effective, strategic and operational partnerships. CEC should be harnessing this strength, rather than dispensing with it.

The workplace literacies funding gives us the capacity to support Edinburgh Adult Education Group to organise the annual Adult Learners' Week Awards. Our workplace programmes have won one this award three times in the Working Life and Personal Life category, for our:

- Starting Points course with Health and Social Care department of CEC. Here learners achieved a qualification in Communication at SCQF level 3/4.
- Communication SCQF level 6 course, also with staff from with Social Care Department of CEC
- **English for Hotel Work courses with King's Manor Hotel Workers.**
- **NHS Lothian Bitesize Project won NHS Lothian's Celebrating Success Award 2014**, in the Respect for Others category.

If the proposed funding cut goes ahead, the unique service provided by the Workplace Literacies Team will come to an end. This will remove the expertise and capacity not only from the WEA but also from the City of Edinburgh. Our team of high quality workplace literacies tutors will no longer be able to make a difference to improving the literacy, IT, numeracy and language skills of Edinburgh's working population. The cut will also reduce the ability of our small, voluntary sector organisation to continue to bring in the additional funding and services which WEA brings in to the City.

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