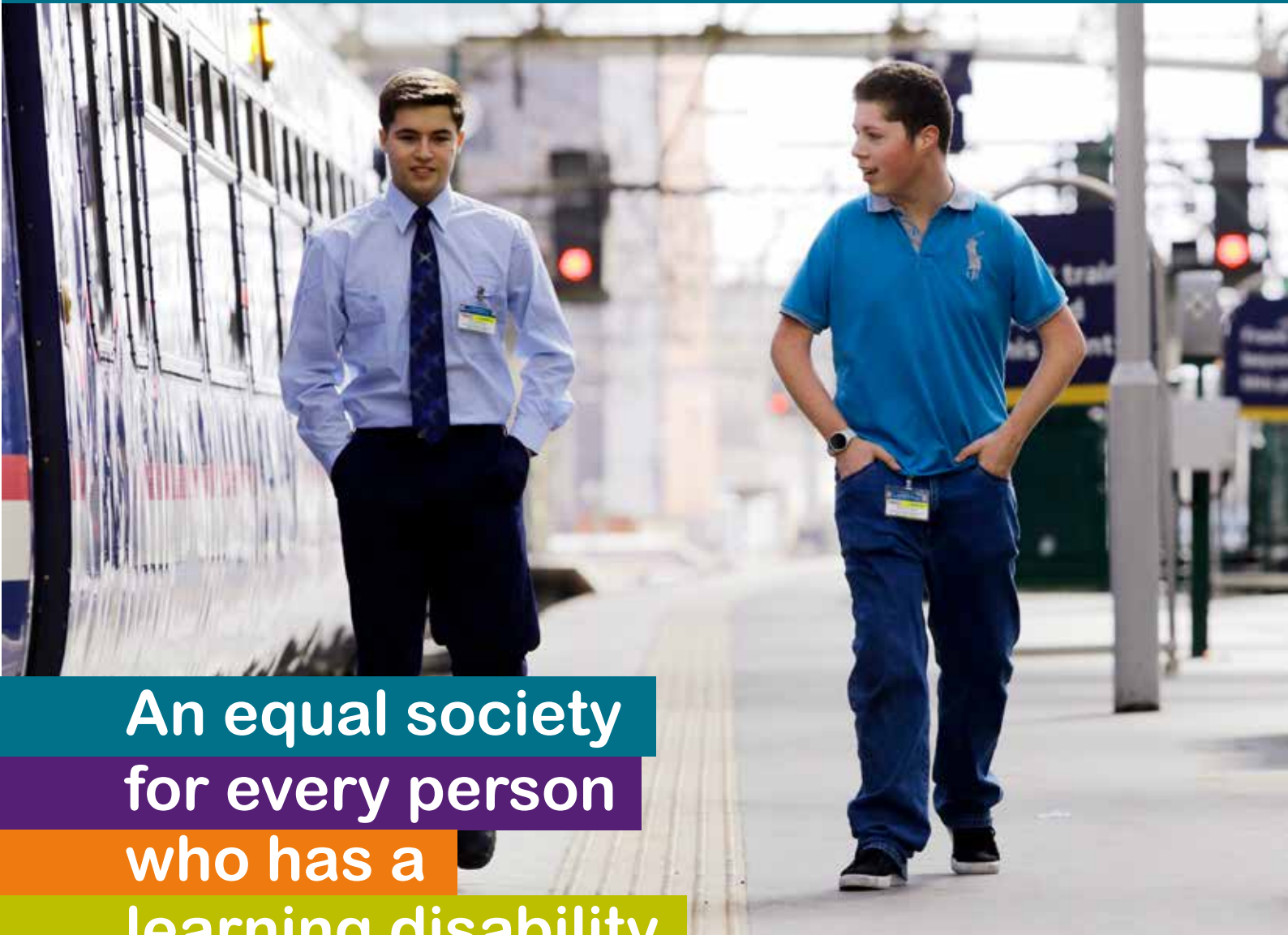




Enhanced Support MA Project

Final Evaluation Report
June 2018



An equal society
for every person
who has a
learning disability

1.0 Background

Supported Employment Modern Apprenticeship Project

Open Doors Scotland is aware of a number of reasons why Modern Apprenticeships have a low participation rate for targeted young people. Firstly, eligibility criteria set by training providers are often high as a result of high SCQF core skills. Secondly, increased demand from all young people puts young people with barriers at a disadvantage. Finally, the lack of understanding from training providers and employers in recruiting a young person from a targeted background often means working practice and learning methods are inaccessible.

Open Doors Scotland is currently delivering a project that supports 20 targeted young people with complex disabilities or complex support needs to access an MA and provides them with ongoing, intensive in work support to sustain it in the form of supported employment. A payment of £1000 has been made to the training provider to allow them to adapt their methods and materials, upskill their staff, and amend their recruitment processes.

The service conforms closely to the Scottish Government's 5 stage Supported Employment Model. The model is linear and is delivered using a person centred approach which reflects the changing needs of clients and the flexibilities this will require. The service is delivered at a pace and in a manner suitable to each individual, enabling each person to progress in an appropriate timescale.

The service has been delivered by staff with the training, experience, qualifications, values and creativity to support clients with varying needs. These include supported employment workers as well as employers' staff and training providers.

Involved Open Doors partners are ENABLE Scotland, SAMH and Action for Children.



The project ended in July 2018. This Final Evaluation Report focuses on findings from interaction with the Open Doors partners, Training Providers, Employers and Modern Apprentices involved. ENABLE Scotland are pleased to have now been funded by the Scottish Government to continue this model of support through Enhanced Modern Apprenticeships.

1.1 Objectives

The purpose of this research was to seek evidence if it exists in relation to the following.

- Excellent partnerships at all levels across support providers, employers, trainers and Apprentices
- Modifications to delivery and learning that is sustainable for all
- Specialist support doing things that couldn't be done otherwise
- Employers really valuing the support
- Disabled young people achieving MAs and sustained jobs
- Any specific challenges

It also investigated whether in the experience of all those involved, is this model different/more accessible/more successful than standard MA recruitment and delivery.



1.2 Stakeholders

The following stakeholders were identified as being key to the evaluation of the Project.

- **Members of Open Doors Consortium (ENABLE Scotland, SAMH, Action for Children)**
- **Training providers responsible for the delivery of MAs within this project**
- **Employers who have engaged the Modern Apprentices**
- **Modern Apprentices with learning disabilities or other complex needs**

There were

- **20 Modern apprentices**
- **11 Training Providers** (Those who took part were: Abellio Scotrail, Muirslicer, Action for Children, Cartney Horse Care, Jobs and Business Glasgow (2), Big Impact, Dundee & Angus College, PA Training, Rewards Training)
- **16 Employers** (Those who took part were: Café Taste, Monktonhill Livery Yard, Ladywell Medical Centre West, Bruntsfield Medical Practice, Arcadia Nursery, Jobs and Business Glasgow, Scotrail, ENABLE Scotland, SAMH, Mayfield & Easthouses Youth 2000 Project (Y2K), St David's Care Home, Cottiers Bar & Restaurant)

The Modern Apprentices, Training Providers and Employers were further supported by 12 experienced Employment Support Workers.

2.0 Methodology

The evaluation relied on a process of initial research (desk based and discussion with the lead Consortium partner, ENABLE Scotland) followed by the active consultation of a range of stakeholders including supported employment workers, employers, training providers and Modern Apprentices.

- The consultation was done using a mixture of online surveys, telephone, individual interviews and Focus Groups.
- A key part of the consultation was the completion of two online surveys by training providers and employers involved in the project.

This provided qualitative evidence which was then fed into other stakeholder discussions. The surveys offered invitations to a more in depth follow up telephone interview, one to one interview or possible attendance at a Focus Group. It was originally planned to have a separate Focus Group for Training Providers, employers and Modern Apprentices. General views on the objectives of the project were to be discussed along with the specific areas identified as above.

- Following low interest from Training Providers and Employers in attending a Focus Group, mainly due to the proximity of the original date to the end of the financial year, the original methodology was amended with a greater focus on telephone follow up and one to one interviews with a joint Focus Group held in the second phase of the project.

- In this second phase, following the drafting of a Preliminary Report based on the above, a survey was issued to all of the Modern Apprentices who had participated in the project. They were offered assistance with its completion. For those who indicated a willingness to further participate, face to face meetings with some of the MA learners took place, along with their support worker, in an environment in which they felt comfortable. They were encouraged to discuss their experience during the project and possibly earlier employment seeking experiences, in more detail.
 - Also in the second phase, the reconvened joint Focus Group met, composed of representatives from both Training Providers and Employers. Those present were given an overview of the findings of the Preliminary Report. They further discussed their experiences and also considered the question “What, if anything, makes this MA scheme different?”
 - Finally, Support Workers were asked to reflect on what, if any, transferable skills they had acquired during their involvement in the project.
 - A final report was submitted to the Consortium lead partner, ENABLE Scotland, at the end of June which incorporated all aspects of the above.
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3.0 Desk top research

Before any consultation was carried out, an analysis of the basic information available about the Modern Apprentices' location, disclosed additional support needs or background, area of study was made along with distribution of MAs across training providers and employers.

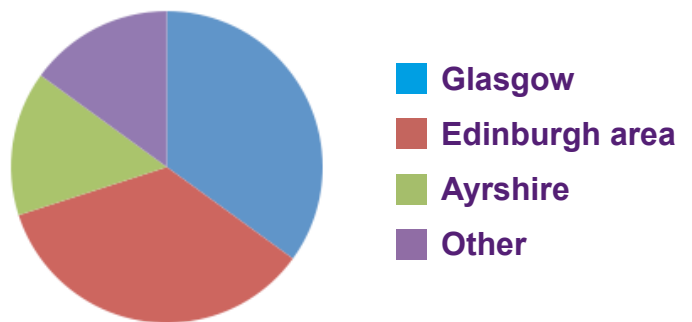


3.1 MAs' locations

Of the 20 Modern Apprentices involved in the project, their geographical areas in which they were employed are as follows:-

Glasgow	7
Edinburgh	5
East Midlothian	1
West Midlothian	1
East Ayrshire	2
South Ayrshire	1
E Dunbartonshire	1
South Lanarkshire	1
Dundee	1

AREA



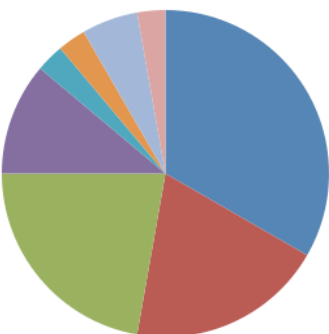
This clearly illustrates that the project has been more successful in recruitment in the Central Belt. Participation in other areas has been relatively low.

3.2 Analysis of MAs' additional support needs

The project offers support to Modern Apprentices with a diverse range of additional support needs or life challenges. These are summarized below. Note that some MAs have more than one category of need.

Undiagnosed Learning Disability	4
Learning Disability	8
Aspersers/Autism	7
Dyslexia	4
Mental Health issues inc anxiety	9
Physical disability	1
Social/behavioral difficulties	1
Hearing loss	1
Communication impairment	1
Care Experienced	1

LEARNING CHALLENGE



- Learning Disability
- Aspersers/Autism
- Mental Health Issues
- Dyslexia
- Physical Disability

3.3 Training Provider MA numbers

Several Training Providers had responsibility for more than one Modern Apprentice.

Albellio Scotrail	1
Lifetime Training	1
Action for Children	2
Cartney Horse Care	2
Jobs&Business Glasgow	1
Muir Slicer	3
Big Impact	3
Dundee & Angus College	1
PA Training	3
Rewards Training	2
Get on Course	1

3.4 Training Provider MA numbers

A few employers had taken on more than 1 Modern Apprentice.

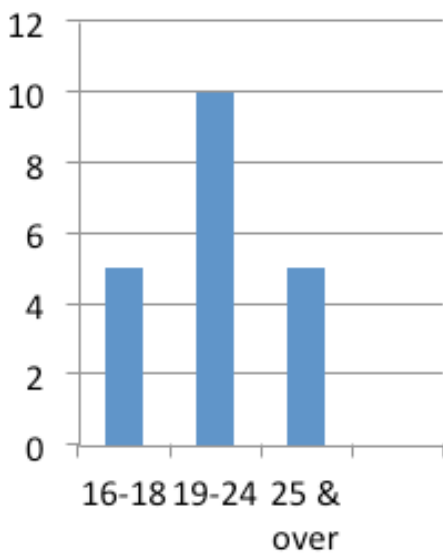
Gingerbread	2
Café Taste	2

3.5 Ages of Modern Apprentices

There was quite a range of ages with the youngest Modern Apprentice being just 16 years old and the oldest being 29 years old at the beginning of the project

Age	No. of MAs
16 - 18	5
19 - 24	10
25 & over	5

No. of MAs



No. of MAs

3.6 Range of Modern Apprenticeships

The types of Modern Apprenticeships included in this project are distributed as follows.

Customer Service	3
Hospitality	5
Equine Care	2
Social Services (Children & Young People)	3
Business Administration	6
Social Services (Care)	1



4.0 Survey responses – Training Providers and Employers

Although the questions asked of the training providers and employers were very similar, the responses have been analysed separately. Where there had been the opportunity for follow up telephone discussions with respondents, these have been included where appropriate.

4.1 Training Provider Survey responses

4.1.1 Has your company previously offered training to a Modern Apprentice with complex needs that you were aware of?

8 out of the 10 responses indicated that they had previously offered training to MAs with complex needs. This was slightly unexpected as Open Doors Scotland had mainly targeted Training Providers with whom they had not worked before. However, it became clear that not all the Training Providers had had previous positive experiences.

4.1.2 How useful did you find the support offered by the Supported Employment MA Project? Please expand on this.

All respondents answered this question and enthused about this aspect of the Project.

- The support gave the apprentice opportunities he may not have been able to achieve previously.
- It is very useful to give additional support to the MA when the assessor is not available.
- Our two MAs have just started but the help that the two support workers have given to date has been excellent.
- Great support for training provider, employer and candidate.
- Very supportive as are now aware that additional support will be covered for the student.
- Very useful as they introduced us to the two young people we are currently working with.
- We thought we were very knowledgeable in this area of support and alternative delivery and assessment, but we have learnt a lot from ENABLE.
- The candidate is very happy with the support offered.

4.1.3 What aspect of the support provided by this project did you value the most?

All respondents answered this. One of the aspects most favoured was the one to one support for the Modern Apprentice, but several also really appreciated the advice they were given by the Open Doors Consortium members as illustrated below.

- Providing additional support specific to the MA candidate.
 - Financial support and guidance with literacy and numeracy support.
 - We look forward to the back up support as some of these young people can be very demanding.
-

- Advice, sharing ideas and good practice.
- Initial feedback about their role and ongoing support for the candidate.
- The support has been useful for all aspects of setting up the MA – initial contact, liaison with employers and accessing other support like Access to Work.
- I value there being another person the candidate can contact.

4.1.4 Can you give any specific example where this additional support made a difference?

Most respondents were able to give specific examples although a few felt they had covered this in the previous question and others felt it was too early to supply this. However, the examples given were quite diverse.

- The apprentice is currently undergoing driving lessons which will help give him further job opportunities within the business.
- Providing a sign language interpreter.
- Offer of training to the team.
- Their expertise helped the employer and MA understand how the job role could be better done with small changes.

4.1.5 Please identify any changes to your company's working policies or practices which have taken place because of your involvement in this project.

2 out of 9 respondents skipped this question. It is reasonable to assume this was because they had made no changes. Amongst those who did answer the question, 4 gave specific examples.

- We now offer all training materials to be supplied as on paper, tablet or Powerpoint.
- Where needed we will now be able to buy specialist equipment.

- Working with ENABLE Scotland has opened up our minds to overcome boundaries, try different things to support each individual. We reviewed our workshop presentations and training materials and supply tablets to support with written work.
- We continue to grow our knowledge and understanding of this area.
- We have introduced extra support study sessions.

4.1.6 Would you do it again? Why?

One respondent felt they couldn't answer the question but the other 8 respondents said they would do it again. The personal support outlined in previous questions seemed to be the overall attraction more than the financial support although this too has already been acknowledged as being very useful. Other reasons were also offered.

- It allows the (organisation) to access and support a more diverse pool of candidates.
 - We feel that MAs should be available to everyone no matter whether they have additional support needs or not.
 - It helps us to help these young people.
 - Great to see support being given to under represented groups, giving the candidates the same opportunities.
 - Great support and friendly staff.
 - Absolutely – it's so much more rewarding seeing someone who could be disadvantaged being successful.
 - Yes. It enables people who would not feel confident enough to undertake an MA to consider it as a viable option.
-

4.2 Employers

4.2.1. Have you employed a Modern Apprentice before? If Yes, has any previous MA had complex support needs that you were aware of?

For 8 of the 12 respondents (67%), this was the first time they had employed a Modern Apprentice at all. However, only one had employed a Modern Apprentice with learning disabilities or other complex needs before.

4.2.2 If this is the first time you have employed a MA with learning disability, can you explain why you have done so this time?

- We had been involved previously with the young person through ENABLE Scotland support worker's engagement with school visits we had carried out with their help.
- I want to allow them the opportunity to grow and develop in the workplace and be offered the same opportunities as everyone else.
- They seemed suitable and keen.
- It is important for individuals to be given opportunities to develop and progress experiencing a working environment where perhaps softer skills rather than academic are required.
- I wanted to give an individual with complex support needs the chance to return to the workplace.
- MA came to us on a volunteer basis. It made sense to try and find funding for her to be paid for the work she was already doing.
- The candidate had shown dedication and commitment throughout their placement. We were then eager to secure funding to allow them to gain a qualification.
- Our nursery is a purpose built building and has the facilities therefore it was possible to provide the opportunity and we were impressed by the candidate at interview.

4.2.3 How useful did you find the support offered by the Supported Employment MA Project? Please expand on this.

A few of the respondents indicated that as the MA had only been employed at the latter stages of the Project, it was a bit early to fully comment on the support offered.

(Note that all MAs will be given 52 weeks of support from the start date of their MA by their support worker, and not just for the duration of the Project).

- This matter is still very much "work in progress". I have no doubt the support will benefit all parties going forward.
- We are in the early stages of support, but it is going well and both my employees are enjoying the support. I have started to see their confidence increase already.

Nearly all the other employers agreed that the support was very good and offered several examples of how they had found the support useful. These ranged from praise for the support given to the MA to appreciation of the ongoing support on offer to the employer.

- The support is in the form of one to one meetings with the MA and sourcing and supplying aids, yellow plastic computer screen and notebooks.
- We find the support very helpful. Our contacts were very supportive and communicated well.
- Very good support, particularly as the MA was going into a nursery to work and so the support was essential, not only for her but to give us an understanding of her needs.
- Very helpful. They have answered every question and supported the MA through her SVQ. They sourced everything she needed.
- Very supportive and always helpful when information needed.
- We found the support helpful as it re-enforced discussions we had with our MA regarding his timekeeping, attendance and development

within his role. Also took some pressure off of us to constantly keep on top of the MA reminding him of shift times etc

- It is great to have their expertise available, plus they just get in there and address any problem.

An employer who was looking at evacuation procedure changes to ensure their MA's evacuation plan was fit for purpose, was liaising with the support worker for not only advice on appropriate equipment options, but assistance with applying for funding from Access to Work and sourcing the equipment at a good price.

One employer spoke of how, despite weekly meetings she had with the Modern Apprentice, sometimes it was easier for some issues to be discussed by the MA with the support worker than with her.

- It was not just the practical side that the support worker assisted with. The MA was a young man in a team which was 100% female and had no confidence. The support worker was able to talk to him about other issues such as his demeanour and attitude, which he then mainly took on board.

There was one example where the employer had employed the MA and had turned to ENABLE Scotland as part of the project to help them identify a suitable training provider.

- ENABLE Scotland have been very supportive in helping select an appropriate (training) provider and being available to support both us and the MA in case of any difficulty.

This also illustrated the diverse recruitment processes for this project.

Some were found employment following advice from a training provider and others were already known to Open Doors and had been supported by them in applications and interviews to gain a place as an MA either with an employer or training provider. The consortium also identified suitable employers and training providers for Modern Apprentices where required, often with the help of STF (Scottish Training Federation).

4.2.4 Please identify any changes to your company's working policies or practices which have taken place because of your involvement in this project.

- SAMH were already a disability confident employer with robust policies and procedures in place.
- We have some measures in place but they are yet to be supported.
- My business has been running for 16 months and we have been inclusive from the beginning. Being involved in this project has massively strengthened our confidence in employing people with disabilities as well as providing them with the additional support I may not understand.
- We will have a more strident medical assessment prior to employment, not to restrict employment but to ensure we have the right support available from the outset.
- We have changed some of our guidelines to flow chart form to help those with dyslexia.
- We are reviewing our evacuation procedures and will liaise with ENABLE on what is the best approach.

Note that in a later informal discussion, one employer identified an issue concerning her general staff who were unsure how to treat the MA who was in a wheelchair to avoid making her feel awkward in any way. ENABLE Scotland suggested tailored training on communication which would include the MA. This would seem to be a typical approach within the Project, typified by the comment from an employer quoted elsewhere in this report.

- They just get in there and address any problem.

4.2.5 Would you do it again? Why?

Nearly all respondents were emphatic that they would be involved in a project like this again.

- Yes. Without question there are many individuals that have potential and should be given opportunities by employers.
- Yes, I would do it again for the simple reason of creating opportunities for people with a disability to feel valued, wanted and needed and to show them they are capable and contribute greatly to the running of a business.
- Yes, I feel the support is invaluable for the progression and development of the client.
- Yes - all though we are still at an early stage, you can see how far (the MA) has come and her confidence is growing each day. She has helped our team out loads and she quickly picks up any tasks that are given to her.
- Yes. I firmly believe in giving opportunities to this group.
- Yes, to give a young person a chance.
- Yes, as it has been a smooth process

However a few employers were slightly more cautious.

- If the right opportunity and candidate were to arise then yes.
- This is our first MA. We will evaluate the scheme towards the end of the apprenticeship. We would absolutely not exclude candidates with complex needs but would need to ensure for both employer and the candidate that we were able to support their needs from the outset.

4.3 Summary

- The high rate of response to the two questionnaires (83% for training providers and 71% for employers) is in itself a measure of how the Supported MA Project has been received.
- For nearly three quarters of the employers (73%) this was the first time they had actually taken on a Modern Apprentice and only one had had any previous experience of a Modern Apprentice with complex needs.
- The reason for doing so now varied with a few having employed the young person and not being aware of their needs and the employer contacting ENABLE Scotland or other consortium partner to seek assistance. Others had been identified by ENABLE Scotland or by training providers already linked in with Open Doors Consortium members as being potential suitable employers for the young persons they were working with.
- On the other hand most training providers involved in the project (78%) had some experience of working with this client group, although one training provider who had a lot of experience and expertise commented that he had learnt a lot from his involvement with the project that he would be able to transfer this to other trainees his company was involved with. Other comments were made about the transferable skills that employers and training providers had acquired.
- The various aspects of support were all valued. The financial incentive for training providers was much appreciated, especially in times of reduced SDS funding, with 78% seeing it as of some importance, important or very important. Many were using the funding to acquire tablets, laptops or materials which were making an immense difference to the confidence of the Modern Apprentices.

However, it was the support provided by ENABLE Scotland and the various support workers which was most appreciated.

5.0 Details of Online Survey – Modern Apprentices

This survey was circulated to 19 of the 20 Modern Apprentices by their own Support Worker although the results were collected centrally. It had been designed in such a way that a basic question was asked and then could be expanded on with the assistance of the Support Worker if the MA wished this. It was felt that it was not appropriate to ask the remaining apprentice to complete the survey due to her personal situation at the time.

All issued surveys were returned, giving an impressive 100% completion rate. This was largely due to the encouragement of the support workers.

In addition, 3 MAs agreed to a face to face interview, accompanied by their support worker if requested, to further discuss their responses.

MA Survey Results

5.1.1 Has ENABLE or other Open Door Consortium member helped you in your Modern Apprenticeship? If so, how?

100% of respondents said that ENABLE and other Consortium members had helped them in their Modern Apprenticeship.

For some, it had been prior to starting their MA.

- They answered questions I didn't know who else to ask e.g what is a CV?; who can I speak to about my eating disorder?
- They helped me secure my Modern Apprenticeship and get me the clothes and equipment I needed to start. .
- They found the (original) placement and arranged for me to start the MA.
- They helped with application, presentation and interview prep.
- They found a training provider and employer. We had lots of meetings in between and included everyone so everyone was happy.

For others, the main help had been once they had started the MA.

- Given me a lot more support in terms of doing new tasks and helped with coursework.
- Checks in with {employer} to make sure everything is ok and helps.
- Supported me in work.
- Visits to make sure everything is ok, listens to my concerns and will help if I need it
- Helped with equipment, so was able to do tasks

Several referred to overall support.

- Mentoring though course and now assisting securing another job
 - Enable has been there for support the whole time.
 - Generally has offered support to me to make sure I am doing ok
 - Always help me build my confidence
-

5.1.2 Has ENABLE or other Open Doors Consortium member worked with your employer? If so, how?

Besides one scenario where ENABLE had had difficulty establishing regular contact with the employer, all the respondents said the Open Doors Consortium member had worked with their employer, although a few were unclear in what way. Most, however, gave clear explanations of what the relationship entailed.

- They are in regular contact. They stay in touch through email, phone and face to face
- X has kept in touch with (employer) to make sure everything is ok. She has also met with (employer) to talk about how to best support me.
- They come to complete reviews and for visits
- Frequently keeping in touch and figuring out ways to keep me on a positive path in terms of developing.
- Enable has met with my employer and discussed areas of improvement and areas I'm doing well in
- Helped employer to support me in my position.
- X will visit regularly and discuss me with employer and raise any issues I have

A few examples were very hands on and practical rather than general support.

- They assessed my work and provided equipment that will help me perform my duties better
- They sorted hours, wages

One MA was grateful that the support worker could speak with the employer in some difficult situations.

- X will speak to my boss when I feel he is being unfair/ I have any issues
-

5.1.3 Has ENABLE or other Open Doors Consortium member been working with your Training Provider to help you reach your goals? If so, how?

There were 7 of the 19 respondents who stated that they were not sure or didn't know if there had been any involvement or there has been no work done with the training provider.

- Advised about equipment as well any British Sign Language interpreters which helps a lot.
- ENABLE met me, employer and MA provider to talk about my needs
- Yes, making sure I am passing my assessments
- Yes - identifying next steps.
- They have discussed my progress overall
- Catches up with Y (Training Provider) to update and makes sure everything is ok.
- Providing support and also suggesting ways of getting much more done.
- Enable and the training provider are in regular contact. Enable and the training provider make sure that all adjustments are made. They worked together to make sure everyone is happy.
- Informing them of my needs

5.1.4 Has your employment coordinator (support worker) been approachable? When have you asked them for help?

All the MAs agreed that their support worker/employment coordinator had been very approachable. The responses showed that in many cases they felt they could ask for assistance with issues they came across even before they started their MA.

Many gave examples of the ongoing support given in their current employment.

- I know I can always contact them and I see them regularly.
- I have approached X lots of times because of change of staff, hours, pay, shifts.
- I've asked for help when I am struggling to do things in the work place and know my shift pattern
- I have asked A to speak to employer to reduce my hours due to my mobility. This was then amended easily.
- Any small problems or worries I have had help with, I would always ask M if I need to.
- I have asked them for lots of help and X has been very approachable.
- I have asked for help with making sure my job forms are correct.

Some examples showed that they MAs also felt they could approach the MAs about quite personal problems.

- We talk about my mental health regularly as that is something that affects me.
- We talk about budgeting as I have a new flat
- When I'm feeling a bit low

One MA is not currently in employment due to the firm she was originally employed with having closed, but the support was still there.

- Now assisting me with securing another job
-

5.1.5 Do you think your support could have been improved? If so, in what way?

16 of the 19 MAs asked were happy with the support they had received.

- I can't think of anything that needs to be improved right now.
- I am happy with current level of support
- No, I am happy.

One responded that they didn't know, but 2 indicated they thought the support could have been improved, although only one gave an example of how it could be improved.

- There could have been communication with parent, care giver, who would also have helped with course



5.2 Additional MA Comments

Face to face interviews were held with 3 Modern Apprentices at their places of work. Two MAs opted to have their support worker present. There were no set questions but the MAs were encouraged to talk about the following.

- What is your education, training and employment background?
- How did you get this particular job?
- Any particular ways their support worker has helped you in your journey to date?

5.2.1

Modern Apprentice A had had a fairly straightforward education and employment background. He had done some casual work in a bar and fast food place while doing a NC level 6 in Business Admin. He sought a Modern Apprenticeship through a training provider and was successful at interview for his current position.

In his own words, he had had some difficulties in the first few months of his employment. It was only when ENABLE supplied him with support that he and his employer felt he had settled enough to start his MA training.

He was very emphatic that it was the assistance he was receiving from his support worker that had made the difference to his ongoing achievement.

- B is the core to everything. It's great that she knows all that's happening with (Training Provider) and (employer) so I don't have to explain it to her everytime.

He was also very pleased that the support did not end with the end of his MA .

- It's a real bonus that she'll be here to help me work out my next step and future interviews for future jobs.

He was also asked why this project was different from the support he had received before in college.

- The difference is that B (Support worker) has both the ties and knowledge and knows what I am doing.

When asked if he would recommend the project to a friend who wanted to do an MA.

- Definitely!

5.2.2

Modern Apprentice B had had quite a different experience. Her disability means she uses a wheelchair. She had struggled at college while studying for her NC in Childcare and had had a negative experience in a previous nursery which had drained her confidence. She had a lot of volunteering experience in mainstream and ASN schools but was never successful when she applied for a paid position in any of the places in which she volunteered.

It was ENABLE who suggested the idea of a Modern Apprenticeship.

Her confidence was so low that it took her support worker quite a while to convince her she should try for a Modern Apprenticeship. It was interesting to hear the MA comment that she had never heard before about Modern Apprenticeships. She commented on this.

- Without M, I would STILL not know what to do!

Once a lot of her self doubt had been overcome and she had been convinced that this was the way forward, the support worker helped prepare her for interviews and generally build up her confidence. However, the MA was very clear that the employer and workplace had to be just right, meeting all her needs, and M supported her in sourcing this.

- I knew it would only work if ALL the boxes were ticked - I had to have the proper support, an understanding employer and training provider, and a suitable workplace that allowed me free access without needing lots of adjustments. The project helped me find all of this.

She also commented on the very detailed knowledge and experience that the support worker was able to contribute to ensuring the work environment was fit for purpose.

- M thought of everything. H (the employer) was very good but M thought of all the little details that would make a big difference such as checking the height of the doorknobs to make sure I'd be able to open doors myself.

The MA was also very happy with the additional support she received from her training provider who also had met with the support worker to work out the best sort of support for the MA.

When asked what she felt was different about the Supported MA Project she was clear.

- It's the way they all work together and the great communication that there is between us all.

5.2.3

Modern Apprentice C had also had a very negative experience in previous employment which had left him so anxious he had to seek therapy. He had taken part time jobs which did not meet his intellectual needs but he still suffered from severe anxiety. He had received advice from SDS and had followed a college course and had also completed Worldhost. However, his confidence was still at a low ebb and it was only when he was referred to the project and was allocated his support worker that his confidence began to be restored.

This was his first full time job.

- M just helps me. I can talk to her about anything that worries me. She goes over things with me and helps me to be more confident.

Although his employer was very supportive, he still had had some big challenges. One was using an open line radio which had caused him great anxiety. The support worker talked this through and gave him practical support which helped.

- M helped me do dry runs with the radio, practising what I would say. That helped a lot. Then I realised that nobody else was really interested so now I just do it!

He was relatively new in his position so had not had a lot of dealings at that stage with his training provider.

Like the other interviewed MAs, he said he would definitely recommend the Project to any friends or colleagues who were in need of additional support. He also said that most would not even know what a Modern Apprenticeship was as it wasn't often spoken of, and he felt this was unfortunate.

5.3 Summary

Both the online surveys and the later face to face meetings with Modern Apprentices made it clear how appreciated, and often vital, the additional support supplied by the Supported MA Project was. In particular the role of the support workers was seen as crucial to this success. There were many specific examples given of this support. These ranged from pre-employment assistance such as sourcing a position and/or giving interview advice; in work support - perhaps liaising with employers or helping address specific challenges; and also personal issues such as timekeeping, flat hunting. In two cases where unfortunately their employment had come to an end, the MAs were grateful for the support being offered to secure a new position.

6.0 Additional discussions

Following analysis of all 3 surveys, a Focus Group was held with 2 training provider and employer representatives. There was also an informal joint meeting with some of the support workers involved in the project, followed by discussion just with the support workers on their role within the project and what they themselves had learnt from their involvement..

6.1 Focus Group

6.1.1 What Makes this Project Different?

Both Focus Group members agreed that it was the relationship with the support worker that made this project different. They also felt that a knock on effect of this was that there was probably a closer working relationship between the training provider and the employer which was beneficial to all concerned.

The additional funding was also a key element.



6.2 Joint Discussions with Support Workers

The training provider, employer, support workers and the Project Leader came together between the two scheduled meetings. This informal meeting led to some interesting observations.

- There is a real need for Modern Apprenticeships to be publicised more and to be seen as a valid option for all young people including those who have additional learning or social challenges.
- A Supported Modern Apprenticeship should be an option to be suggested by support staff or training providers especially for those who have been in care or suffer from issues such as anxiety.

6.3 Discussion with Support Workers

The discussions with the support workers had a different focus from those with the training providers, employers and Modern Apprentices. Although they were asked “What is Different about this Project?”. They were also asked to reflect on their own learning journey based on their involvement with the project.

6.3.1 What have you Learned?

They all had significant experience as support workers, working with up to 30 clients at a time and supporting them pre-employment and offering in work support as appropriate. Involvement in the Supported MA project had meant a steep learning curve for them all but now they felt comfortable with all aspects of the actual Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks and how they worked and were confident in answering any queries about them from employers or the MAs themselves.

They had built up good relationships with most of the training providers. Where this had not yet been established was where the MA was confident in the training side of the project and had seen no need for additional support in this area.

When asked if they had developed any new transferable skills themselves, all said that they would use their new knowledge of Modern Apprenticeships with other non MA clients and offer this as an option where appropriate, whereas they would not probably have considered doing this before.

7.0 Conclusion

At the heart of this research are two questions- what do the stakeholders think about the supported MA project and the support they have been given, and what makes this project different?

The responses to the first question were fairly consistent. Almost all training providers, employers and Modern Apprentices valued the support that was offered. Most training providers welcomed the financial support although none gave it as the most important part of the support on offer.

Many examples were given of the huge role that the support workers gave. This ranged from guidance to employers and training providers on what materials and equipment were most appropriate for their Modern Apprentice to personal support for Modern Apprentices often struggling with confidence issues.

This also tied in with the response to the second question. What most stakeholders felt made this project different was the communication between the employer, training provider, support worker and the Modern Apprentice. Other similar projects might have support workers liaising with the MA and the employer but the linkage between ALL the key stakeholders was seen as invaluable.

There was also the impact on continuity for the young person as this project allowed for the same support worker to carry on working with the client as he or she gained a qualification unlike what happens if the client opts to go to college.

The desk research also raised some issues pertaining to the geographical spread of the Modern Apprentices and also the age of the participants. The concentration of MAs within the Central Belt was seen as a restriction that could be addressed by having regional project managers. It also highlighted the range of social or learning challenges of those who had benefitted from the project, with mental health issues, anxiety/ Aspersers and the challenges of having been previously in care being common.

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8.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review and evaluation, the following recommendations should be considered. Recommendations are presented separately for The Open Doors Consortium, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government.

8.1 Open Doors Consortium

8.1.1

The Open Door Consortium should seek funding to maintain and expand the Supported MA Project with careful consideration given to a wider client group and a more consistent geographical spread.

The Project should be extended to engage more Modern Apprentices following the same model as currently being used. To replicate the success of this current Project within the Central Belt, consideration should be given to appointing local project managers within areas in which Open Consortium partners operate.

8.1.2

The members of the Open Door Consortium should make every effort to ensure continuity of support offered to their clients.

Although there was an almost 100% positive response about satisfaction with the support received by MAs, Training Providers and employers, every effort should be made to ensure this support is consistent and, in circumstances where this might not be possible, all key stakeholders should be kept informed to minimise disruption and maintain communication and trust.

8.2 Skills Development Scotland

8.2.1

The suitability of Modern Apprenticeships as an option for those with learning or social challenges should be more widely publicised.

Despite the launch of the Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in Scotland in November 2015, there still seems to be a lack of awareness of Modern Apprenticeships in general with many young people with learning needs or social challenges leaving school or college without being aware of this alternative work based pathway to a recognised qualification.

Further video case studies and publication materials based on selected Modern Apprentices within this project should be developed to highlight their success and how they overcame their challenges with the support of the Open Doors Consortium project.

8.2.2

SDS should ensure that Training Providers and Employers are more aware of the extended age range for those with learning difficulties and the possibility of amending the Training Providers' MA allocations to accommodate these clients.

One major issue for the Project was identifying suitable Training Providers and Employers who were willing to take on a Modern Apprentice with social or learning challenges. This could be ameliorated if there was a greater awareness of the extended age range for these clients, potential financial advantages and the possibility of replacing some of their allocation of younger aged MAs with this older targeted client group.

8.3 Scottish Government

8.3.1

The Scottish Government should continue and increase funding for the Supported MA Project to allow the model to be rolled out more consistently across Scotland.

The evaluation shows a high satisfaction rate with the Supported MA project and almost all the target of 20 MAs are on track to be successful in their Modern Apprenticeship so there is a strong argument for not only continuing funding for the Project but expanding the number of MAs based on there being currently 20 MAs being managed by one project coordinator. Having a project coordinator in each area who has local experience and knowledge of potential Modern Apprentices, Training Providers and employers will facilitate the successful expansion of this excellent project.

Annex 1: Training Provider questionnaire

1. Name of Company/ Individual and contact details.
2. Has your company previously offered training to a Modern Apprentice with complex needs that you were aware of? YES/NO
3. If this is the first time you have offered training to an MA with complex support needs, can you explain why you have done so this time? YES/NO
4. How important was the offer of additional funding support in your decision to offer training to a MA with complex support needs? –Not important/Of some importance/ Important/Very important.
5. How useful did you find the support offered by the Supported Employment MA Project? Please expand on this.
6. What aspect of the support provided by this project did you value the most? If provided by this project did you value the most? Can you give any specific example where this made a difference?
7. Can you give any specific example where this additional support made a difference?
8. Please identify any changes to your company's working policies or practices which have taken place because of your involvement in this project.
9. Would you do it again? Why?
10. Are you willing to be contacted to participate in further discussion? (Choose from No, Phone call, Face to Face or Focus Group).

Annex 2: Employer questionnaire

1. Name of Company/ Individual and contact details.
2. Have you employed a Modern Apprentice before? YES/NO
3. If Yes, has any previous MA had complex support needs that you were aware of?
4. If this is the first time you have employed a MA with learning disability, can you explain why you have done so this time?
5. How useful did you find the support offered by the Supported Employment MA Project? Please expand on this.
6. What aspect of the support provided by this project did you value the most?
7. Can you give any specific example where this made a difference?
8. Please identify any changes to your company's working policies or practices which have taken place because of your involvement in this project.
9. Would you do it again? Why?
10. Are you willing to be contacted to participate in further discussion? (Choose from Phone call, Face to Face or Focus Group).

Annex 3: Modern Apprentices' questionnaire

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Who do you work for?
4. Has ENABLE (or another member of Open Doors Consortium) helped you in your Modern Apprenticeship? If so, how?
5. Has ENABLE (or another member of Open Doors Consortium) worked with your employer? If so, how?
6. Has ENABLE (or another member of Open Doors Consortium) been working with your Training Provider to help you reach your goals? If so, how?
7. Has your employment coordinator (support worker) been approachable? When have you asked them for help?
8. Do you think your support could have been improved? If so, in what way?



The Enhanced Modern Apprenticeship programme, through the Open Doors Consortium, has supported young individuals with barriers to employment to secure and sustain Modern Apprenticeships.

The Apprentice, Training Provider, Employer and ENABLE Scotland have worked together to promote an equal society for all

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