

## Fair Start Scotland – Covid19 Response Summary – May 2020

This briefing summarises the flexibilities introduced to mitigate against the impact of Covid 19 on FSS Service Providers and current and future participants.

### Background and purpose

The current Covid19 outbreak places increased financial and delivery pressures on FSS Service Providers. Scottish Government has responded by offering both financial assistance and service delivery flexibilities in line with Scottish Government procurement policy. The aim of these amendments is to: maintain the quality of service to current participants; allow Service Providers the flexibility to respond to current delivery challenges, and to ensure that Service Provider market capacity is sustained and can respond to the anticipated increase in demand for support.

Scottish Government (SG) is working closely with FSS Service Providers and other delivery partners including DWP to identify and mitigate the service-related impacts of Covid19 as they arise. Further amendments may be made. The table below summarises our response to date.

Theme	Purpose	Action
<b>Financial support</b>	Maintain support to current FSS participants; sustain FSS Service Provider financial capability to respond to future demand for employability support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce FSS Cost Plus Model in line with UK Govt procurement notice (live to end June 2020).</li> <li>The Cost Plus model effectively ensures that the Service Provider receives at least their minimum monthly costs each month. The 'cost' to SG is the difference between providers' fixed monthly costs and the monthly payment we forecast Service Providers would have received had there been no Covid 19 outbreak.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery Flexibilities</b>	Ensure participants continue to receive optimum support from FSS under the current restricted circumstances	<p>On 16th March 2020, SG implemented delivery flexibilities to provide immediate support to FSS Service Providers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirement for face to face service delivery interaction with participants</li> <li>Providers, continue to engage regularly with participants using agreed media – phone, face time etc.</li> <li>SG will not apply Service Credits during this period* where the provider has been unable to comply with the usual service delivery requirements</li> <li>Pause of usual Quality and Compliance process*</li> <li>Providers are not required to “exit” Participants from the service once their support period has ended. Participant journeys can remain in a suspended state until further notice.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants remain able to ‘pause’ their FSS journey in line with current arrangements to facilitate a health or other domestic situation which requires attention</li> <li>• Providers are not required to obtain “wet signatures” on the Participant Agreement Form or Third Party Referral Form until a future date*</li> <li>• SG has a weekly call with Service Providers to update and deal with issues arising. Other regular contract management and performance discussions remain as before and are conducted by phone where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Third Party Organisation (TPO) Referral Process</b>	Ensure that FSS Service Providers can progress TPO referrals in the temporary absence of JCP benefit eligibility checks.	JCP have advised that they are currently unable to undertake benefit eligibility checks on TPO referrals submitted by Service Providers. To ensure referrals can still be made we have introduced an interim self-declaration process from 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 until further notice.*
<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	Enabling early and effective engagement with potential participants and those who are most vulnerable to the effects of long term unemployment	<p>Continue our pre-Covid19 policy to extend eligibility for particularly vulnerable groups to Day 1 unemployed status, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals with a conviction</li> <li>• Care Experienced Young People</li> <li>• Lone Parents</li> <li>• Refugees</li> <li>• Individuals from BAME groups</li> <li>• Individuals who are resident in 15% most deprived SIMD areas</li> <li>• Individuals who are unemployed with a health condition that is a barrier to work</li> </ul>
* All changes will remain in place until the current Covid19 response period ends, at a date decided by SG.		