



**Access to Industry
Strategic Plan
2024-2027**

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About this strategic plan

Our strategic plan sets out our aims and objectives for the period from April 2024 to March 2027.

In setting this plan, Access to Industry enlisted the support of an external consultant who spoke to our clients, colleagues, Board, some funders and some partners. We took the information learned through this and put it alongside what is happening at a policy level and what our clients are currently experiencing. We did this to determine our own priorities within this landscape.

Our vision and mission

Access to Industry's mission is to support people to move into education and employment in Scotland. We do this by working with people to alleviate the barriers preventing them from making progress; creating structured programmes to build skills and confidence; developing learning opportunities; and by delivering a quality service.

Our values

Our approach to delivery is to provide a service that is accessible, non-judgemental, of quality, and relevant.

Our history

Access to Industry has worked with individuals to support them into education and employment since 2000. Initially the creative industry sector provided the focus for our programmes, but through time we expanded the remit of our work as well as our geographical reach. Our work delivers real transformative change, assisting individuals to overcome personal difficulties that impede their progress.

Originally operating from the Wester Hailes area of Edinburgh, we expanded across the East of Scotland as we developed further education 'Access Courses'. These were designed to encourage people unlikely to access mainstream college courses – without some additional support – to apply for and then retain a college place.

In 2003 we began to develop a specialism in supporting the specific needs of people in recovery from substance use. Part of this specialism was delivered in one-to-one support, but also in ensuring our programme of activity enabled routine building and the opportunity to grow both in confidence and academic qualifications. Our name changed to Access to Industry.

In 2006 we began development of another specialism, supporting people with an offending history. We offered an innovating employability 'through-care' support system initially to young men from HMP & YOI Polmont being liberated to areas in the central belt of Scotland, and subsequently to adults being liberated from HMP Edinburgh and to women offenders.

Our history and development inform the content of the programmes we offer today. We are pleased to offer a broad range of opportunities to anyone eligible, regardless of background or age. We have increased our professional skills and knowledge by supporting unemployed people with particular needs, whether they are in recovery from substance use, have an offending history, experience of homelessness, or require support for their mental health.

We now provide services in communities and HMPs across the central belt of Scotland and work with people of all working ages. We are proud to be seen by our clients as a very special, person-centred, responsive organisation with real expertise in helping people through the barriers they face towards employability. We know the way we build relationships with people is central to our – and their – success.

We are happy that, as we move to our quarter century, our aim is as it was at our inception, to assist people with barriers to progression in Scotland to move into education and employment. We will continue to make sure we offer our clients a unique service delivered in a flexible, strength based way.

Our stakeholders

In developing our 3-year strategy, we didn't want to presume we knew what was best for the people we work with, so we asked key groups what they thought of the services we provide. We asked our consultant to speak with these groups so they could speak openly and honestly.

We spoke to:

- Our clients – 18 people in 3 of our locations;
- Our staff – 22 of our colleagues through small group sessions;
- Our funders and partners – 7 key organisations through one-to-one interviews.

The consultant made some general recommendations for our strategic direction as a result of the feedback.

- Do not change your person-centred approach
- You can diversify who you work with or where, but not how you work
- You may need to push back to funders in future
- You need to keep space to respond to opportunities and threats in a very changeable landscape
- If possible, you could put resources into improving workspaces and systems, external comms and visibility

We have fed these suggestions into this strategic plan.

The context we are working in today

At this point, when we look forward to the next 3-years of delivery, we are in an environment that has a lot of challenges for the people we work with, and for us as an organisation in meeting those needs. The personal experiences of individuals being compounded by external factors such as cost of living increases (over the preceding couple of years). These add to personal challenges to progression such as mental health wellbeing, housing, benefits and access to support services.

As we write this, moving people out of poverty is a key aim of Scottish Government and local government. Local authorities are challenged with doing more to alleviate poverty, through employment and other initiatives, with stretched resources. This impacts on those providing those services for clients through having insecure funding (often annual) and impacting on planning and resourcing.

There is a policy focus in Scotland for employability services to have a person-centred approach. This person-centred approach has been – since our inception – part of our

delivery. For Access to Industry, this approach is a 'non-negotiable', we will not pursue funding that requires us to dilute this. The clients we work with have support needs that must be met for them to progress.

We need to ensure that our services are accessible and respectful of all those who are eligible for them. Our service works from a basis of having a human rights approach.

We will work to the priorities of national and local Government but will not assume that we know, within those priorities, how to best meet the needs of our current and potential clients. We will involve our clients in determining our 'offers', providing a voice for people with lived experience within our organisation.

We need to operate in a way that promotes fair work. Both for our clients and our colleagues. We aim to move people into work that is fair in terms of its conditions. As an organisation we need to lead by example and have a fair work agenda at our core.

The unpredictable, challenging and changeable context makes forward planning difficult. We will work hard to continue delivering our successful services whilst also identifying opportunities to meet needs in new ways. We want to be a sustainable, innovative and flexible organisation using our expertise to help our clients move forward.

Our unique contribution and approach

At Access to Industry, we provide a service that is accessible and valued by the people we work with. We asked our clients what they thought of the service we provide, and they said it was:

- Person-centred;
- Flexible;
- Empowering;
- Relationship based;
- Non-judgemental.

We asked our clients what they thought our service provided to them, they said it supported them in:

- Building confidence;
- Learning to talk to other people;
- Emotional support;
- Getting qualifications;
- Getting into work;
- Chance to find out what you're good at;
- Somewhere safe to go, out of the flat;
- Someone to talk to;
- Getting your brain working.

The thoughts of our clients show that they appreciate that we offer a person-centred approach, flexible to their needs, and in providing learning opportunities. But we are not complacent in this. We will continue to ask for their involvement and feedback in developing our activity. We will build the learning that we provide to meet their needs.

We know that we can't meet all our clients' needs alone. We will continue to work in collaboration, formal and informal, with other organisations to develop our services and to build the support networks for our clients.

We work closely with our funders, who say they can continue to trust us to deliver what we set out in funding bids and applications – and deliver value.

Our aims and objectives for the next 3 years

Our development over the next 3-years will be focused on 4 main aims, to:

1. Deliver an employability service of quality that progresses individuals towards work:
 - Design and deliver employment projects;
 - Sustain current level of services;
 - Collaborate with other agencies and organisations;
 - Promote our services to key policy makers and influencers in order to widen awareness of services, and influence change;
 - Be flexible to adapt to needs of client groups and the wider employability environment;
 - Deliver a service of quality and evaluation/continuous improvement.
2. Continue to listen and work with our clients to deliver a service that is inclusive and relevant:
 - Consult with our clients;
 - Be consistent in ensuring there is the opportunity for people with ‘lived experience’ to participate within the organisation;
 - Ensure there are opportunities for peer training;
 - Organise an annual event, the Certificate Ceremony;
 - Make information on Access to Industry readily available.
3. Provide a fair workplace for our colleagues:
 - Ask colleagues what the best way is to consult and seek their input;
 - Determine an agenda of ‘worker welfare’ issues including the working environment, internal systems and seek their input;
 - Develop policy and an environment that promotes inclusivity and diversity on recruitment and in employment;
 - Encourage development of staff through training and other opportunities (i.e. attendance at events).
4. Build on our Community Colleges to deliver relevant accredited learning for our clients:
 - Support staff to deliver in-house accredited learning;
 - Develop a portfolio of accredited qualifications delivered in-house;
 - Develop outreach training.

How we will measure success

Our success over the next 3-years will be in how we sustain and develop our offer to clients. These will be measured through achievement of aims and objectives set.

Measurement criteria have been set for each objective. We will formally report as an organisation on progress towards these each year. We will report at each of our Board meetings.

Access to Industry Aims and Objectives

April 2024 to March 2027

Deliver an employability service of quality that progresses individuals towards work.

We will	In (Y1/Y2/Y3)	In order to	How it will be measured	What resources/skills we need
Design and deliver employment projects. Sustain current level of services.	Y1-Y3	Maintain current offer. Support the needs of clients within employability services, including those around mental health; human rights; recovery; and trauma.	Funding secured to deliver services to the same level across the 3 years of the strategy. Successful funding applications; staffing level; number of clients supported annually.	Resources: information/research and feedback on client needs; budgets Skills: Application writing.
Collaborate with other agencies and organisations.	Y1-3	Ensure employment service is joined up with other support.	Formal partnerships, informal partnerships and referrals to other services.	Networks: be networked in the areas we deliver Skills in developing service level agreement.
Promote our services to key policy makers and influencers to widen awareness of services, and influence change.	Y1-3	Showcase the service provided and the benefit to client group.	Social Media data; membership of networks.	Investment in communications.
Be flexible to adapt to needs of client groups and the wider employability environment.	Y1-3	Remain relevant to client needs, funder priorities and respond to gaps/needs in services.	New projects; training for staff.	Knowledge: Managers to be strategically placed to be aware of wider strategy development in employability. Training for staff to deliver support.
Deliver a service of quality with evaluation/continuous improvement.	Y1-3	Sustain and improve service relevance.	Feedback: staff, clients, Monitoring systems: outcomes, outputs.	Skills to develop management reporting/systems.

Continue to listen and work with our clients to deliver a service that is inclusive and relevant.

We will	In (Y1/Y2/Y3)	In order to	How it will be measured	What resources/skills we need
Consult with our clients to ensure quality and relevance.	Y1	Evaluate the services we offer and develop current and new services.	Numbers of consultation; number of responses; changes instigated as part of consultation.	Smarter use of current technology and stats. Plan engagement/consultation across the organisation.
Be consistent in ensuring there is the opportunity for people with 'lived experience' to participate within the organisation.	Y2	Give individuals experience and responsibility within a supported environment.	Participation in 'focus' groups, surveys, evaluations. Individuals taking part in internal volunteering.	Skills in developing surveys; composing evaluation; developing volunteer opportunities.
Ensure there are opportunities for peer training.	Y2	Provide peer supporters within Access to Industry and facilitate external opportunities.	Number of clients participating in peer support training; number of clients becoming Peer Supporters or Mentors.	Supported access to Peer Support training.
Organise an annual event, the Certificate Ceremony.	Y1-3	Celebrate client successes for the graduation ceremony; support clients to share stories; promote the value of Access to Industry.	Event held; clients attending; stakeholders attending; number of certificates given; feedback.	Finance: costs for venue/catering/certificates. Time: preparation time for the event.
Make information on Access to Industry readily available.	Y2	Ensure clients have the information they need.	Feedback from clients and colleagues; 'hits' on the website for the pages.	Website development company; financial.

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Provide a fair workplace.

We will	In (Y1/Y2/Y3)	In order to	How it will be measured	What resources/skills we need
Ask colleagues what the best way is to consult and seek their input.	Y1	Determine a system, or systems, for consultation with colleagues.	Number and nature of consultation exercises.	Consultations, 'focus' groups.
Determine an agenda of 'worker welfare' issues, including the working environment, internal systems and seek input.	Y2	That employees have an effective voice within Access to Industry. Discuss and take forward topics to the benefit of the wider organisation and colleagues.	Change in systems.	TBC – depending on systems, could include meeting space.
Develop policy and an environment that promotes inclusivity and diversity on recruitment and in employment.	Y2	Attract, retain and develop a wide range of staff.	Monitor diversity on recruitment; review policy.	Data capture templates; practices that encourage recruitment from wide range of sources; equality and diversity training for all staff; equalities impact assessment.
Encourage development of staff through training and other opportunities (i.e. attendance at events).	Y1-Y3	Have a skilled workforce who have the tools for the role and are given space to develop; to support retention.	Details, numbers of training attended.	Budget/finance for training; network of training providers.

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Build on our Community Colleges to deliver relevant accredited skills based learning for our clients.

We will	In (Y1/Y2/Y3)	In order to	How it will be measured	What resources/skills we need
Support staff to deliver in-house accredited learning.	Y1	Ensure staff members have the relevant skills to deliver and assess SQA qualifications.	Training undertaken. Number of people delivering training.	Finance for training/delivery, access to trainer training. An internal assessor.
Develop a portfolio of accredited qualifications delivered in-house.	Y2-Y3	To offer clients of Access to Industry qualifications; to reduce reliance on accreditation through other bodies.	Number of different qualifications. Total number of qualifications. Locations qualifications delivered in.	Workbooks for training delivery; skills to delivery qualifications; staff time and staff space for delivery; internal assessor.
Develop outreach training.	Y2-Y3	To offer Access to Industry accredited qualifications in more areas in which we operate.	Number of qualifications offered; number of qualifications achieved by clients.	Course/qualifications workbooks; venues for delivery; internal assessor.