

## **ADDITIONAL COSTS RELATING TO ISLES OF SCILLY RESIDENTS WHEN ACCESSING SKILLS, TRAINING AND WORK BASED LEARNING**

### **Introduction**

The Isles of Scilly is a small archipelago 28 miles from Land's End with a population of 2300, 700 of whom are in full time employment (Nomis stats). Travel links to the mainland are by ferry to Penzance (summer only), and by plane to Land's End and Newquay (year round) and Exeter (summer only).

This paper sets out to illustrate the financial disadvantages faced by residents of the Isles of Scilly in accessing skills, training and work-based learning opportunities related to the additional costs associated with either the individual attending mainland based learning or the trainer/assessor being able to visit the Islands.

### **Existing Support Mechanisms and related changes**

A small discretionary travel and accommodation grant is administered on behalf of the Education Funding Agency (EFA) by the Council to contribute towards board and travel costs associated with students to access Further Education courses with mainland providers during academic years 12 and 13.

There have been some successful innovative solutions applied through the use of new technologies to facilitate distance learning to small groups of trainees on the Islands for class-based teaching to occur. We are expecting recent 'superfast' broadband connection to the mainland to have a major impact on the development of distance learning models across the Islands; however, there are significant elements of skills based training requiring hands on or face to face delivery which cannot be delivered via distance learning models.

Changes to Higher Education funding are also having an impact on career choices for young people. We have noted an increase in the number of students completing Further Education and returning to the Islands instead of moving straight into Higher Education. An increasing number of young people do not make the move at all and increasingly more students are looking at work-based learning and vocational courses instead of an academic route.

Employers report that training/up skilling which requires regular trips to the mainland is not an option for most employees with families and domestic/caring commitments. Females in lower paid employment are considered to be disproportionately affected.

Feedback from an Isles of Scilly business survey (November 2015) highlighted perceptions that apprenticeships cannot be delivered on the islands due to seasonality; no appropriate framework, travel to the mainland, significant time off if one day a week is required on the mainland and additional barriers for those not living on the main island of St Marys.

### **Barriers**

#### **Travel costs**

In 2016 flights for tutors coming across to the islands are likely to be:

| <b>From Land's End</b> | <b>From Newquay</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| £140 to £178 return    | £210 to £228 return |
| £105 for a day trip    | £120 for a day trip |

Islanders may qualify for the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company's Travel Club which would enable them to receive a reduction. Flights for Travel Club members are:

| <b>From Land's End</b> | <b>From Newquay</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| £120 to £136 return    | £161 to £180 return |
| £85 for a day trip     | £98 for a day trip  |

The airport taxi shuttle (to and from the airport to the main town) on the Isles of Scilly is £15 return.

The Scillonian (boat) costs from £90 return for non travel club members. This is not usually practical as the boat doesn't dock on the Isles of Scilly until midday – it takes 2.5 hours. Travel Club members receive a very good rate on the boat of £30. Again this is not always practical as the boat docks in Penzance at 19.30 and so an extra night's accommodation may be necessary.

Islanders attending training on the mainland will need to hire a car or catch the train from the relevant airport / harbour.

### **Accommodation and subsistence**

During the winter months the last scheduled flight from the islands is around 16.30 with check in being an hour before therefore making it difficult to deliver a full days training if making a day trip. Tutors coming to the islands to deliver/assess may need accommodation which is in the region of £50 for bed and breakfast.

For islanders who need to attend training on the mainland, bed and breakfast accommodation will be necessary in most cases.

### **Off island residents (those not resident on the main island of St Mary's)**

Inter-island boating is in the region of £9 return for a scheduled return. Particularly in the winter, scheduled inter island boats are few and far between and so a specific booking ('special' journey) is required. A 'special' boat is £100 return. This would be necessary for off island participants to attend training on St Mary's and to travel to the mainland or for a tutor to deliver/assess on one of the smaller islands.

### **Weather**

Travel to and from the Islands is also susceptible to disruption due to adverse weather conditions, particularly during the winter. Low visibility and high winds can stop flights from operating. This is not an uncommon occurrence and during the winter months there is no option of travelling by boat. This can be very disruptive and can result in courses planned to be delivered on the Islands to be cancelled at very short notice. Whilst it is not ideal for a learner to be unable to return home from the mainland it is equally undesirable for a tutor to be stuck on Scilly with the additional supply cost that may be incurred by the provider to cover the tutor's absence as well as additional accommodation costs.

### **Cohort sizes**

Being such a small community means that there is always going to be a difficulty in achieving a viable cohort size, especially when it comes to qualifications therefore income from course fees may not make it viable for providers to deliver.

## Comparative costings

A number of comparative scenarios based on previous instances have been detailed below to outline the indicative costs of accessing a range of training solutions. These do not account for the additional costs off island residents travelling to and from the main island of St Mary's to access training or travel to the mainland.

This information is provided to illustrate additional delivery costs for the Isles of Scilly. The information is correct as at 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and it is the responsibility of applicants to ensure their costs are appropriate and up to date.

### Model A: Apprenticeship

A resident of the Isles of Scilly, lodging in Cornwall and employed by a Cornish employer earning the average net pay per week of an apprentice as per the NAS live vacancy report as of 21/12/15. (Lowest weekly wage = £99, highest = £270). This does not include the costs of returning home for holidays.

|  | Weekly | Annualised |
|--|--------|------------|
| Earnings                                 | £141   | £7,332     |
| Board/ Lodgings (not inc spending money) | £150   | £7,800     |
| Local travel                             | £10    | £520       |
| Disposable income                        | -£19   | -£988      |

### Model B: Apprenticeship

Resident of the Isles of Scilly, living on Scilly and employed by a Scillonian employer accessing college based learning for one day per week for 38 weeks per year. This does not include assessor visits.

|   | Weekly   | Annualised |
|---|--|------------|
| Earnings  | £141   | £7332      |
| Board/lodgings (not inc spending money)                             | £70  | £3640      |
| Average cost of return trip to mainland by ship or plane x 38 weeks | £79<br>19 wks @ £30 (boat)<br>19 wks @£128 (average plane) | £3002      |
| Overnight stays to fit with travel plans x 38 weeks                 | £100<br>£50 per night x 2 nights x 38 wks                  | £3800      |
| Surface transport x 38 weeks  | £20  | £760       |
| Disposable income   |  | -£3870     |

### Model C: Apprenticeship

Resident of the Isles of Scilly, living on Scilly and employed by a Scillonian employer accessing college based learning for one week per half term. This does not include assessor visits.

|  | Weekly                                     | Annualised |
|--|--|------------|
| Earnings   | £141                                       | £7332      |
| Board/lodgings (not inc spending money)                      | £70  | £3640      |
| Average cost of return trip to mainland by ship or plane x 6 | £79<br>3 wks @ £30<br>3 wks @£128          | £474       |
| Overnight stays to fit with travel plans x 6 weeks           | £350<br>£50 per night x 7 nights x 6 weeks | £2100      |
| Surface transport x 6 weeks                                  | £20  | £120       |
| Disposable income  |  | £998       |

### Model D: NVQ undertaken on the Isles of Scilly

3 to 5 days for assessor between £255 and £636 for flights, accommodation and transfer

3 to 5 full taught days between £255 and £636 for flights, accommodation and transfer

Total between £510 and £1272 (depending on flights taken and number of trips necessary).

### Model E: 10 day L3 Management course

5 x 2 taught days between £925 and £1475 (depending on flights taken and accommodation required)

### Model F: One day business courses e.g. Customer Care

Between £120 and £290 (depending on flights taken and whether it is necessary to stay the night)

In addition to the above, the recent costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence for training an Air Traffic Controller was £15,000. The Five Islands School is currently supporting a member of staff to qualify as a French teacher. Total travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for this will be available in due course.

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