

Dear Belfast City Councillor,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Right to Work: Right to Welfare (R2W) group. We are a group of people unemployed and people out of work on welfare benefits.

As Belfast City Councillors representing some of the most marginalised people in our society, you will be only too aware of destructive impact which both the lack of employment opportunities and the negative impact of welfare cuts, is having on the most disadvantaged people of Belfast.

This crisis is not of Belfast City Council's making. However, it is within your power, collectively as a Council, to take positive steps to creating real outcomes for those in most need.

Belfast City Council spends in excess of £40m every year on procurement – using public money to purchase goods and services for the benefit of the people of Belfast. Also, the large amount of public money being provided through contracts to non-public bodies provides Belfast City Council with a unique and untapped opportunity.

Currently Belfast City Council does not include clauses in its procurement contracts which make it compulsory for real jobs to be ring fenced for the long term unemployed (12+ months).

Rather, Belfast City Council, at most, provides Steps to Work placements for the unemployed which amounts to less than £3 per hour with minimal outcomes in terms of sustainable employment.

Yet this is not only possible to create Real Jobs, it is currently being done elsewhere.

The Department for Culture Arts and Leisure, in its construction of the £15m Ravenhill stadium inserted clauses which aimed at delivering real employment and wages to the long-term unemployed in some of our most disadvantaged communities (see attached Councillor Briefing).

The difference between the two approaches, as demonstrated in the below chart, is stark:

	General 'Social Clauses' administered in public sector	DCAL Contract - Ravenhill Stadium
<b>EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Work experience placements on benefits	- 7 fully paid jobs - Living Wage Foundation requirement
<b>APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES</b>	'formally recognised' apprenticeships	- 4 fully paid apprenticeships
<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	Targeted at <i>Steps to Work</i> participants. At maximum	Ring-fenced for those most likely to experience long-term unemployment (12+ months)

	long term unemployed defined as 3+ months	Target groups based on a Section 75 (1) Equality Assessment
<b>RETENTION</b>	No focus on retention	Requirements to prove provision of “ <i>meaningful work providing experience, development and marketable skills which will enhance the person’s skill set for continued and future employment development.</i> ” And incentives to retain existing LTU employees
<b>QUANTITY</b>	Ratio - <i>jobs: contract value</i>	Limited outcomes (7 jobs, 4 apprenticeships) but no ‘formula’
<b>MONITORING</b>	Monitoring through DEL, but no evidence of systemic outcomes monitoring across contracts	- Monthly monitoring by DCAL with actions required
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	‘Contract Performance Clauses’	Carried out under Section 75 (1) NI Act 1998 Assessed at selection/interview stage Included in the ‘subject matter’ of the contract ‘Non-delivery’ considered a “breach of contract”

Additionally, a 2003-05 pilot project carried out by the Department of Finance and Personnel involved the ring-fencing of jobs for the unemployed into contracts for construction and services.

This approach is legal. Precedents and templates exist from its application elsewhere and it is currently being implemented by a Government Department.

With political will, this approach could be implemented across the entire public sector.

Since April 2013 members of the R2W group have visited every dole office in Belfast and spoken with thousands of unemployed people. We have developed a ‘Real Jobs’ motion which we would like Belfast City Council to adopt ensuring that the Council uses all powers available to it (for example planning and procurement) to provide a legal clause which ring-fences jobs for the long term unemployed.

Over 1500 unemployed people from across the communities in the city have signed our petition asking Belfast City Councillors to pass the following motion:

***“That this Council recognises the increasing social and economic hardship experienced by people in our communities as a result of growing unemployment and cuts to welfare benefit; council accepts it has a duty to use the powers available to it (including but not limited to planning, regulation and procurement powers), to generate positive outcomes for the most marginalised in our communities and hereby commits to include a ‘Real Jobs’ clause at every available opportunity, in contracts tendered by council to procure goods, services and capita works. The ‘Real Jobs clause’ will guarantee ring fenced, fully paid jobs and apprenticeships for the long-term unemployed (12+ months)”***

By passing this motion, Belfast City Councillors can lead the way by showing that it is possible to progress, with one voice, a practical initiative that will generate positive outcomes for all communities, particularly those communities who have suffered long standing neglect and are bearing the brunt of unemployment and welfare reform.

We would like to respectfully offer political parties a briefing on the 'Real Jobs' motion.

Practically, the motion does not currently have a sponsor, and we are open to offers of sponsorship. However, we feel it is of best interest if the motion was not 'owned' by a particular party but supported on a cross-party basis – reflecting the public support it has attracted to date.

To demonstrate support for the motion, the Right to Work: Right to Welfare group have set up a / *'Councillors in Support of the Real Jobs Motion'* webpage, where every Belfast City Councillor declaring support will be listed.

See [www.pprproject.org](http://www.pprproject.org) for further details, or contact Seán Brady at [sean@pprproject.org](mailto:sean@pprproject.org) 90313315 (w) to request a briefing and/or register your support.

Please find enclosed a copy of the petition signed by over **1500** unemployed people.

Given the urgency of the unemployment crisis we respectfully request a response within 20 working days. It is our hope as a group that the council can unite to pass this motion before the year's end.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support.

A copy of the petition has also been circulated to media outlets today.

Yours sincerely,

...The Right to work: Right to Welfare group.