

Fife Employability Forum

Improving employment outcomes for the people of Fife

Wednesday 12 November 2014, Rothes Halls

A total of Forty one people attended the Fife Employability Forum on Wednesday 12 November. All slides from presentations will be made available on our website within the forum report.

Update Presentations

Adam Dunkerley, Opportunities Fife Partnership

The UK Partnership Agreement for European Funding was adopted on 29 October 2014 by the European Commission. Scottish Government submitted draft Operational Programmes for both European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Funding (ESF) in July of this year. With the approval of the Partnership Agreement, the Operational Programmes are now expected to be formally resubmitted during November for final approval by the end of this year.

There have been two allocations:

- Pipeline activities - £7.03 million
- Poverty and social inclusion – £1.9 million

The Scale of Unit Cost Model has been tested, the National Rules have been published and the Operational Programme has been agreed. A set of definitions for the activities and outcomes that will be eligible for payments, has been proposed.

Further work will be required to put in place the processes for delivery, management and verification of the pipeline activities. Due to the nature and complexity of this, it appears unlikely that the proposals will be approved by January 2015. As is the case with other Local Authorities who are awaiting this funding, a contingency planning paper will be submitted to the OFP Executive on 25 November 2014 to discuss additional transition arrangements.

Janet McQueen, Partnership Manager, Department for Work and Pensions

All Job Centre Plus offices have gone digital, including new job search units, digital signing-in and WIFI. Customers can now book slots to use the computer facilities to help with their digital job search requirements. Janet outlined hardship payments which are an award of Income Based JSA made at a reduced rate to give a minimum level of financial support. Hardship payments can be made to certain people who do not qualify for JSA under normal rules or who would suffer hardship if JSA is not paid due to sanctions. Several conditions must be met for a payment to be made.

Joe MacIntyre, FORT

FORT, which has been running for eight years, is now receiving approximately 100 referrals a month and has in excess of 7000 records. The CRMS is remaining the same due to European Funding. It is confirmed NHS Fife are joining FORT.

Highlights of the new system:

- Suitable for making/tracking outcomes for payments.
- Opportunities Fife Partnership system and FORT will connect in the future.

- Opportunities Fife vacancies will be on the system.
- You will be able to match qualifications to vacancies.
- Interviews can be organised.
- Standard letters can be created.
- Fort now comes with an integrated budgeting and income expenditure tool.
- In the New Year FORT will come with integrated e-mail options.

New Partnerships in Fife

The forum then heard from two new exciting partnerships in Fife:

Fife Rural Skills Partnership - <http://fiferuralskills.com/>

Ninian Stuart, Falkland Centre for Stewardship and Paul Cruise, Living Solutions presented on the Fife Rural Skills Partnership which aims to increase the rural skills training and opportunities in Fife. They have forestry and hut building apprenticeships. The key priorities of the partnership are employability, multi-employer apprenticeships, and employer support.

Fife Employability and Training Consortium – Fife-ETC - <http://fife-etc.org/>

John Oates, BRAG Enterprises presented on the development of the Consortium, including: delivery targets, consortium partners, and the positives and challenges of working within a consortium. Laura Crombie, Clued-Up Project presented on her perspective of working within the consortium, again highlighting the positives and challenges this new approach had brought.

Road Testing your Partnership Ideas – Facilitated Session with Sue Newberry

Sue Newberry invited members of the group to contribute ideas for partnerships they could develop with colleagues in the room. Five themes were identified.

- Increasing opportunities to learn skills through building huts
- Funding partnerships/fundraising
- European Fund Partnership
- Homelessness
- Self-Directed Support

Followed by a seminar on the key principles of successful partnership working.

My Shout

Irene Blackburn – LinkLiving

LinkLiving are recruiting for a Volunteer Worker (employability). This vacancy will close on Monday 24 November 2014.

Elaine Fox – Energi

Energi offer training and support on Self-Directed Support. To find out more visit Energi's website here: <http://www.energi.org.uk/>

Sue Newberry – Funding Ideas Ltd

A webinar on OWLS will take place on Wednesday 19 November.

Janet McQueen – DWP

Since the introduction of JSA and ESA, the number of waiting days that has to be served before JSA or ESA can be paid is 3 days, this takes effect as of 27 October 2014. All new claims with a First Effective Date (on or after 27 October 2014) will have to serve seven consecutive calendar waiting days before benefits can be paid.

Repeat claims that link back to a claim with a Job seeking period or limited capability work prior to 27 October 2014 and those who have already served three waiting days on a previous claim are not required to serve the additional four waiting days.

Claimants do not have to serve waiting days in their current claim if:

- Their entitlement to JSA/ESA begins within 12 weeks of the end of their entitlement to to:
 - Income Support (IS)
 - Pension Credit
 - Carers' Allowance
 - Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance
 - ESA/JSA
 - JSA as a joint claim couple
- They are 16 or 17 years old and are only entitled to JSA because of severe hardship
- They are claiming Credits only
- The nominated member of a JSA joint claim couple is currently getting a training allowance or
 - they claim JSA/ESA; and the claimant or their partner has an existing award of IS, JSA or ESA; and ends that award on the day immediately before the new claim takes effect
- They make a joint-claim for JSA and they or their partner has had an entitlement to another benefit in the last 12 weeks: JSA, IS, ESA, IB or CA
- They claim ESA and are terminally ill
- They claim ESA following a period of Statutory Sick Pay or sickness while in Her Majesty's Forces