



## **Fife Employability Forum**

### ***Improving employment outcomes for the people of Fife***

Wednesday 30 April 2014, Rothes Halls

32 people attended the Fife Employability Forum held on Wednesday 30 April 2014 at Rothes Halls. 17 from attended from the third sector, 11 attended from Fife Council, 1 from SDS, 1 from DWP, 1 from Fife College and 1 from the private sector.

During the forum 6 presentations were given and a group discussion was held around what topics should be covered at future forums.

### **Phil Martin (Department for Work and Pensions)**

Phil outlined what provisions are being put in place for clients before entering and upon leaving the Work Programme. This process is currently live in Fife and has been since Monday 28 April 2014. Phil has sent us some slides which summarise this process and these are shared on our website.

*Pre-Work Programme provision* will include quarterly work search interviews and, phased in over the next six months, weekly work search reviews and 'day one conditionality' which will require people to have an email address, an established CV and be registered on Universal Jobmatch prior to their initial worksearch interview.

A number of changes were highlighted for lone parents including mandatory work-related activity for parents whose youngest child is 3-4yrs old. Travel and childcare costs will be met.

*Post-Work Programme provision* will follow one of three options depending on the assessment made by an individual's Work Coach:

1. Mandatory Intervention Regime where Coaches will spend much more time with clients
2. Daily Work Search Reviews (phased in between now and Dec 2014)
3. Community Work Placements lasting up to 6 months for up to 30hrs/week.

The Community Work Placement provider for Scotland has been announced as Learn Direct, although it is not yet known who will deliver this locally to Fife .

The DWP Flexible Support Fund for 2014/15 will focus on key client groups such as: ex-offenders, supported employment, lone parents, those with caring responsibilities, and improving digital skills.

If you are interested in making an application please contact Phil in the first instance:

[phil.martin1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phil.martin1@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Q&A**

*Is there really going to be a 35hr/week jobsearch commitment?* Yes, this will include any work-related activity such as appropriate volunteering and work placements.

*How much flexibility will be given around Day One Conditionality for people who are unaware of the expectation or do not have the skills?* Clients who have the skills will be given an agreed timeframe to get these elements in place. Where they do not have the skills to do so they will be referred to an appropriate free course. These are currently being developed by Fife College and Community Learning & Development.

*For those required to do daily signing will their travel expenses be paid?* Yes, these costs can be claimed whenever people have to travel to the jobcentre on a non-signing on day.

*Will volunteering be considered as work-related activity?* Yes, as long as it is deemed appropriate. No sanctions should be in place for this.

*Will people be expected to attend at the job centre 35hrs/week to undertake their jobsearch?* No, this can be undertaken at any venue relevant to the client whether a public or private computer.

*How will this affect for example older people who have very limited literacy, no digital skills, and no interest in gaining digital skills?* They will still be expected to use online jobsearch tools. There will be support through the Fife College/Fife Council Introduction to IT Courses that are being developed and delivered at the moment. Using jobs that interest people as a hook is a good start.

#### **Heather Tytler (Skills Development Scotland)**

Heather gave a brief update on the Employability Fund allocations for 2014. The fund covers stages 2, 3 and 4 of the employability pathway and covers three age bands.

Fife Council Consortium includes:

The Workers' Educational Association  
Oilean (Training and Nurture) Ltd  
Employability Enterprise Consultancy Ltd  
West Fife Enterprise Ltd  
Momentum Skills  
Lever Training Ltd  
Princes Trust  
Xtra Mile  
Fife Council

A provider event is being held on Wednesday 07 May at 2.00pm in the Glen Pavilion, Dunfermline. Heather has reserved 12 spaces for members of the Fife Employability Forum. Please contact Christine Davison by **midday on Tuesday 06 May** if you wish to attend.

**Adam Dunkerley (Fife Council, Opportunities Fife Partnership Manager)**

Adam provided an update on the latest thinking on the Fife Employability Pathway Commissioning Framework and on simplified costs for future European Funding. A copy of his slides are available in the attachments.

- a. **FEP Commissioning Framework** takes into account key findings from the review of the Fife Employability Pathway provision undertaken by Alan McGregor (TERU) in 2014. The Framework targets spending for European Funding 2014-20 and Fairer Scotland Funding – FSF will focus on the 20% most deprived areas in Fife according to the SIMD. It also highlights key strategic groups who would benefit from targeted interventions such as: Long term unemployed, literacy and numeracy, IT skills for work, school leavers at risk of becoming NEET, looked after young people, ex-offenders, disability & health issues, carers & those with family responsibilities. The Framework should be finalised by mid-May, expressions of interest are to be expected by the end of May, with proposals submitted by mid-June and projects commencing in early July.
- b. **Simplified Costs** are being introduced to reduce the audit and verification process currently associated with ESF funding. One of three methodologies will be used: Scale of unit costs, Flat rate for indirect costs, and lump sum payments for small one-off activities. This will be decided at a national level.

**Q&A**

*What is your gut-feeling on whether or not EU Funds will kickstart at the beginning of July as the Scottish Government states?* At the moment it is impossible to say. The Scottish Government continues to commit to this start point however there are many issues such as the forthcoming European Elections and the fact that the UK level documents have still not been submitted for consideration which will affect this. FifeCouncil are 'keeping their fingers on the pulse' so that they are ready to respond as soon as decisions are made.

*Does the target group 'people with health and disabilities issue's only include those registered for disability related benefits?* No, this should include anyone for whom their health or disability presents an established barrier to accessing employment.

*Can you explain how you calculated the Lit & Num cohort?* These figures are based on a Literacy & Numeracy Report provided by Community Learning & Development in Fife Council.

**Lucinda McAllister (Fife Council, Employability & Employer Engagement)**

Lucinda updated the group on:

- a. The Opportunities Fife website which has been updated with lots of new functionality including online application forms and (eventually) employers being able to upload jobs directly. Phase 2 discussions are about to start, bringing together the wider partnership, and a more involved group discussion about the future look and feel of the website.
- b. Single Point of Contact and an increased use of social media.

- c. Fife Youth Job Contact: An event is planned for Friday 20 June 2014 about celebrating the success of the Fife Youth Job Contract. This will cover various sectors where employers, delivery partners and young people will get the opportunity to network.
- d. Work to encourage women into engineering.
- e. Youth Employment Scotland (YES) funding is being used to support the Fife Youth Job Contract funding. This will help to create an additional 50 – 100 jobs.
- f. The report for the Fife Employer Standard Pilot is due by end of May at which point there will be further discussion about the future of this approved qualification.
- g. The Employability and Employer Engagement Team attend all career events across Fife, showcasing training opportunities and academy and apprenticeship opportunities.
- h. Employability Future Activity: Construction academy, tourism/hospitality academy, enterprise apprenticeships, and community benefits.
- i. Fife community works programme, - could have up to £6.5million or more available to support community based work placements.

#### **Claire Neill (Fife Gingerbread, Making it Work)**

Claire shared the work Fife Gingerbread had been doing with the Making it Work programme. The programme is a partnership between Fife Gingerbread, Fife Council Client Action Team, Citizens Advice and Rights Fife, The Scottish Childminding Association, One Parent Families Scotland. Using a holistic approach they aim to break down barriers while improving skills, confidence and determination amongst lone parents with this leading to more individuals being ready to enter into employment. The project is currently only active in the Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly area but they are massively oversubscribed already and so are working to see if they can attract funding to expand into Levenmouth and Glenrothes.

#### **Inga Davidson (Employ Your Mind, Fife Employment Access Trust)**

Inga gave a lively overview of the innovative use of Cognitive Remediation Therapy in FEAT's Employ Your Mind and Grow Your Mind programmes. This pioneering work supports individuals with severe and enduring mental health problems to develop thinking and planning strategies that can help them not only in the work place but in their daily life.

#### **Future Forum Content:**

Participants were asked to identify topics they would like to see covered in future Employability Forums, and then to identify those they thought were most important using 'dots'.

We have listed the topics selected in order of preference below. There was clearly a strong interest in looking at working in partnership and engaging with employers. We will use the next two Forums to focus on these issues. We will also aim to include updates on funding, FORT and opportunities to showcase projects as core items on the agenda of each event.

In between Forum meetings we will continue to use our e-bulletin to keep people posted on developments.

We will also work with the Opportunities Fife Partnership to see how we can achieve the goal of an accessible IT Mapping Strategy.

**Forum topics in order of preference:**

1. Partnership Working (19 dots)
  - a. Growing and enabling better partnerships Fife-wide
  - b. Help with placements, training, upskilling staff
2. Employer engagement information (18 dots)
  - a. Feedback from employers on needs/training reqs
  - b. Raising awareness of range of funding/support available
  - c. Employer attendance at forum: discuss at forum
3. Funding – incl. clarity on ESIF and Employability Fund updates (12 dots)
4. Showcase projects/sharing good practice (10 dots)
5. Updates on FORT developments and good practice(10 dot)
6. Accessible IT Mapping Strategy (7 dots)
7. Welfare Reform (3 dots)
8. Volunteering and employment understanding the expectations on Vol Orgs (3 dots)
9. Work Programme Providers (3 dots)
10. Third Sector Consortium update (1 dot)

**MY Shout session:**

Pegs Bailey gave an update on the development of a third sector employability consortium which Fife Voluntary Action had undertaken to facilitate at the previous Forum. The Consortium has now held several meetings and is well underway to developing a Fife-wide employability proposal which aims to address some of the key needs identified by the draft FEP Commissioning Framework. 9 organisations have been involved to date and BRAG is acting as the lead on the Consortium.

Shirley Moyes [shirley@adviceinfrastructure.com](mailto:shirley@adviceinfrastructure.com) let the group know that she is available for FORT support and advice and that the current directory of services is being transferred to a new web location.

Helen Lawrenson spoke about the emerging Fife Rural Skills Partnership of which The Falkland Centre for Stewardship is member. There is concern around the aging workforce and career pathways into rural jobs. To help with these concerns they have arranged an event where employers will meet potential employees on the Thursday 01 May 2014. If this is successful they will run more events like this.