

Fife Employability Forum

**Eric Byiers, Chief Executive
Fife Chamber of Commerce**

Employers' Perspective

Developing the Young Workforce in Fife



Overview

- Benefits of employment clear – employer engagement critical
- Range of employer contributions – input to groups/classes; help with CV's and interviews; work experience; apprenticeships; recruitment
- Intervention needed to support particular groups & age groups
- Need to show advantages for employer engagement
- Local Employability Partnerships to take forward agenda – often lacking employers' perspective (Opportunities Fife as exception)

Employer Perspective

- Prime focus is on running the business – survival and growth
- Willingness to be engaged – wider community benefit recognised
- Keen to see benefit to the business – wherever possible
- Need to match capacity to contribution
- Funding schemes for employment and training welcomed/essential

Challenges

- Capacity issues and cost issues
- Confusion over range of programmes and assistance available (lack of context)
- Contact overload – potential to ‘switch off’
- Combining the economic and social agendas

Developing the Young Workforce

- High levels of youth unemployment – still just under 1 in 5 across UK – 69,000 in Scotland
- Skill shortages in labour market – particularly in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths)
- Changes in Education – CfE; positive outcomes alongside attainment
- Changes in Recruitment – More school to employment and apprenticeships (Note: Fife different from Scotland for school leavers)
 - College – 36% Fife: 28% Scotland
 - Employment – 14% Fife: 20% Scotland

Developing the Young Workforce

- Response to Wood Commission report – Scottish Government support for Regional Groups
- Fife Group approved and funded – currently recruiting Employers to Fife-wide and Area Groups
- Employer-led but dependent on partnership working
- Chamber Policy Priority – consistent, coherent and structured approach with earlier, pro-active career guidance
- Need for more employers to engage with more young people

Developing the Young Workforce in Fife

- Provide **leadership** and a **single point of contact** and support to **facilitate engagement between employers and education**
- Encourage **more** employers to engage with education
- Oversee staff team and use of budget
- Establish an Action Plan to take forward employer engagement
- Build register of 'business offers' to match with 'school requirements' - and vice versa!
- Key Issue – build on existing work, arrangements and structures; working in partnership

Employer Benefits

- Access to “talent pipeline” – skills development
- Benefit from innovation and creativity of youth in the workforce
- Easier and more effective recruitment – better informed candidates/decisions
- Potential for young people to get to know the business
- Existing workforce development – potential to improve retention
- Contribution to shaping tomorrow’s workforce, develop attitudes, skills, knowledge – inspiring young people
- Giving something back – community engagement and recognition

Employability – Employer Engagement

- Challenges fully recognised – benefits identified for employers and individuals
- Clearer, coherent approach needed for the benefit of employers and individuals
- DYW arrangements developed in close partnership with Opportunities Fife to promote alignment
- As with 3rd sector, initiatives need to involve employers in design, development and delivery of programmes