



Volunteer Managers' Network Meeting Notes
Theme: Volunteering and Employability
Thursday 14th November, 9-11am, Kirkcaldy Golf Club

Attendance: 38 Delegates

Programme:

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| 9.00-9.30 | Breakfast and Networking |
| 9.30-9.40 | Volunteering and Employability Overview
<i>Sarah Latto, Fife Voluntary Action</i> |
| 9.40-9.55 | Meeting the Needs of Unemployed Volunteers
<i>Matthew Ritchie, Fife Council Client Action Team</i> |
| 9.55-10.10 | Employability and Volunteering in Action
<i>Aileen Aitken, West Wemyss Community Trust</i> |
| 10.10-10.55 | Introduction to New Employability Project
<i>Pegs Bailey, Fife Voluntary Action</i> |
| 10.55-11.00 | Final Remarks |

Notes:

Sarah Latto, Fife Voluntary Action

Sarah opened the event with a brief summary of the employment situation in both the UK and National context. This was followed by some information about Fife Voluntary Action's experience of working with the unemployed, and the services it can provide to support organisations and volunteers who are unemployed. See the attached presentation for more information.

Sarah invited questions:

Q: How do you provide support to volunteers when you don't have the capacity/resources?

A: It is recognised that support is needed for volunteers and that this is a challenge for many organisations. FVA can help organisations to recruit, train and support volunteers. Jacquie from FVA gave brief examples of the two supported volunteering projects run by FVA (one for people with health barriers and one for young people at school leaver age with additional barriers) which both provide one-to-one support to volunteers with additional support needs, helping them to settle into a volunteering role.

Q: What is FVA doing to specifically target geographical areas of greatest need e.g. Levenmouth?

A: Sarah said that the majority of services provided to volunteers were Fife-wide and demand-led with no specific work done to target geographical areas. A more targeted approach could be considered in the future however.

Mathew Ritchie, Client Action Team

Matthew gave an overview of the services provided by the Client Action Team (CAT), which include one-to-one key worker support with CVs, application forms and online job searches, signposting to other services such as FVA and the provision of Job Clubs. He discussed the paperwork that all clients using their services have to complete, which asks about many of the potential barriers to employment that they might face. These include lack of qualifications, health conditions, caring responsibilities, criminal records, housing issues, personal presentation and financial hardship. The clients are then assessed against an Employment Readiness Scale which measures their distance from realistically achieving employment.

Matthew explained that these are some of the key barriers that unemployed volunteers are likely to have that volunteer involving organisations should be aware of. He then discussed some of the key benefits of volunteering that clients experience, including gaining new skills, increasing confidence and getting a current reference. These are all extremely valuable, particularly for the long-term unemployed.

Questions:

Q: How do we meet the needs of these volunteers if they present with so many barriers?

A: Matthew highlighted the importance of recognising finance in particular as a barrier, and strongly recommended the importance of providing travel expenses where possible. Sarah added that often it is the 'softer' support that is important, such as being patient and understanding.

Aileen Aitken – West Wemyss Community Trust

Aileen spoke about the projects that the Trust co-ordinates that involve volunteers. She then spoke about the benefits of involving volunteers both for the community and for the volunteers themselves. See the attached presentation for more information.

There were no questions. Sarah thanked Aileen, and highlighted that her own experience with the Trust shows how valuable it is for volunteers and the wider community, and that so many of the voluntary roles gave volunteers excellent transferable skills.

Pegs Bailey – Fife Voluntary Action

Pegs introduced her role and work since coming into post, as well as her idea for developing an Employability Skills Certificate. She then invited delegates to discuss and share their views. See attached presentation and consultation notes for more details.

Following the group discussions, Pegs asked for any questions or observations.

Q: Where do we find out more information about employability services in Fife, both in the voluntary and statutory sectors?

A: Pegs mentioned that a mapping exercise had already been done regarding employability services provided by the voluntary sector in Fife, and a report had been written on this subject (see attached). She also

stated that a further mapping of employability services provided by the statutory sector was the next stage of her project and that she is planning to produce a booklet with information on the range of employment support services available including statutory provision as well as third sector provision.

One person observed that the employability certificate would need to be transferable, as not all people go straight from volunteering into employment – often there is another destination first such as further voluntary work or training.

Sarah then gave some final remarks (see final slide of the attached presentation) and thanked delegates for attending.

Evaluation

Delegates were asked to put a cross on the target indicating how they found the event.

17 delegates completed the evaluation

8 delegates found the event 'good'

9 delegates found the event 'Great'

Comments:

'Need a bigger screen – layout'

