

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SKILLS

Wednesday 27 February 201, 1300-1400 hours
Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament

Minutes (Draft)

Present

- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- Gillian Martin MSP
- Stuart McKenna, Scottish Training Federation
- Lorna Trainer, Scottish Training Federation
- Grant Thoms, Scottish Training Federation
- Joanne Buchan, Colleges Scotland
- Andy Witty, Colleges Scotland
- Geoff Campbell, Nithcree Training
- Fiona Harper, SELECT
- Bal Birdi, Pearson UK
- Mary Weir, Pearson UK
- Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland
- Kevin Patrick, Lantra Scotland
- John Brown, Life Skills Centres Limited
- Robert Bruce, Semta
- Stephen Young, CECA Scotland and I.S.E.
- Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland
- Boab Thomson, Universities Scotland

Apologies

- Johann Lamont MSP
- Tavish Scott MSP
- Ross Greer MSP
- Anne Galbraith, SECTT
- George Brown, SQA
- Ellie Hutchinson, Cannongate Youth
- Ian McCulloch, ITC Training Academy
- Svea Miesch, ScotlandIS
- Aileen Ponton, SCQF Partnership
- Julie Cavanagh, SCQF Partnership
- Liz Barron-Majerik, Lantra Scotland
- Cara Hilton, CECA Scotland
- Drew McGowan, West College Scotland
- Ameila Morgan, Venture Trust
- Ishabel Bremner, Argyll & Bute Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP opened the meeting and noted apologies from members of the group.

2. Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Wednesday 19 December 2018 meeting were ratified. It was noted that the Convener has now written to the Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Jamie Hepburn MSP, regarding the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and that the response will be circulated to the group once received.

3. Presentations and Discussion

The Scottish Training Federation (STF) presented on the *Scottish Government Review of Employability Services: Ensuring we don't throw the baby out with the bath water*. and presentations were heard from: Stuart McKenna, Chief Executive; Lorna Trainer, Vice Chair; and Grant Thoms, Vice Chair.

Stuart McKenna introduced the topic, stating that the current review of the Scottish Government's strategy is about making employability better, looking at how good the current programmes are, what should be kept, should there be a one size fits all, and who should deliver them.

Grant Thoms noted that the STF submitted its response to the No-one Left Behind review in the context of the labour market strategy and that it raised the issues around commissioned boundaries and highlighted the frustration that it was difficult to work across local authority boundaries. Grant stated that this is causing replication of resources such as data gathering and, that as the employability fund is mostly focused on young people, those aged 25+ are missing out on the fund.

Grant went on to state that the STF concluded in its response that there needs to be more national standards and measurement; that quality assurance needs to be looked at in more detail; there needs to be a regular assessment process, linking from one provision to the next; and that there needs to be more collaboration at a regional level, allowing providers to work across different local authority boundaries to get the best value for public money and target people with the greatest need.

Lorna Trainer focused on the success of the Employability Fund and the benefits including removing barriers, developing core skills and vocational training, and helping people into jobs. It was noted that the investment is £2,000 per person and that there is a whole group of people who's needs are being addressed via employability programmes – 25% start at SCQF level 3 or below.

In terms of outcomes, Lorna stated that it a journey to positive employment and that the Scottish Government is beginning to look at progress in terms of distance travelled for individuals. Lorna noted that 70% leavers achieve a positive outcome and that 68% achieve a job-related outcome.

In the discussion that followed, it was noted that in the construction industry, there are difficulties with mobility of labour and employability with some people requiring greater support from agencies to build confidence and aspirations to that they can see themselves in a job.

Geoff Campbell noted that in road haulage logistics, the jobs are there but there is difficulty in getting people straight from school, especially as the cost for an HGV licence is £2-3k. Small pilots across the country are seeing good success but there is a need for a more joined-up approach.

Gillian Martin MSP noted that there was a lack of passporting with no comprehensive record of skills or additional support needs – no mechanism to pass the information on. A unique learner number was suggested to take away the need to keep repeating information. Skills Development Scotland mentioned their data hub although it was noted that there are some issues around GDPR as the individuals have to agree to the information being passed on. Colleges Scotland highlighted that these issues were being looked at through the Scottish Government's Learner Journey review.

4. Dates for Future Meetings

The dates for the next two meetings are as follows:

- Wednesday 24 April 2019 (1pm-2pm)
- Wednesday 12 June 2019 (1pm-2pm).

It was noted that any suggestions for more detailed topics and discussions should be emailed to Joanne Buchan.

5. Close

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was closed.