

Cross Party Group on Skills

Minutes of the meeting held at 12.45 p.m. Thursday, 5 February, 2015

Committee Room 2

The Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh

Apologies	Present	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Sheridan, Construction Skills • Jane McLaughlin, FSB • Bruce Heil, Open University • Sarah Jane Laing, Scottish Land and Estates • Lyn Turner, Unite • Stephen Williamson, Scottish Enterprise • Simon Williams, NES • Rebecca Marek, SYP • Peter Cannell, Open University • Karen Adams, NES • John Holten, Cogent • Helen Brown, Barnardo's • Gail Gibson, SDS • Nicholas Young, Working Links • Joanne McManus, ICS Learn • Kate Sankey, LLTNP Skills Partnership • Alison McClure, liP • Ian Stirrat, Select • Phil Ford, Construction Skills • Peter Russian, liP • Anna Ritchie-Allan, STUC • Andrew Crone, SQA • Tommy Breslin, STUC • John Dick, Pearson • Irene Bell, EDAS • Polly Purvis, Scotland IS • David Lonsdale, SRC • George Brown, SQA • Amy Brown SDS • Peter Kormylo Education Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aileen Ponton SCQF Partnership • Ann Galbraith SECTT • Kate Still Rathbone • Tom Wallace Loch Lomond & Trossochs National Park • Jackie McNally Creative Scotland • Ian McCulloch ITC Academy • Laura Peacock Investors in People • Jay Smith Employment Enterprise • Joe Wilson College Development Network • Grant Thomas Ingeus • Joanne Buchan Colleges Scotland • Rebecca Chad Education Scotland • Ruth Boyle SDS • Anthony O'Reilly SCQF Partnership • Gavin Brown MSP • Margaret McCulloch MSP • Iain McCaskey FISSS • Greg Moreton FISSS • Tracy Ramage A4E • Vivienne Brown EDAS • Colin Dalrymple STF • Violeta Ilendo Fife College Board • Gordon MacDonald MSP • David Moroney SDS • James Morgan SQA • Amanda Turner Close the Gap 	

1. Agenda Item 1 - Welcome

1.1 Gavin Brown MSP as Co-Convenor opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Agenda Item 2 - Apologies

2.1 Mr Brown noted apologies from Members and welcomed Gordon MacDonald as the new SNP MSP on the group replacing Marco Biagi.

3. Agenda Item 3 – Matters Arising

3.1 The minutes from the meeting on 27 November 2014 were adopted as an accurate record.

3.2 There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

3.3 Mr Brown took the opportunity to thank the meeting's lunch sponsor, The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership, represented at the meeting by Aileen Ponton.

4. Presentations & discussion

4.1 Martin Docherty then opened his presentation entitled "*Volunteering: Skills development and sustainable economic benefits*". A brief overview of volunteering was given with statistics on current numbers acting as volunteers and the types of activities volunteers can get involved in. This was further broken down to volunteering rates in the various local authorities and opened up to describe the various skills gained through volunteering which could be of ultimate benefit to employers.

Martin used the example of Standard Life offering their services to decrease the turnaround time for processing of Disclosure Scotland forms saying that those who had volunteered their services discovered skills they did not know they had by carrying out the exercise.

He went on to emphasise that volunteers require a specific skillset along with good soft skills and that a challenge exists to ensure all volunteers possess a minimum skillset. Martin concluded by saying that Volunteer Scotland is happy to help organisations to develop any of these areas. A copy of the presentation is attached to this note.

4.2 Mr Brown thanked Martin for his contribution and opened the meeting to questions and discussion on the information contained in the presentation.

4.3 Colin Dalrymple pointed out that those furthest away from the workforce are also furthest away from volunteering and asked for Martin's view on this. Martin replied that jobseekers often develop soft skills to address this.

4.4 Margaret McCulloch raised the issue of social isolation and loneliness and asked how the organisation reached out to homeless people or those with chaotic lifestyles who would not normally put themselves forward for volunteering. She made the point that by saying volunteers need a minimum skill level these groups are being excluded.

Martin replied that not everyone can become a volunteer immediately. Some need support before they can do so

4.5 Laura Peacock said that there was a big role to be played by volunteer managers to develop people skills in this area and help them to articulate their skills.

Martin agreed but emphasised that volunteering has a cost. He said that volunteers cost money and time and organisations must be prepared to invest in volunteers to get the benefit.

4.6 Kate Still informed the group that Rathbone runs a number of national training programmes but that there is a group of people not coming forward and these groups need to be targeted. She said that there is European Social Fund monies available for such things which in her view is not being exploited.

4.7 Gavin Brown said that there were a lot of good organisations mentioned both in the presentation and the discussions and asked what could be done from a policy point of view to engage smaller businesses in the process. Michael replied that they need to recognise the skills needed and the fact that there is a cost. He said that it is critical to build an opportunity around a volunteers needs.

5. Skills Development Scotland update on Scottish Apprenticeship week

5.1 David Moroney provided a brief update on this item saying that this was the fifth annual Scottish Apprenticeship week and it has now grown to more than 160 events taking place during the week. He said that SDS provide the platform but it is for others to get involved. David's complete presentation including video clips can be accessed using this link:

- https://prezi.com/pbhqsdjy6wol/scottish-apprenticeship-week-2015/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

5.2 Colin Dalrymple said that STF were a strong supporter of Apprenticeship week and he invited SDS to attend their Parliamentary reception where they would be unveiling the Apprentice of the Year.

5.3 Gordon MacDonald asked if there was information on sectors where there should be a demand for apprenticeships or why certain sectors might not be engaging. David said that there was research being carried out to identify key growth sectors such as life sciences, digital sectors and so on.

5.4 Ian McCulloch pointed out that such sectors are aspirational. He said that we should not lose sight of the traditional sectors such as tourism and hospitality.

5.5 Laura Peacock said that liP will be working with 250 organisations next year and as an organisation were keen to engage with Scottish Apprenticeship week. She asked how they could forward plan for this. David said that there were improved links on the SDS website and the events guides were more user friendly now.

5.6 Aileen Ponton pointed out that there were also newer Technical and Professional apprenticeships also available and she asked whether SDS would use Scottish Apprenticeship week to promote these to which the answer was 'Yes'.

5.7 Tom Wallace said that lots of SMEs struggle to take on apprentices and asked what guidance SDS could offer them. David replied that the SDS Employer engagement teams could help with this.

6. Update from the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership

6.1 Aileen Ponton informed the group of the conference “SCQF: An Unexplained Journey” which was taking place on 19 -20 February at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Glasgow. There were currently 206 delegates registered and registration was due to close on 6 February.

6.2 A briefing note entitled “*Qualifications frameworks: expanding influence, persisting obstacles*” was circulated and Aileen briefly explained how this note captured recent framework developments across Europe as well as explaining the role of national qualifications frameworks in the validation process and their relationship to the labour market. The pdf of the Briefing note is circulated with this meeting note.

6.3 Aileen also spoke about awareness and understanding of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and how the framework can be used to recognise non-formal and informal learning such as the skills and learning referred to in the earlier volunteering presentation. Aileen iterated that having learning recognised and placed on the framework was not something everyone aspired to but that having something recognised in such a way is a huge confidence boost.

7. Dates of future meetings

7.1 The next 4 meeting dates will be as follows:

- 14 May (AGM)
- 24 September
- 26 November
- 4 February 2016

7.2 The following members have expressed an interest in presenting at future meetings:

- Rebecca Chad (Education Scotland) on project work around Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce (September meeting)
- Vivienne Brown (EDAS) – November meeting
- Kate Still (Rathbone) – workshop possibility

8. Any other business/ Close of meeting

8.1 Mr. Brown announced that this was to be the final meeting for Colin Dalrymple as he was retiring as Chief Executive of STF. Mr. Brown thanked Colin for his contributions to the group over the years and wished him well.

8.1 With no further business to conduct Mr Brown thanked everyone for their ongoing support, reminding members that the CPG was their group and if they had any suggestions for the format or agenda items for future meetings they should let them be known.