

Minute of the Employability Strategic Group meeting held on 24 May 2012 at Job Centre Plus, Kirkwall

1. Welcome and apologies

Present:

Karen Johnstone	Jobcentreplus (<i>Chair</i>)
Maggie Berston	Human Resources, NHS Orkney
Fraser Devine	Voluntary Action Orkney
Amy Thomson	Employability Orkney
Linda Russell	Orkney College
Derek Aiken	All Age disabilities, Orkney Health & Care
Alistair Ferrier	Skills Development Scotland
Doreen Rendall	Skills Development Scotland
Suzy Hopkins	Blide Trust
Hannah Thomson	Community Planning Officer (<i>Secretary</i>)

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Jackie Thomson from Economic Development and Chessa Llewellyn White from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- 1.2 Karen noted thanks to several group members who had left since the last meeting: Joyce Slater from Skills Development Scotland, Jeremy Richards from Blide Trust, Tina Gilbey from Lifeskills, Mary Anne Crook from Health Promotions and Robert Allan from NHS Orkney.
- 1.3 Karen welcomed Suzy Hopkins from Blide Trust and Alistair Ferrier from Skills Development Scotland.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting held on 21 March 2012

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as accurate.

3.0 Matters arising and action points from the last meeting

- 3.1 The results from the business study had not yet been published. All other actions were completed.

4.0 Membership

- 4.1 Once appointed, the manager at the Blide Trust would become a member of the group. In the meantime, Suzy Hopkins or another employee would represent Blide Trust.
- 4.2 Alister Ferrier would become the permanent replacement for the manager for Skills Development Scotland. Alister is based in Caithness and involved with a similar community planning employability group.
- 4.3 It was noted that there was no replacement for the Healthy Working Lives Officer yet but this was an area the group were keen to keep represented.

4.4 Karen would discuss a Lifeskills representative with John Maclellan.
Action: KJ

4.5 Robert Allan had left his role of Learning and Development Manager at NHS. This post was not due to be filled and therefore Maggie Berston would continue to represent NHS Orkney.

4.6 The group were in agreement with Karen's suggestion to invite an Education and Leisure representative.
Action: KJ

5.0 Sector Based Work Academies/Training for Work

5.1 Sector Based Work Academies (SBWA) offer training, work experience and a guaranteed interview for those people who need extra support in accessing employment. Karen had emailed partners to ask for them to look at funding streams which may include employability and how this money could be pooled to provide meaningful work based training.

5.2 Hannah had provided to Karen an overview of Council expenditure on employability which included money to St Colms and Keep Orkney Warm.

5.3 The store 'Dealz' due to open an outlet in Kirkwall during August expressed interest in running with a SBWA and through this to guarantee interviews. Karen explained that there was the ability in Orkney to deliver training, the Employment Worker was able to source work placements and Dealz were able to guarantee interviews which would complete the SBWA. The Job Centre Plus would support clients through the process, and it may be particularly suitable for adults with learning disabilities. It was agreed that Karen would have a discussion with Linda Russell and Doreen Rendall about using Training for Work places. Partners would be kept informed by Karen so that referrals could be made.

Action: KJ, LR & DR

6.0 Welfare Reform/Universal Credit

- 6.1 Karen outlined some of the changes to be made under Welfare Reform:
- About creating incentives to get people back into work.
 - Stronger approach to reducing fraud and error.
 - Personal Independence Payments will replace Disability Living Allowance and as part of this there will be different criteria.
 - A change in housing benefit allowances, for example, house sharing cap moved from aged 24 and under to 35 and under.
 - Rent rebates to be paid to the client rather than directly to the landlord.
 - Under Universal Credit, the extra benefits which previously kicked in for those relevant people working 16 hours or more a week would now apply to those working 24 hours or more a week.
 - Additional premiums paid to disabled people and carers.

6.2 Karen encouraged partners to discuss relevant changes with clients. It was agreed that this item would remain on the agenda and that the paper outlining the changes would be circulated to the group.

Action: KJ/HT

6.3 Karen to look into 16 and 17 year old hardship cases and feed back to the group on this.

Action: KJ

7.0 Employment Worker Action Plan

7.1 The Employment Worker Action Plan for May – July 2012 was presented to the group. Karen invited partners to let her know of anything missing from the Plan and also encouraged partners to refer clients to the Worker.

Action: All

7.2 It was noted that the Employer Recruitment Incentive had ceased at the end of March and Skills Development Scotland were awaiting an announcement on its replacement.

8.0 Lifestyle project

8.1 Derek issued a floor plan for the new Lifestyle project to be based at the Pickaquoy Centre which will replace facilities currently based at Keelylang Day Centre. The Lifestyle project will primarily be for adults with profound learning and physical disabilities and focuses on providing a community based outreach service. The partnership build between the Council, Orkney Health and Care and the Pickaquoy Centre is being built to be fit for purpose and will be available to Pickaquoy and the public to use the space when not occupied by OHAC service users. The Lifestyle Project was due to open in Autumn 2013.

9.0 Autism Alert Card

9.1 The Autism Alert Card had been launched on 22 May in parallel with Shetland and Western Isles cards. Derek issued a guide which explained the purpose of the card and encouraged partners to distribute it amongst forums/groups/staff as it was hoped to advertise it as widely as possible. Hannah to email the guide to the group.

Action: HT

9.2 It was thought that the launch of the card could highlight training needs around communicating with people with autism. Derek asked that OHAC be contacted if any organisation had any such training needs.

10. Short Life Working Group update

10.1 The presentation slides made to the Steering Group in February were circulated to the group. This presentation had also been made to Council and NHS Corporate Management Teams for consultation. Both of these teams were positive about the proposal and a progress report

was due to be submitted to the next meeting of the Steering Group on 18 June.

- 10.2 The next stage would be for the Short Life Working Group to disband and be replaced by two separate Boards taking work forward. One Board would be led by Karen and would focus upon putting in place the Employability Hub. The other Board would be led by Derek and would focus upon where the Employability Hub would refer clients to. There would also be a third element to the continuation of work, considering corporate responsibility. Maggie Berston was key to this in demonstrating success had by NHS with work placements.

11. Unemployment statistics

- 11.1 Karen provided a verbal report on the May 2012 statistics and it was noted that unemployment in general and in youths had dropped considerably. Karen agreed to circulate the statistics by email.

Action: KJ

12. Feedback from Strategic Economic Forum

- 12.1 There had not been a meeting of the Strategic Economic Forum since the last meeting of the group.

13. Agency updates

- 13.1 Alister noted that the final School Leaver Destination Return was with Skills Development Scotland and not been published yet. The overall picture for Orkney appeared good although the FE dropout figure was causing concern. The full Return would be reported to the group in due course.

14. AOCB

- 14.1 There was none.

15. Date of next meeting – 23 August at 2pm at Job Centre Plus