

# CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SKILLS

Tuesday 1 May 2018, 1300-1400 hours  
Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament

## Minutes

### Present

- Johann Lamont MSP
- Gillian Martin MSP
- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- Stuart Millar, Ayrshire College
- Debbie Blinkhorn, Spirit AeroSystems
- Duncan McDougall, Glasgow Clyde College
- Alan Connelly, Specsavers (Scotland)
- Roy Gardner, City of Glasgow College
- Jacqui Massie, City of Glasgow College
- Fiona Armour, G1 Group
- Alex James, Scouts Scotland
- Cate Nelson Shaw, Remarkable
- Karen Ormiston, Remarkable
- Julie Cavanagh, SCQF Partnership
- Cara Hilton, CECA Scotland
- Drew McGowan, West College Scotland
- Irene Thomson, The Open University
- Robert Girvan, CITB
- Ian McCulloch, ITC Training Academy
- Robert Bruce, Semta
- George Brown, SQA
- Anne Galbraith, SECTT
- Fiona Harper, Select
- Stuart McKenna, Scottish Training Federation
- Mary Weir, Pearson
- Kevin Patrick, Lantra
- Paul Mullan, Skills Development Scotland
- Michael McDaid, Skills Development Scotland
- Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland
- Marie Donnelly, Skills Development Scotland
- Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland
- Anne Meikle, EDAS/Women's Enterprise Scotland
- Baljinder Birdi, Pearson
- Stephen Young, GMG Construction
- Andy Witty, Colleges Scotland
- Joanne Buchan, Colleges Scotland

### Apologies

- James Dornan MSP
- Colin Smyth MSP
- Tavish Scott MSP
- Karen McAvenue, Scottish Government
- Aileen Ponton, SCQF Partnership
- Christine Powell, Essentials Plus Ltd
- Keith Geddes, Pagoda Porter Novelli
- Shona Matthews, Chartered Banker Institute
- Ishabel Bremner, Argyll and Bute Council
- Kenny Stewart, The Open University

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

Johann Lamont MSP opened the meeting and noted apologies from members of the group.

## **2. Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Tuesday 6 February 2018 meeting were ratified.

## **3. Presentation and Discussion**

The topic for the meeting was the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) and presentations were heard from: Stuart Millar, Director of Industry Programmes with Debbie Blinkhorn, Human Resources Advisor, Spirit AeroSystems; Roy Gardner, Executive Director, Corporate Development & Innovation, City of Glasgow College with Fiona Armour, Head of HR and Reward, G1 Group; and Duncan McDougall, Assistant Principal, International & Business Development, Glasgow Clyde College with Alan Connelly, Divisional Relationship Manager, Specsavers (Scotland).

Stuart Millar highlighted how Ayrshire College has been working with Spirit AeroSystems, the worlds largest Tier 1 aerostructures supplier, which has seen unprecedented growth due to new markets opening up and new technology. The FWDF has been utilised to deliver training to 300 employees and part fund a full-time vocational trainer (a former apprentice at Spirit AeroSystems). It was noted that this partnership working has strengthened relationships between the college and Spirit AeroSystems and that the knowledge and experience is being fed back into courses at the college. The partnership is also helping to redress the gender balance by bringing more women into the industry.

Roy Gardner stated that at City of Glasgow College had received 128 FWDF applications to date and delivered 321 training programmes. The fund was promoted through fortnightly breakfast sessions at the college and a targeted promotional campaign. It was highlighted that the college has formed a new partnership with G1 Group through the FWDF. The national hospitality company identified the need to develop internal talent and the skills lost through pre-prepared food and the college designed courses to meet their needs in areas including fishmongery, butchery, patisserie, gluten-free breadmaking and hospitality.

Duncan McDougall said that 40 companies had signed up to training through the FWDF, with 85% new customers to the college. One of those companies is Specsavers Scotland who required customer care training and also identified a need for British Sign Language Training; this is now being piloted in 10 branches across Glasgow. Through partnership working, a potential new Modern Apprenticeship programme has been identified and this is being taken forward with Skills Development Scotland.

A Q&A followed with SCQF Partnership asking if the bespoke training has been credit rated; both City of Glasgow College and Ayrshire College stated that it had been whilst Glasgow Clyde College said that it hadn't been asked for yet. SCQF Partnership noted that it can be useful for people's learning journey and that they were happy to assist.

It was noted that the fund ends in September and was the Scottish Government being pursued to get another year out of the fund. It was stated that the fund was welcome and that it would be continuing for another year. The speakers were asked how they identified levy-paying organisations. It was stated that it isn't an issue as there is information out there e.g. through SCDI to cross-reference with. It was noted that a national promotion campaign would be helpful as some employers are still unaware of the fund. It was stated that making contact with employers has taken time however next year allocations will be fulfilled.

The STF noted that its members would like to see the fund provided by others, not just colleges and that as the fund is limited, a more collegiate approach by all would be more effective.

## **4. Dates of Future Meetings**

It was noted that the future meetings would be held after the summer recess, the dates of which are yet to be agreed. Any preferences for meeting days/dates should be sent to Joanne Buchan at Colleges Scotland.

## **5. Close**

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