

Cross Party Group on Skills

Minutes (Draft) of the meeting held at 12.45 p.m. Thursday, 26 September, 2013

Committee Room 2

The Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh

Apologies	Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Brown, SQA • Anne Galbraith, SECTT • Kate Still, Rathbone • Fiona Stewart, SDS • Simon Thomson – Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland • Shona Matthews - Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland • Libby Brumfitt – Skills for Justice • Fiona Moriarty - Scottish Retail Consortium • Úna Bartley – Open University in Scotland • Stephen Sheridan - CITB • Sandy Burgess – The Institute of the Motor Industry • Irene Bell – EDAS • Gerry Croall – Lifeskills • Aileen Ponton - SCQF • Fiona Moriarty - Scottish Retail Consortium • Judith Ackerman – IIP Scotland • Professor Steve Olivier - University of Abertay Dundee • Kelvin Thomson • Jamie Stewart – Scottish Countryside Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret McCulloch MSP (Co-Convener) • Gavin Brown MSP (Co-Convener) • Ryan Reed (Secretary) • Simon Warr, Barnardo's Works Edinburgh • Charlie Shentall, Scottish Countryside Alliance • Ian McCulloch, Independent Training Consultants Ltd • Yvonne Ryan, Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards • Jamie Smith, Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards • Iain McCaskey, Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards • Laura Peacock, Investors in People Scotland • Simon Williams, NHS Education for Scotland • Joanne McManus, ICS • Jay Smith, Employment Enterprise • Joe Wilson, The Scottish Qualifications Authority • Colin Dalrymple, Scottish Training Federation • Alex Close, Federation of Master Builders • John McKinney, National Specialist Contractors Council • Fiona Stewart, Skills Development Scotland • Newall McGuinness, SELECT • Sylvia O'Grady, Scottish Union Learning • Julie Cavanagh, SCQF Partnership • Gail Gibson, Skills Development Scotland • Nicola Mclelland, Skills Development Scotland • Dr Patrick Watt, Skills Development Scotland

1. Agenda Item 1

Welcome

- 1.1. Gavin Brown MSP as Co-Convenor welcomed members and opened the meeting.
- 1.2. Presentation from Lunch Sponsor – Barnardo's Works Edinburgh

Margaret McCulloch MSP welcomed Simon Warr from Barnardo's Works Edinburgh and thanked his organisation for sponsoring lunch for the meeting. She confirmed that Simon would give an input on the work of his organisation but suggested he do so after the presentation from Patrick Watt and Nicola Mclelland.

2. Agenda Item 2

Apologies

- 2.1. Gavin Brown MSP noted a number of apologies which had been sent from Members (as above).

3. Agenda Item 3

Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 3.1. Joe Wilson from the Scottish Qualifications Authority proposed the minutes as accurate and Colin Dalrymple from the Scottish Training Federation seconded the proposal. The minutes were adopted.

- 3.2. Matters arising from Minutes of the meeting of 23rd May 2013

From item 5 of previous minutes relating to the work plan for this session. Four meetings have been planned to take account of suggestions as per minutes of the last meeting and discussion. Hopefully this is welcomed by members and represents their interests well. Further ideas can be sent to CPG Secretary as required and he will record these for development/discussion in future.

- 3.3. Dates for meetings and themes are as follows:

Thursday 26th September 2013 (current meeting)

- Key theme: Setting the scene – LMI and skills in context. An overview of the current landscape and priorities.
- Input from Patrick Watt and Nicola Mclelland from SDS.
- Barnardo's Works Edinburgh will sponsor lunch.

Thursday 28th November 2013

- Key theme: Scottish Apprenticeship Week – contributing to success in 2014.
- Input from SDS.
- SDS have agreed to sponsor lunch.

Thursday 27th February 2014

- Key theme: Leadership and management skills and their contribution to sustainable economic development.
- Input from EDAS.
- EDAS will sponsor Lunch.

Thursday 08th May 2014

- Key theme: Digital literacy and 21st century skills (Digital participation and open educational resources will be main focusses).
- Input from Joe Wilson (SQA) and Ronald McIntyre (Open University).
- SQA will sponsor lunch.

4. Agenda Item 4

Presentation from Patrick Watt and Nicola Mclelland, Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

- 4.1. Patrick Watt began the presentation from SDS and provided an overview of the role of SDS in the generation of Labour Market Information and the services they provide to support the wider work of SDS.
- 4.2. It is important the Careers Advisors are not isolated from information about the wider labour market and therefore the Evaluation and Research Team provide a vital source of information when Advisors are making decisions about the information they give service users. It is also important that the wider staff team at SDS understand the current position of the labour market as this informs a wide range of work across the organisation.
- 4.3. The work of the Evaluation and Research Team links with the Scottish skills planning model and provides:

- Monthly updates on vacancies across local authority areas.
- A quarterly *Skills Pulse* survey developed using information from the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. The survey results here are based on responses from members of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC). The results highlight training priorities and give insight into the skills and business challenges that they are currently facing.
- Centrally gathered information on advertising in the press for vacancies; ‘scanning’ the newspapers for information.
- *Skills in Focus* – Quarterly events with academic input, each looking at a different aspect of the skills agenda.

4.4. All of the reports and materials above are available online and SDS state that there have been in excess of 50,000 downloads of these.

4.5. The Research and Evaluation Team provide a range of other services internally to SDS.

4.6. Through Sector Managers they also work with SSC/Bs.

4.7. They have a focus on LMI.

4.8. They help to co-generate presentations with partners where required.

4.9. Colin Dalrymple, STF asked whether reports were only used by SDS or whether these were publicly available as he felt they would be a useful source of information.

Patrick stated that he had no objection to providing these on request. Much of the information was available online on the SDS website.

4.10. Margaret McCulloch MSP asked whether this information is used to inform MA profiles and how this aligns with SSC/B understanding.

Patrick stated that the information is used to inform the SDS MA Contracting Strategy and that the information helps SDS to understand growth sectors. He suggested that, because of the sources and type of data used that there can be quite considerable changes over a short period of time. The Contracting Strategy also directs ‘bidders’ to sources of information and outlines key figures and trends and the links these have to the strategy.

SDS also produces the MA Survey which looks at how MAs have been used over a given year.

- 4.11. Gavin Brown MSP asked how easy it was for those new to this information to find what they were looking for, given the complexity and breadth of what is available.

Patrick replied that the information was 'locally' structured which could help people to get access to the information they needed. Also, he recommended signing up to an SDS newsletter which would keep people up to date with key changes and developments.

Action: Ryan Reed (Secretary) to forward information from SDS on how to sign up to this service. Patrick Watt/Nicola McClelland would arrange for this to be passed on.

- 4.12. Sylvia O'Grady, STUC asked whether Careers Advisors still undertook visits to local employers as a way of ensuring they were informed about local labour market needs and as a way of maintaining relationships.

Patrick replied that whilst this could be useful there was a need to ensure efficiency on a national basis and questioned whether this was a particularly effective way of gathering information. For example, he asked how this information was captured and interpreted. He felt that there had been improvements and efficiencies made by adopting a national and systematic approach to research, giving advisors relevant information from a central source.

- 4.13. Patrick Watt introduced his colleague Nicola McClelland

- 4.14. Nicola McClelland delivered an interactive and very well received presentation which asked the Group to vote on the answers to a number of questions related to skills. A number of points and questions were raised by the group in response to the presentation.

- 4.15. Charlie Shentall, Scottish Countryside Alliance asked whether there was any evidence of skills shortages being more prevalent in particular sectors.

Patrick was not aware of any particular sector suffering disproportionately from skills shortages.

- 4.16. Jay Smith from Employment Enterprise asked why the uptake of MAs amongst SMEs in Scotland was so low compared to larger businesses (suggesting a figure of 7% uptake).

Fiona Stuart from SDS suggested that the 7% figure was based on penetration into SME businesses nationally. Because there are far fewer large businesses in Scotland, the penetration into those businesses, measured as a percentage, will always be far higher. 7% of SMEs in Scotland is a large number of individual businesses and the overall percentage uptake nationally is higher than 7%.

- 4.17. John McKinney from the National Specialist Contractors Council asked if there is a prediction of skills gaps in particular sectors given an ageing population.

Patrick said that it was hard to make a projection of gaps, but also suggested that *gaps* rather than shortages were not always a bad thing as they can sometimes be a result of innovation. It has also been shown that employers are generally good at filling gaps. Patrick also pointed out that age is not always negative and suggested that we are in general healthier and wealthier in advancing years when compared to the past.

- 4.18. Gavin Brown MSP stated that he was pleasantly surprised at the proportion of employers involved in the survey who had in place a formal plan for dealing with their future skills needs (48%).

- 4.19. Margaret McCulloch MSP suggested that Modern Apprenticeships had helped to raise the prevalence of skills planning amongst employers.

5. Revisit Agenda Item 1

Presentation from Simon Warr, Barnardo's Works Edinburgh

- 5.1. Barnardo's Works Edinburgh (BWE) is a service which works with 16 – 24 year olds facing barriers to employment.
- 5.2. BWE works in partnership with SDS, Job Centre+ and individual employers.
- 5.3. Their main aim is to find work placements for individuals to allow them to gain experience in the workplace.
- 5.4. 65% of BWE service users achieve an 8 week placement with an employer. 47% go into independent employment.

- 5.5. BWE take a whole person approach and provide on-going support and advice to service users to give them the best chance of success.

6. AOCB

- 6.1. Scottish Apprenticeship Week – Scottish Parliament Event

Margaret McCulloch MSP has agreed to sponsor an SDS event in the Garden Lobby.

- 6.2. Kathleen Doyle (Secretary) CPG on Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector was in touch with Ryan Reed (Secretary) about a possible joint meeting. Ryan confirmed with her that CPG Skills had already set themes for this session but that CPG Skills should perhaps keep in mind through discussions the possible role of volunteering and the voluntary sector.

Action: Ryan Reed will contact Kathleen to look at the possibility of a joint meeting in the next session.

- 6.3. Update of membership details: Ryan Reed will be working to ensure he has up-to-date contact details for member organisations. He will contact all members and ask each to confirm their organisational representative and alternate. It is possible to have others included for information. Consolidating this information will make administering meetings much easier and ensure that the most relevant people are attending, and that unwanted emails are not being sent to anybody.

7. Date of the next meeting of CPG Skills

- 7.1. The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 28 November. The meeting will start at 12.45pm.