



Economic Resilience and Employment Forum
Wednesday 17th February 2021
10am – 12pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Sandra Lyon (SL) (Chairperson)	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
Lynda Ross-Hale (LRH) (Vice Chair)	Cyrenians
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Allan Robertson (AR)	Social Security Scotland
Hazel Taylor (HT)	Cyrenians
Lynn Kennedy (LK)	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (Forth Valley)
Lynsey Hansford (LH)	CVS Falkirk
Mairi MacDonald (MM)	Community Focus Scotland CIC / The Social Grocer CIC
Michael Fong (MF)	Link Living
Sarah McCulley (SMc)	Falkirk Council Education and Training Unit (ETU)
Scott Malcolm (SMa)	CVS Falkirk
Valerie Ormiston (VO)	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Victoria McRae (VM)	CVS Falkirk

1. Welcome and Introductions

SMa introduced himself, welcomed forum members present and advised the meeting was recorded via Zoom. Introductions were made by forum attendees, along with background on their roles and what their organisation had been focusing on during the pandemic.

SL noted that the recording may be shared with members who couldn't attend this meeting.

2. Presentation: "Skills Development Scotland: Who We Are and What We Do."

VO gave a presentation on Skills Development Scotland (SDS), with a focus on their careers work, specifically around providing information and guidance, and opportunities to develop skills (new or existing). Key points included:

- SDS' aim is to ensure people are able to succeed in the world of work, with a focus on skills planning and development, work-based learning, Career



Management Skills, and equality of opportunity (is embedded in everything they do).

- They work to ensure education and training is responsive to people's needs, and people are able to apply for employment without barriers.
- Career Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) service:
 - Their free, impartial CIAG service is based in Manor Street in Falkirk, open Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.
 - While they do a lot of post-school work with people (including school leavers, schools and families), the service is open to people of all ages, not just young people, at any stage of their career.
 - The service normally runs groups and appointments, which are currently closed due to COVID-19, but they also offer digital support.
 - People can also speak to an advisor via phone: 01324 620311.
 - People can also take part in the national PACE campaign, where they make a step by step career plan with their advisor, by phone: 0800 917 8000.
- My World of Work has recently launched their [new webpages for adults](#) (as opposed to young people and school leavers).
- [Partnership Action for Continuing Employment \(PACE\)](#):
 - As noted above, the national helpline: 0800 917 8000.
 - A team of 20 people offering support and advice for employers and individuals.
- They are currently working with employers to create [Skills Investment Plans](#) (SIPs) for local areas (including in Falkirk and Forth Valley), as different areas have different skills needs across different levels and sectors.
- The [Our Skillsforce](#) website is specifically designed to support employers (including the third sector), with information on available employment funding, etc.
- Third Sector Work:
- SDS' work with the third sector includes managing the [National Third Sector Fund](#), which offers employability support to unemployed people across Scotland. The fund can also support any individuals of working age, and young people within 6 months of their official school leaving date, and is delivered by third sector organisations, targeting individuals assessed at stage one of the [employability skills pipeline](#).
 - Current providers are contracted for delivery until June 2021, and it is expected that a third year of delivery (covering July – Jun 2022) will be procured soon.
- SDS is also working with Who Cares?. Children 1st, armed forces and veteran charities (amongst others), and the NSPCC, who delivers all SDS staff training on child protection.



VO then explained that all training provided by SDS in Falkirk is based around requests and information from the third sector. She is keen to work further with local third sector groups and organisations working in employability in Falkirk, particularly those who can help develop people's confidence and self-esteem, time management skills, working in groups, and other soft skills.

SL noted that there may be an opportunity for SDS and TCV Scotland to work together, as TCV supports various groups of interrupted learners. She also asked how an organisation becomes a contractor through the National Third Sector Fund; VO will check and confirm.

The presentation is available to view or download as a pdf from the CVS Falkirk website.

Action: VO to check how organisations become National Third Sector Fund providers and inform SL.

Action: VO to send SM relevant links to SDS websites.

3. Presentation: "DWP Labour Market Provision"

The forum discussed the various mental health support needs they had seen in LK gave an overview of the DWP's current labour market provisions, and an update on Jobcentre Plus and their priorities. The presentation is available to view or download as a pdf from the CVS Falkirk website.

The UK Government has announced its "Plan for Jobs", a package of new funding focused on job creation and strengthened employment and skills support, building on existing support from DWP and the Jobcentre Plus network, aiming to support longer term recovery from the economic impact of COVID-19, with a doubling in the number of work coaches to offer tailored support to help people find work.

Key points from the presentation included:

- DWP has been operating throughout the pandemic and various lockdowns, bringing many of their services online and providing digital training opportunities.
 - Their offices are currently open Monday – Friday, 10am – 2pm to support vulnerable people only.
 - They are currently preparing for the end of furlough, with a safeguarding team in place.
- The Kickstart Scheme: creating 6 month work placements for young people who currently receive Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. Applications are now open for employers to



take part, with the first placements expected to start in November. There is currently no minimum amount of placements for employers. Further information is available via the [Kickstart Gateway](#).

- Their new Youth Offer, which supports young people aged 18 – 24 years old in their worksearch, and consists of 3 different elements to meet young people’s needs at different stages of employability:
 - Youth Employment Programme (YEP): structured 13 week programme for young people “closest to the labour market”, focusing on referring them into work-related training, apprenticeships or the Kickstart Scheme (above).
 - Youth Hubs: currently a digital offer, and working with local partners (including Forth Valley College in Alloa and Falkirk) to allow young people to access up to 6 months of tailored support (including their own work coach) to meet any wider skills gaps.
 - Youth Employability Coaches: flexible support for young people with more complex employability needs and barriers, in order to help them into employment, with an additional 6 weeks of in-work support. There is also a possibility of working with the third sector on this, as a supportive environment.
- Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAPs): offering support to help unemployed people of any age, at any stage of their career, move into “priority sectors” (eg. construction and social care). The programme offers training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview with employers who have open vacancies.
- Job Funding Support (JFS) service: a less intensive programme providing a minimum of 4 hours digital one to one support, plus a group session, for those who are recently unemployed; to be eligible, people must have received Universal Credit and the new Jobseeker’s Allowance within the last 13 weeks.
- WHP Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) scheme/JETS Scotland: up to 6 months’ personalised support for those unable to find employment in the first 3 months of unemployment; again, people must have received Universal Credit and the new Jobseeker’s Allowance within the last 13 weeks.
- Flexible Support Fund: aiming to break down barriers to employment locally by removing barriers such as travel expenses to interviews, or appropriate clothing for interviews and work.

LK is also keen to build relationships with the third sector (especially those who can provide placements or volunteering opportunities), as the DWP knows this is the way forward in supporting their customers.



4. Presentation: “Falkirk Council ETU: Employability Development Update”

SMc’s presentation focused on recent developments within ETU, and their thoughts on how they can work better with the third sector. Again, this presentation is available to view or download as a pdf from the CVS Falkirk website.

ETU supports people of all ages and at all stages of their career; their aim is to progress people into permanent employment. As they work with people with different support needs (including social, personal, and health), they provide a range of support and specialist provision to prepare people for the world of work. They work with people regardless of their eligibility and assignment to “contracts” or programmes within ETU.

Key points included:

- Young Person’s Guarantee (YPG):
 - Scottish Government’s promise that every young person aged 16 – 24 years old in Scotland will have the opportunity to take up a place at university or college, gain employment, work placement, training, apprenticeship or volunteering activity based on their own personal circumstances and ambitions.
 - Not a single service, but delivered by a network of local support, including education and employability services, and the third sector.
 - Aims to ensure accessibility, and understanding in young people about what’s available.
 - Investment from Scottish Government and Falkirk Council to develop and support young people to be as attractive as possible to employers, and to develop themselves.
- [Parental Employment Support Fund \(PESF\)](#):
 - Launched in 2019, in line with the Child Poverty Action Plan at national and local levels.
 - Providing intensive employability support for parents both in and out of work, helping to tackle in work poverty, and enhance links between local employability services and the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in all 32 council areas across Scotland.
 - There are currently 6 priority groups identified who experience barriers to or challenges in work (eg. low income), with additional investment aligned to [disabled parents and young parents](#).
 - While this is a national fund, delivery is different in each area due to differing need; Falkirk Council’s approach has focused on delivery of blended skills development and training programmes.
- National Transitions Training Fund (NTTF):
 - Supported by SDS, providing support to those over 25 years old.



- Aims to tackle the rise in unemployment caused by COVID-19 by offering short sharp training opportunities for people to learn in-demand skills.
- People will be able to enhance their skills, training, qualifications with the possibility of entering a new area of work (due to the impact of COVID-19 on their current sector or industry).
- The Kickstart Scheme: Falkirk Council is acting as a gateway organisation, along with some of their partners.
- Third sector engagement: having looked at how ETU engaged with the third sector previously, they have identified ways to work together going forward:
 - Referral pathways: third sector supporting ETU's reach in the local community and refer those looking for support
 - Become an employer: discussing funded job creation programmes and employing a local person through ETU's employer recruitment incentives
 - Commissioning: providing a valuable specialist service by joining Falkirk Council's procurement framework
 - Support and Feedback: engaging in ETU's feedback evaluations, and talk about their experiences

SL asked for an update on No One Left Behind, which focuses on school transitions and wider all age support. SMC confirmed that work on this was progressing (especially on service design and the framework), but had been delayed due to COVID-19. As with PESF, this is a Scottish Government initiative (aimed at better integrating employment services) which is delivered differently in each area due to differing need. Some approaches have also had to be adjusted by roughly 2 months after COVID-19, to be in a better position to deliver.

SL then asked if there would be the possibility of internships with the third sector, as SMC mentioned having with NHS Forth Valley.

SMC said this could potentially be an option, as they also work with Forth Valley College on these internships; the point of working with NHS Forth Valley was that Forth Valley Royal Hospital provided a wide variety of learning in one location, but this is unlikely to be available even once internships restart, and ETU will need to look at alternative placements. SMC will keep members informed, either personally or through CVS Falkirk.



5. AOCB

On behalf of the forum, SL and LRH thanked all presenters for attending and speaking with members, as did VM and SM on behalf of CVS Falkirk.

Action: SM to compile a factsheet and video on information covered during the meeting, and share with the forum.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 17th March 2021,
10am – 12pm, via Zoom**

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