



THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION GROUP

1st June 2021

THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY

Working together to put our sector first
Dumfries and Galloway's Third Sector Interface

KEY POINTS

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A PERSONAL RECORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TSDG, NORMA AUSTIN HART. IT IS BASED ON MY OWN OBSERVATIONS. IT IS NOT A FORMAL MINUTE OF THE MEETING.

The new Education and Skills Strategic Co-ordination Group (ESSCG) for the South of Scotland, was established following the decision of the Regional Economic Partnership in 2020.

1. The ESSCG will address education and skills issues in the South of Scotland, drive the labour market response to COVID-19 and Brexit, support the emerging Regional Economic Strategy, and provide oversight of the South of Scotland Regional Skills Investment Plan (RSIP). It will also consider and address the skills and education challenges post COVID and post Brexit.
2. The terms of reference were discussed and with some minor changes agreed.
3. The most recent labour market intelligence was presented. Key messages were:
 - a. GDP significantly adversely affected, with projections to possibly 2024 before a return to pre Covid levels.
 - b. The scale of job losses anticipated may not be as high as previously estimated at the end of furlough.
 - c. Young people will still be disproportionately affected.
 - d. Qualitative information would be welcome from communities to add to quantitative data.
 - e. Numbers of Universal Credit claimants are climbing again.
 - f. For those in work there are challenges to the quality of employment with an increase in poorer terms and conditions.
 - g. There appear to be skills shortages in some key sectors like textiles and tourism. There was also discussion about the other barriers to recruitment like housing shortages.
 - h. Employer forums can be very useful in understanding the nuances and changes in the labour market.
 - i. School leavers may have lost confidence in the last year through lack of work preparation activities.
 - j. Some employers are going to go straight to local schools to recruit.
 - k. Perhaps the messaging about job vacancies should be more positive.
 - l. South of Scotland Enterprise will be setting up an employers' intelligence group and the new RES will be based on extensive data gathered for the purpose of the strategy.
 - m. There will shortly be 2000 school leavers. The YPG is being used but improved messaging is still needed and direct involvement with employers also.
4. The regional skills investment plan (RSIP) was produced in 2019. The draft ESSCG action plan is based on this. The ESSCG action plan is based on a series of areas of action:
 - a. Area of Action 1: Improving access to education, skills, and training
 - b. Area of Action 2: Better meeting the skills needs of all employers
 - c. Area of Action 3: Growing and developing the workforce
 - d. Area of Action 4: A region for young people

- e. Area of Action 5: Creating a Culture of Enterprise and Innovation
 - f. Area of Action 6: Future proofing the skills system
5. There was discussion about the details. The TSDG chief executive suggested that the third sector could be a partner in more actions. **The SDS representative agreed to meet outside the meeting to agree where the third sector might appear as a partner.**
 6. Innovative apprenticeships and work-based learning models: this paper generated quite a bit of discussion. It was based on SDS commissioned research by Cambridge Economics.
 7. The models of shared apprenticeships were explored. They have been piloted but without becoming mainstreamed. Various models might work now:
 - a. In the **creative industries** or digital industries - a host model like the Stove who share the apprenticeships among a series of micro businesses
 - b. Or a traineeship model based in colleges, not full employed at this point.
 - c. Start with traineeship and move to host model
 - d. In the **engineering sector** first option to develop foundation apprenticeships
 - e. Or work with NMIS who act as the organiser of work placements and partner with training providers
 - f. Or have a first year at college and then move to the traineeship
 - g. For **land-based industries** - work with large land-based employers like Roxburgh or Buccleuch and move the trainees around the different settings and training provided from colleges
 - h. Or the anchor institution model where the trainee gets training in the MI but work experience with a range of employers
 8. Scottish Funding Council is supportive of the concept of shared apprenticeships and will consider funding models to encourage them.
 9. The concept of shared apprenticeships was welcomed by ESSCG, especially using anchor organisations, and another paper will come to the next meeting to propose how to take this forward.
 10. There was a brief update on the progress with producing the regional economic strategy (RES) The first phase of consultation is finished and there is now a draft which has a vision, ambitions and aims, key priorities. The aim of skilled and ambitious people is particularly relevant to the remit of this group. The final version will provide a ten-year framework for all partners.
 11. Digital Skills Hub by D&G and SB colleges:- a presentation was given on the proposed digital skills hub. This is a virtual Hub hosted on the DigiSkillScotland website to offer local digital learning, training and development which is accessible online, through the Skills and Learning Network and the Colleges.
 12. It was pointed out that the third sector was not consulted on the question of 'What should a digital skills hub in the South of Scotland provide?', despite being expected to deliver some of the activities (community centres were mentioned). The TSDG chief executive asked how the third sector would be involved in the four priority themes. **The response was to propose a meeting between TSDG and the colleges to discuss.**

13. Date of the next meeting: in three months, date to be advised.

