



THIRD SECTOR
Dumfries and Galloway

THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

REPORT OF MEETINGS

EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGIC COORDINATION GROUP (ESSCG)

4 November 2022

THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY SUMMARY

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

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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.

1. This group is chaired by Prof Russel Griggs, chair of South of Scotland Enterprise, and is attended by senior figures from colleges, universities, DWP, SFC, SDS, Scottish Government, SoSE and third sector.
2. In relation to matters arising from the last meeting on 4 June, I suggested that the ESSCG could have a presentation on the TSDG Digital Exclusion research which was launched on 27 September. This was agreed.
3. The first item on the agenda substantive was an update on the task and finish groups which included an update on the pilot of Shared Apprenticeships. Unfortunately, this has folded. There was a robust discussion about the reasons for its failure which centred on insurmountable bureaucratic hurdles. The consensus was that these have to be overcome since this is the only way that MAs can be based in micro-businesses including TSOs. It was agreed that the pilot needs to be resurrected and a new model considered. I argued that the third sector needs to be represented on the steering group and Russel agreed. I also asked how the £65k would be spent if it is not being spent on the pilot. I was advised to take this question to the LEP.
4. Seamus Spencer SFC gave a presentation on the Regional Pathfinder. The timeline from March 2022 to March 2023 follows this structure: data analysis- regional priorities- process analysis- reflections and recommendations. The first three are broadly complete and the fourth is underway. The recommendations are to be introduced in the academic year 2023-2024.
5. The ESSCG was asked to comment on the priorities that have been identified which includes three regional pilots in South of Scotland. Developing a joint prospectus for learning and innovation in the land based sector; West of Scotland Educational Pathways and the **South of Scotland Digital Skills Hub**. One of the aims of these pilots is to encourage young people (and their parents) that they can stay in D&G for their tertiary education.
6. The digital skills hub has been around for a couple of years. The various strands of this work needed to be knitted together. All key stakeholders are involved in the Digital Skills Pathway. The D&G College curriculum will be aligned to the needs of local employers.
7. I asked about the relevance of the Digital Exclusion Research to the digital skills hub pilot. The research shows that motivation is the key challenge with only 9% of those surveyed identifying lack of skills as a barrier. There seemed to be nothing in the presentation about how to change that.
8. I pointed out that we have set up a SLWG to consider the recommendations of the digital exclusion research and how they bear on the question of digital skills provision at all levels. The work of this group can be fed back to the ESSCG. As part of the presentation mentioned earlier.

KEY POINTS

9. There was an update on the careers review implementation. See this link <https://www.gov.scot/groups/skills-delivery-landscape-independent-review/#:~:text=It%20involves%20general%20questions%20on,2022%20until%2023%20December%202022.>
10. Springboard was mentioned as a crucial charity in relation to linking young people with training and jobs;

<https://springboard.uk.net/121-mentored-training-scotland/>
11. SSDA are holding a conference in South of Scotland on tourism and hospitality in March 2023. I agreed to contact SSDA to ask how we might be involved. TSDG employability team will make contact.
12. Elspeth Hough from Scottish Government gave the ESSCG an update on the NSET. Delivery plans have just been announced. The intention is that the plans bring national and regional plans closer together. These are high level giving an indication of direction of travel. Each plan has a programme board.
13. I pointed out that the relationships between the NSET, the LOIP the NPF and the RES are difficult to track for TSDG and we would find it difficult to explain the framework to the broad range of TSOs in D&G. Point was taken.
14. I also asked about third sector representation on the NSET programme boards and Elspeth Hough agreed to look into this and get back to me.
15. The group also discussed the Convention of the South of Scotland and its role in the governance structure in South of Scotland. I again made the point that the third sector is not represented on the CoSS and I had written to John Swinney Deputy First Minister with no success.
16. The ESSCG has an opportunity to influence the issues that are raised to the CoSS in February. I suggested the issue of disparity of pay and terms and conditions of employment between the third and public sectors for the same jobs particularly in social care should be raised. RG suggested the shared apprenticeships should also be raised.
17. SDS gave an update on the labour market information for SoS, all in the context of supply chain issues, Brexit, inflation and cost of living crisis.
18. The LM is 'tight'. Job postings are on the way down but not dramatically and are still above pre Covid levels. The pre-Christmas jump may not be as big as usual due to cost-of-living concerns.
19. Claimant count is at 4.2%
20. Economic inactivity (or hidden unemployment) is interesting. EI is on the rise due to caring responsibilities, studying, lifestyle choice, early retirement, long term sick and other reasons, nationally and locally. In D&G we cannot afford EI to be high.

21. In D&G and SB of 16-64 age population (36,400) or 24.1% are EI , In D&G 36.6% are EI due to long term sick. This is well above Scottish averages.
22. 22% of EI would like to be economically active, above the national average of 17.9%
23. SDS regional skills assessment for SoS will be available later in November.
24. Replacement demand is now more important than understanding growth. I asked if this challenges the basis of our national and regional economic strategies which are based on growth.
25. There was a discussion about the relationship between the ESSCG and the REP. RG proposed that we ask the REP how, when and what they would wish us to report. I pointed out that the CPPB has fallen into the trap of having regular reports for each of its constituent partners on their respective strategies and delivery without having the analysis on what is missing, being duplicated and where can it add value. I would want to discourage the REP and the ESSCG from falling into the same trap. The CPPB is currently considering how to refresh its arrangements
26. The ESSCG heard a brief update from the Crichton Campus Leadership Group (CCLG) which will focus on the Crichton site.
27. Next meeting of the ESSCG will be end of January 2023