



**THIRD SECTOR**  
Dumfries and Galloway

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# **Third Sector Employability Forum**

## **Note of the meeting**

1 November 2021 (2.30pm – 4.00pm)

Via ZOOM

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

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## ATTENDANCE

Carolyn Kennedy	(CK)	Better Lives Partnership
Craig McEwen	(CM)	Inspired Community Enterprise Trust Ltd
David Bradbury	(DB)	Let's Get Sporty
David Ewing	(DE)	Loreburn Housing Association Ltd
Eva Milroy	(EM)	Dumfries and Galloway College Students Association
Mhairi Ross	(MR)	Apex Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway)
Mia Glendinning	(MG)	Visibility (Dumfries and Galloway)
Rose Murdoch	(RM)	Kirkconnel and Kelloholm Development Trust
Sharee Rennie	(SR)	Care Training Consortium
Terri Elson	(TE)	Fedcap Employment
Vicki Sutherland	(VS)	The Springboard Charity

### In attendance

Norma Austin-Hart	(NAH)	CEO, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway
Ann Gordon	(AG)	Volunteering Officer, TSDG

### Apologies

Allison McCourt	(AM)	Visibility (Dumfries and Galloway)
Julia Muir-Watt	(JM)	The Whithorn Trust

## 1 WELCOME

Norma Austin Hart welcomed everyone to the forum and attendees introduced themselves.

## 2 NOTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING (21 SEPTEMBER 2021)

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed by all present.

NAH confirmed that the LEP meeting in October was cancelled, however, she will raise the points noted in the minutes at the next meeting. MR noted that she will attend the next LEP representing community justice.

The short life working group on mapping employability provision in the sector is now complete.

NAH has invited Anne Connor or Job Centre Plus to the next meeting to talk about Kickstart.

## 3 TSDG EMPLOYABILITY FORUM DELEGATE TO LEP PROPOSAL

NAH proposed to the forum that a request be made to the LEP for a forum member to attend meetings alongside NAH.

Members of the forum unanimously agreed to request additional representation on the LEP. Carolyn Kennedy volunteered to undertake the role for 1 year, provided LEP approval is received.

NAH will contact the LEP with the proposal.

#### **4 UPDATE ON LEP AND DISCUSSION ON NO ONE LEFT BEHIND**

NAH noted that the work of the LEP is based on the 2021-22 Improvement Action Plan. NAH shared the plan with forum members and noted that the third sector is included within the current version of the plan (having been omitted from previous version). It was noted that the improvement plan is high level, lacks detail and does not take account of the diversity of the region.

Going forward the LEP should separate policy and delivery within the plan. The LEP should report annually to the Community Planning Partnership on the progress being made with the plan.

RM noted the improvement plan does not explore growth and investment in communities and does not use a place-based approach. Consideration needs to be given to ensuring communities have appropriate skills to undertake possible new jobs within their localities. Tourism is a growth industry across the region, however, local people are not necessarily equipped to undertake the roles available (or which may become available). NAH confirmed in her view the LEP consider the labour market but do not employ a place-based approach. This is the approach favoured in the Regional Economic Partnership

SR stated that more open discussion is required with the third sector in order that working in partnership the plan can be achieved. EM questioned whether there are enough organisations in the region to provide training to equip people to undertake prospective new jobs.

SR noted the new proposals for “No One Left Behind 2” providing employment opportunities for those over 25 years and who have been unemployed for more than 12 months. Information was released on 1 November requesting expression of interest from organisations who can offer new 6-month job opportunities to these people with £10k being received for each opportunity to support salaries and training. It was noted Employability and Skills have earmarked 12 jobs for the third sector – proposing 9 in health and social care and 3 either in the green economy or digital skills. Expressions of interest have been requested by 10 November.

It was agreed by all present that the timescales for expressions of interest are far too tight for third sector organisations to create the paperwork and plans for new job roles. DB noted it is

unlikely that the third sector are ready to take on new people at such short notice and that they would need to ensure training etc was in place to do so.

A significant discussion took place around the short time scales for submissions, however, that the third sector also need to demonstrate to the public sector given the right situations how they can be an asset to job creation across the region. RM noted that there is need for a culture shift whereby the public sector become enablers and the third sector deliver. The third sector can deliver high quality jobs given time and if appropriate training opportunities for new employees are made available. DB noted that a more person-centred approach is needed not just covering employment for an individual but their housing needs, education, health etc also need to be addressed.

MR noted that there are difficulties in recruiting young people to Kickstart posts, it is likely that recruiting older people to these new NOLB2 posts will also occur. EM stated that the 12 posts in health and social care, digital and the green economy were not necessarily right for the third sector who may be able to provide good jobs but under different categories. DB noted that any new jobs must be sustainable for the individuals at the end of the NOLB2 funding and in addition that the long-term unemployed may not be job ready and there may need to be mentoring and/or pre-employment training in place. CK also noted it would be helpful to know the type of vacancies individuals attending the job centre are looking for (and/or qualified in) and then see if job roles could be available to suit these people.

NAH suggested that the forum consider creating a development plan for the third sector to compliment the LEP improvement plan and addressing areas which the third sector are in control of. A plan such as this would help build confidence and trust in the third sector and show we are willing to work alongside our partners in the public sector to ensure the LEP plan is delivered. RM noted any such plan should reflect the values and principles of third sector organisations.

MR stated that as the job roles for the NOLB2 funding are required to last for 6 months many third sector organisations will be unsure if their own funding will be available in the next financial year – therefore, would be unlikely to take on new staff whose roles fall into the next year as the organisational funding may not exist.

NAH agreed to contact Employability and Skills and enquire as to the timescales for submissions of interest are flexible. DB noted it would be helpful if there was a referral system in place with the job centre to help signpost long term unemployed to NOLB2 roles.

NAH confirmed TSDG will put a call out to the sector re expressions of interest and will raise the wider points at the next LEP.

NAH explained the model being used in Fife regarding employability and the third sector which was presented at the LEP meeting.

Fife Council fund a 2 employability posts within Fife's TSI via a grant of £45k. This has proved a successful model with the balance of funding around employability shifting from public to third sector. Adam Dunkerley who made the presentation on behalf of Fife Council recommended the following:

- Good governance around employability with policy decision making and delivery of employability being split between 2 different groups.
- TSI should be resources to provide employability support to third sector organisations.
- Performance management plan for TSI should be in place.

## 6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### **Short life Working Group**

It was agreed that a short life working group be convened from the forum to create a development plan to identify what the third sector need to better perform in areas of employability. The group would meet 2 – 3 times to complete the exercise and report to the next forum meeting and to the LEP meeting in January.

SR, CK and DB agreed to be part of the working group and NAH agreed to organise the first meeting.

### **TSDG Employability**

NAH noted that funding had been found to enable the recruitment of an employability officer for a 4-month period. It is hoped that long-term funding will be secured during that time.

## 7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14 December 2021, 2pm

The meeting will be held via ZOOM

### **ACTIONS**

- Distribute Employability Forum Terms of Reference with notes of the meeting.
- NAH to request that an additional third sector representative attend LEP meetings.
- NAH to contact Employability and Skills re flexibility of timescales for NOLB2.
- NAH to contact Job Centre re possible referral system for NOLB2.
- NAH to put call out re expressions of interest for NOLB2 to sector via TSDG database.
- NAH to raise issues regarding third sector and NOLB2 at next LEP meeting.

- NAH to organise meeting of new short life working group.