

Third Sector Employability Forum

Wednesday May 1st 11-12.30

Present:

Beverley Francis (Chair, Volunteering Matters)	Alan McCloskey (VSGWL, Chair)
Victoria Isbister (VSGWL, minutes)	Angela Moohan (The Larder)
Yvonne Shaw (PfP)	Garry Walker (The Larder)
Helen Davis (WLYAP)	Kris Wisencraft (Enable)
Eunice Simpson (VSGWL / WL African Women's Network)	

Apologies

Raymond Branton (FCDWL, Play Works)	Tracy Murdoch (Kidzeco)
Rosemary Sleith (Open Door Project)	Karen Nailen (CAB)

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting. Eunice welcomed as new member.

2. Previous minutes, matters arising and review of actions outstanding.

Minutes agreed as accurate record.

3. Service Delivery: Key Updates

- Enable: Following withdrawal of funding from WLC they are now working with Nextsteps and Inspiring Scotland and are at full capacity. Staff in Cedar bank school are funded by PEF (Pupil Equity funding) and also at max capacity. No change in service delivery.
- CAB: Services in high demand. A lot of crisis support and complex cases. Busier than last year. Lots of work in outreach venues. Have attracted a number of new volunteers who are now in midst of training which will help to meet demand for services. Not significant waiting times and priorities will always be seen.
- WLYAP: No direct employability funding. School based work going well and funded by PEF. High success rate West Calder. Completing Whitburn schools programme and in negotiation with schools – high demand but limited funding. Cashback programme in year 2 and also going well.
- The Larder: Supporting people into positive destinations through variety of Employability courses for mixed ages, genders, and referral systems. Power to Grow stage 1 and 2 for age 16+ who need additional support 2 days a week. 64 people through programme so far. High referral rate. Cashback programme working with 10yrs-24yrs who are in the periphery of social justice system. Currently working on end of year report.
- Volunteer Matters: Conclusions being pulled together from the programme funded by MHWB (Mental Health Wellbeing). One common thread is that people feel once a programme has ended, they feel “left”. Lots of lessons to be learned.
- African Women's Network: Aim to create opportunities for the underrepresented in WL (West Lothian) community with a focus on women. Launching Black Women into Leadership May 24th in partnership with WL college for those who may want to change job or progress. Beverley feels there could be a lot of opportunity within Forum to support African Women's Network with their aims of training, employability, and volunteering.

- Partnership for parents: Have employed a part time pathways coordinator to reach out to wider ethnic community. Eunice thanked Pfp for this opportunity. Beverley said aim of forum is to build and nurture partnerships.
- Gateway: Supporting Pfp consortia through development officer, secretariat, and publicity. MHWB Y4 funding has been announced for projects starting in April 25. Aim to open to applications in Sept 24 giving organisations opportunity to bid for funding again. Likely £470K again. Third sector annual report coming together and includes some great case studies – including Pfp – showing the difference that organisations are making in the Third Sector.

4. Discussion surrounding current political developments.

Scotland's First Minister resigned 29.04 and this has created some speculation surrounding future funding. Beverley met George this morning and confirmed funding letter not yet received. Angela attended joint meeting of TSEF (Third Sector Employability Forum) executive and TSI (Third Sector Interface) Chief Officer group coordinated by Pegs Bailey who presented information that the delay has come from finance division, not employability division, as they are reviewing budgets.

Employability division had a plan and were ready to offer the grant letters. It is thought that this week's changes in government could cause additional delay. Group agreed that Pegs would write Gillian Martin MSP on this. It was agreed that this should be discussed at LEP next week as it is important to secure future provision which includes jobs.

Kris feedback that he had attended Mid-Lothian LEP on Monday who were also drafting a letter of communication. Informal conversations from SLADE last week mentioned possible 25% reduction in grants requested. Kris commented that it was interesting to note how different council's work. East Lothian projects are up and running, Enable has been paid for 2 already. Mid Lothian have completed grant application process and were at point of awarding but it's now on pause. Unsuccessful bidders have been notified.

Lee Anne spoke about their no service break policy, recognising that it's harder to get things started back up and acknowledging drain on resources, not to mention losing valuable staff. There's a clause stating that money / budgets may change and could be last minute, but this allows for continuity of services.

Agreement from those present to write a letter to Gillian as local TSEF. Decision to tweak national template to ensure personal response. Lee Anne advised there are 8 MSPs covering the area and recommended writing to them all. Alan advised SCVO are also looking at this issue.

5. LEP – May 9th

- Guest speaker: Pegs Bailey. Good timing as will bring wider perspective. Alan has meeting with Pegs prior.
- Expecting investment plan to come back with awareness of current financial pressures and politics.
- External facilitated strategy day – George Scott - collaboration, understanding, values, working together.
- Investment plan – no provision for young people – can this be raised.

6. Partnership for Parents update

- 4 months into 6-month programme
- Referrals from key agencies have been poor. Referrals mainly self-generated.
- Biweekly operational meetings, building local collaborative framework.
- Submitted Q1 report
- Some statistics shared from participants e.g. 92% female.
- Developing ongoing partnerships
- Board meeting held prior to this meeting. Childcare barrier acknowledged again. Eunice advised a lot of African families are separated and agreed it was a problem. Yvonne said they had tried to build in these costs but couldn't make delivery model work. Group will look at whether this can be built into future bid. Yvonne went on to explain that there was a small childcare budget built in which a couple of people would have accessed however there was lack of provision for the short periods required i.e. couple hours a week.
- In response to whether MHWB Y4 could help, Alan advised that he had just met with Scottish Government and was waiting for draft guidance but looked like TSI may have some leeway to consider local factors.

7. AOCB

- TSEF Chair / co-chair – LEP members: Angela advised she is stepping back from TSEF and LEP. Beverley thanked Angela for co-chairing and all her valuable input, advising that she is proud of all the achievements that the Forum has accomplished in it's time.
- There was no objection to Beverley continuing as Chair. Beverley said that Volunteering Matters (VM) are a national player working in WL and having both perspectives was useful.
- Beverley cautioned that VM are currently reviewing their funding arrangements and the current new CEO is reshaping organisation structure and approach. If Beverley's contract is not extended, she may also have to step back from TSEF. Consultation ongoing until mid-May. All charities are under pressure. Alan thanked Beverley and Angela for all their support including being Third Sector Rep's at the LEP advising that he relies on them to inform his voice as TSI Rep. A continued voice from TSEF would be much welcomed.
- Terms of Reference / Memo of Understanding: Needs reviewed.

8. Date of next meeting: June 26th – 1.30pm

AOCB - None

Circulate Ioni's report once completed	Volunteering Matters
Invite Ioni Allan to future meeting	Victoria / Lee Anne
Letter from TSEF to Gillian	Beverley / Lee Anne
Send Email template	Angela to Beverley
Post LEP update in Teams chat	Beverley (after May 8)
Co-Chair Vacancy	All Members to Victoria
Circulate TOR/MOU	Victoria (done)
LEP 1-2 Rep vacancy from TSEF	All Members to Victoria