

Third Sector Employability Forum

November 13th at 1.30pm

Chair: Liyan Adnan (VSGWL)

Present: Alan McCloskey and Victoria Isbister (VSGWL), Fin Russell (Impact Arts), Scot Smith (Routes to work), Adam Brown (Street League), Angela Moohan and Hayley Ghillies (The Larder), Gareth McKenna (BUSC), Helen Davis (WLYAP), Sophia Gore (Green Skills)

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Introductions:** Liyan opened the meeting.

2. **Previous minutes (25.09) and matters arising:** Actions completed.

3. Council update - George Scott

- Pride and Place fund papers went to Council Executive on Tuesday. WL eligible for up to 20million pounds over 10 years. George shared some of the details and eligibility (Fauldhouse and Blackburn / Whitburn). This is on the agenda with third sector working group next week. - [West Lothian Council Committee Information - View Committee Document](#)
- Shared Prosperity 3-year fund ends March. Await details on Local Growth fund.
- [Business Gateway | Business Gateway](#) Released 10-year strategy which include renewed commitment on skills and development. Working group will look at operational delivery.
- [Invest in West Lothian - Business Advice & Support](#)
- Employer practitioners' day - George gave thanks to colleagues for attending and drew attention to the call-to-action evaluation report, call to action. 3 monthly practitioners at local level, provide support to LEP, bring key data, insight and intelligence. Support their decision making moving forward. Proposals for new quarterly PEP meetings which all partners will be invited to attend. May impact on timings and format of future TSEF meetings
- Annual investment plan - no underspend to share at moment.
- Question about LEP Funding 26/27 regarding third sector funding.

4. LEP

- Strategy Day October 8th was well attended by all partners, good representation important, everyone was involved and had a say. Couple highlights: Pegs Bailey (National Third Sector Employability Partnership Engagement Manager) gave an overview of Good Commissioning Guidelines document, which gives clear direction for employability leads and has lived experience at its core. Alan will share this when received. LEP good practice framework will be signed off shortly. Presentations given by Partnership for Parents, Routes to work and Liyan which showcased some of the work happening in the third sector.
- In work poverty acknowledged on the agenda
- Feedback that LEP relationship and Third sector engagement much improved. Question; Is there an opportunity to feed into strategy day planning next year?

5. Service Mapping Exercise overview

13 orgs responded out of giving clear idea of strengths and gaps. 2,600 people per year being reached. Three key themes identified including in work

support - very limited structures exist currently. Practical barriers include language and childcare. Next steps - present at LEP and explore solutions.

6. Service Updates (All)

Routes to Work: Food hygiene course next week - low referrals despite varied partnership working get in touch if you know of anyone. Now offering training needs analysis on location.

Impact Arts: Started 2nd block: Stoney burn and Up hall. Word of mouth impact on referrals. Lone parent, ethnic minority demographic.

Street League: Drop in's at Xcite Bathgate, football and gym. Mobile across WL offering 1:1 service to help them into further training, employment and education. Hopefully have programme starting January 19th, 12-16 spaces.

The Larder: Waiting to hear about further funding for Cash for communities, power to grow paused just now due to staffing. Working with schools.

Partnership for parents: Mid-point of contract, met 80% of target numbers. Expect drop off due to festive season. Focusing on impact, which is creating meaningful and impactful change for parents. Positive placements and destinations. Technology challenge joining Helix however this allows transparency and data sharing between 6 regions.

Broxburn United: Looking at employability courses through SFA extra time, apprentice is now employed full time. Developing programmes across the board.

WLYAP: Two programmes start in January - one in partnership with SPARK aimed at people removed from employment market. External funding awarded for work with West Calder high school on S4 employment aspects. 8 - 10 places. Cyrenians growing programme, outdoor spaces. Looking long term, positive climate network conversation with college.

Green Skills: Routes to Grow 10-week programme. Good referrals across WL for S4/S5. New outdoor learning coordinator hired. Hope to broaden groups - perhaps run some short-term workshops.

7. AOCB

- Await further information Practitioners group and how it may impact this forum
- All welcome to VSGWL AGM: [Register to attend](#) Tuesday December 2nd 11am Broxburn - includes buffet lunch and networking
- Contact Liyana.adnan@vsgwl.org for any follow up and support
- WL has been selected for further research by CLES around in work poverty. Presentation made to LEP. Might open opportunities for TS colleagues.
- yoursay.westlothian.gov.uk | [Have Your Say on the Future of West Lothian Council](#) Consultation ends on 16th: all encouraged to respond.

Forum Meeting	LEP Meeting
08/01/2026 1.30pm	15/01/2026
05/03/2026 1.30pm	12/03/2026

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