**Third Sector Employability Forum**

Wednesday October 2nd 1.30-3pm – Hybrid

Present: David Stewart (FEDCAP), Stuart Matson & Kathleen McLoughlin (Routes to work), Adam Brown (Street League), Garry Walker (The Larder)

Apologies: Raymond Branton (Play Works), Karen Nailen (CAB), Angela Moohan (The Larder)

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions – (Chair)

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing himself as interim chair and encouraging nominations from members. This forum is open to all partners within employability sector. Welcome to Stuart and Kathleen from Routes to work, who are based in North Lanarkshire however deliver contracts in various areas and will be delivering Partnership for Parents in WL having been awarded recent funding.

1. Previous minutes and matters arising

Minutes approved. Standing items – LEP Rep and Forum chair – email Alan if interested.

1. Partnership for Parents update

Alan spoke with WLC employability manager George yesterday. Thanks to routes to work for making meeting today, last minute invite. Impact Arts also invited however were unable to attend. This meeting is held 1 week before LEP. Important to have input from the Third sector.

[Employability Support | Routes To Work | Scotland](https://www.routestowork.co.uk/)

Looking to move back into work, training or education? Routes To Work is a charity based in North Lanarkshire that provides free, confidential employability and skills support.

* Awarded Lot 2: qualifications. Kathleen will manage skills team, which has been growing significantly over recent years. Propose to target parents in WL and looking for support and guidance from partners in WL. Lot 1 – tailored for parents, Lot 2 upskilling support for those in work.
* Delivery in community-based setting. Armadale, Fauldhouse, Whitburn, The Brock, Bathgate - targeting areas of higher deprivation but open to working in other areas as needed. Meeting George on Monday.
* “We propose engaging and registering clients over the 9-month period with the intent of having all clients successfully complete REHIS Food Hygiene and REHIS First Aid qualifications. We will then offer a more contextualised vocational routeway looking at individual skills and ambitions for employment, focusing on potential careers and growth employment sectors in Customer Service, Care, Hospitality, Retail or Construction.
* **Clients will be supported to undertake all, or a selection of, the following accredited qualifications:** CSCS Routeway (incorporating REHIS Health & Safety & CSCS Test). World Host: Principles of Customer Service. REHIS Food Hygiene. [Scottish Certificate for Personal Licence Holders](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/101847.html#:~:text=Scottish%20Certificate%20for%20Personal%20Licence,a%20personal%20licence%20in%20Scotland.) (SCPLH). Contact details are publicity to follow in due course.
* Garry said the Larder were awarded Lot 3 and that it had been difficult to meet the tight deadline and asked Alan to feed this back. Welcomed routes to work and impact arts to the forum. The Larder operate a smaller model and also deliver some SVQ qualifications (as limited funding) and signpost. They have 23 people supporting with programme over 9-month period, targeting lone parents and parents with substance abuse issues. Main focus is on providing work experience.

Garry raised disappointment on behalf of Angela of The Larder at not winning lot 1 and lot 2, voicing concerns about the decision not to use local partners and providers. Garry went on to say it was great to see new partners in West Lothian however they have not delivered in WL which doesn’t fit in with Community wealth building values. Alan said all applicants had the same deadline, 10 days in total (including 2 weekends) and confirmed he had fed back the difficulties partners had gathering the data needed for application, agreeing that it was a tight deadline. Stuart added that they are a registered charity, not for profit, and will be bringing a lot of experience to the area and looking forward to working with partners.

Alan spoke about the value of the third sector and of collaboration especially with the challenges facing community centres in light of council budget pressures. The Gateway remain an accessible community hub and are engaging with both communities and the council to facilitate feedback highlighting the impact on communities of current proposals.

1. Service Delivery

**Street league** – Due to staff family bereavement, the team are continuing with small group sessions which include 1:1s – working with up to age 29 to find a positive destination. Sports drop in Tues + Thurs, football drop in Wednesday.

**FEDCAP** – Experiencing same challenges as everyone, reduced / uncertainty of funding which lead to difficulties workforce planning. Some staff decide to move on. Expressed concerns about SPF (Shared prosperity Fund).

1. LEP Update (local employability partnership)

* George has been in position for about a year and has brought transparency and energy to LEP.
* Last month a strategy Day was held to bring partners together as attendance has declined and many partners don’t speak up. The more who attend the more effective it can be. Alan chaired the meeting, which was well attended, Skills development Scotland apology. DWP and NHS were around the table as were Scottish government and Improvement service.
* Survey carried out prior about how effective the WL LEP is. Part of the day was scoping out the new improvement plan, which has implications for the third sector.
* Subgroups created of at least 2 partners who are then involved in driving forward those subgroups and report back to LEP on activities and progress. E.g. data and evidence - Scottish government, gateway and NHS – each org has data which would be useful in this group.
* David asked about Alan’s workload – clarification given that the seat is a third sector rep, does not need to be Alan. This person would represent the third sector, not their own organisation.
* Proposal to invite George Scott to December meeting. No objections. David raised that George would be welcome more regularly which would build trust and increased visibility welcome.

1. AOCB

* Employability Funding Allocation survey <https://uodschoolofbusiness.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6YfPxi8Hbd1xnuu>
* Mental health and wellbeing fund year 4 third sector groups funding launched Monday. Q&A tomorrow, will be recorded. Guidance and application forms on Gateway website. All TSI’s have a fund. £465,000.

1. Date of next meeting: December 11th 1.30-3pm

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| **Forum Meeting** | **LEP Meeting** |
| February 28th – 1.30pm | March 7th |
| May 1st – 10am | May 9th |
| June 26th – 1.30pm | July 4th |
| August 20th – 10am | August 29th |
| October 16th – 1.30pm | October 24th |
| December 11th – 1.30pm | December 19th |

*Actions*

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| Share LEP survey results | Alan |
| Once LEP dates shared, project next year’s Forum meetings | Victoria |
| Invite George to December forum meeting | Alan |
| LEP Rep | If interested email Alan |
| Forum chair | If interested email Alan |