

Heart of the South West Skills Advisory Panel

12th July 2021
from
11:00am – 12:00pm

Via Microsoft Teams

11:00am Welcome, Introductions and Declarations of Interest

Attendees:

- Vince Flower
- Eifion Jones
- Bill Blythe
- Stuart Elford
- Rod Davis
- Phill Adams
- Emma Hewitt
- Sharron Robbie
- Jackie Grubb
- Joanna Caine
- Rosie Bates
- John Laramy
- Laurence Frewin
- Jo Holmes
- Gabrielle Climie
- Sean Mackney
- Nora Corkery
- Mark Shepherd
- Khristine Norton
- Paul Blackmore
- Chris Young
- Mike Matthews
- Mel Roberts
- Jacob Coburn
- Julie Hawker
- Carl Wyard
- Victoria Bendle
- Simone Marillier-Roberts
- Paul Turner
- Victoria Hatfield
- Edward Coley
- Cheryl Ward
- Stephen Henagulph
- Steve Cardew
- Andy Berry
- Nicky Keast
- David Ralph
- Keri Denton
- Hilary Stevens
- Helen Higgs
- Chris Evans
- Tina Brinkworth
- Victoria Gage
- Lee Tozer
- Katy Quinn
- Mike Green
- Tony Skeel
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Apologies:

- Rob Bosworth
- Alan Denby
- Jamie Evans
- Debbie Wright
- Nicola Williams
- Suzanne Bond

11:10am Minutes of Last Meeting

- Actions from last meeting:
 - There were no declarations of interest to report and all actions had been completed.
 - Simone Marillier-Roberts to include Vince Flower on the attendee list at the previous SAP meeting
 - Simone Marillier-Roberts to note the boards appreciation to Fiona McMillian on the previous minutes following the update that Fiona has now stepped down as chair and Vince will be taking this role going forward.

11:15am Update on LMI – Phill Adams

Phill Adams provided an update to the group on the current LMI and data. A copy of the slide deck that was presented during the meeting has been shared with the group.

11.30am Roundtable of Members – all

John Laramy advised that there are a lot of young people/adults considering college options as opposed to employer led courses such as apprenticeships as this is felt to be the safer option at the moment.

Stuart Elford highlighted that there is some confusion as to why there are a significant number of people on furlough within the sectors who are identifying a skills shortage such as hospitality and care.

Rod Davis advised that furnish and manufacturing cannot find enough apprentices at the moment. There are a number of good vacancies currently on offer however there are no applicants applying for these vacancies. Concern that there are a number of skills courses being taken up however those with an employment outcome such as apprenticeships are struggling to fill.

Julie Hawker advised that furlough is helping businesses survive during the pandemic but is also helping those who need mental health support as well due to the pandemic.

Phill Adams advised that HEROG have been tasked with picking up a wider piece around skills which has filtered down to the SAP including a virtual jobs fair so this will be discussed with the group in due course.

Sharron Robbie highlighted the need to inform parents and schools of the current apprenticeship opportunities that are available. It was advised that following discussions with providers, 3 of these providers are no longer offering Health and Social care provision which will have an impact. Further many providers have advised that they are struggling to retain staff members due to the current competition within the sector.

Joanne Caine advised that employers are having to work harder to retain current staff members due to the competition around. Around 28% of employers have at least 5 vacancies they are advertising. Within the travel to work area of Exeter, there are around 8,000 vacancies on indeed. Online bookings for careers hub opened up last week and they are currently receiving bookings which is positive.

Sean Mackney advised that there is difficulty with employers finding people for current vacancies. There is a question around if employers are holding staff in furlough who are concerns about returning or they no longer want, whilst they re-recruit.

Bill Blythe advised that he is optimistic that furlough will decrease as sectors reopen.

Emma Hewitt highlighted that there are currently more opportunities available than people. A comms piece needs to be considered in order to raise awareness to people, so they know what is on offer. How do we join up the dots to ensure disadvantaged people are aware of what is currently available?

Jackie Grubb highlighted that many people are being kept on furlough until this runs out in September so we may see a change following this.

Mel Roberts advised that they are currently struggling to get people engaged with activity. Need to ensure careful management if activity is approved and rolled out.

John Laramy highlighted that there are currently more jobs than people. Young adults prefer face to face advice. There is a large amount of offers available at the moment so it is difficult for young people to choose the right opportunity for them, perhaps this is something the SAP could work on aligning better?

Rosie Bates also highlighted that people want face to face discussions and support going forward. The Youth Hub which has just opened in Exeter will be a way to help young people clarify their options.

Paul Blackmore advised that the hospitality sector is currently struggling to manage demand and recruit however the professional services sector is very buoyant at the moment.

Mike Matthews raised concerns over the Kickstarter programme which was advised has not been well received by many employers. It has been advised that the programme takes too long to start up and they are not receiving the calibre of applicants.

Mark Shepard highlighted that high street footfall is currently down by a third. Further it has been reported that there is a national shortage with recruiting HGV drivers. Hospitality is no longer considered a safe haven like it used to be as people cannot guarantee employment and are required to work unsociable hours. Many people want a better work life balance now. Further there were many overseas workers within this sector which Brexit has impacted. Messages need to be simplified so they are clearer to their target audience.

Sharron Robbie advised that there have been various responses to the Kickstart programme throughout the South West. It was highlighted that there is a taxi shortage. Thoughts need to be considered around how we support people into new sectors.

Stuart Elford advised that kickstart within their area has been much more successful than initially anticipated. It is believed that this is because there are better incentives for young people with the kickstart scheme compared to other schemes available.

Laurence Frewin advised that they are raising the profile on what's available at the moment. Adults need advice and guidance as much as young people, so this is a main area of focus for September. Language needs to be more employer friendly to get them engaged.

Stuart Elford updated the group on the LSIP project. It was advised that an announcement is expected on 15th July 2021. It was advised that Helen Hart will be engaging with stakeholders to discuss next steps regardless of if the proposal is successful or not.

12.00pm AOB and Close

Phill Adams introduced Victoria Bendle and Simone Marillier-Roberts to the team. It was advised that they have joined the core skills team at Devon County Council and will be providing secretariat support to the SAP going forward.