

**Productive Skills For Devon**  
**18<sup>th</sup> march 2009, Job Centre Plus**

**Present:**

Tim Jones	Chair
Andrew Lightfoot	DEP
Alan Gorman	South West Pound
Ben Neild	SLIM
Caroline Applebee	Devon Adult Community Learning
Caroline Murphy	Train to Gain (Business Link)
Charlotte Hanson	Community Council for Devon
Craig Marshall	Training Provider Network
David Rowe	University of Plymouth
Debbie Passmore	South Devon Workforce Development Group
Janet Sinclair	Job Centre Plus
Janis Blacklaw	Skills for Life
Jennifer Brogan	DCC – Tourism Skills Network
John Davey	Connexions
John Willis	Skills for Life
Philip Done	NWDWDAG
Steve Smith	DCC
Trevor Day	PS4D Consultant
Trisha Radford	South Devon College
Jenna Corke	Scribe

**Apologies:**

Anne Barnett	DCC
Geoff Hallett	Connexions / Devon Education and Business Partnership
Jeremy Filmer-Bennett	Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Karen Christie	Teignbridge District Council
Kate Foster	University of Exeter
Keri Denton	DCC (Jennifer Brogan attending in place)
Liz Abell	Devon Renaissance
Nicola Poultney	DMO
Philip Oldfield	Exeter City Council
Tim Beavon	West Devon BC
Tony Skeel	LSC
Tracy Hill	Integria

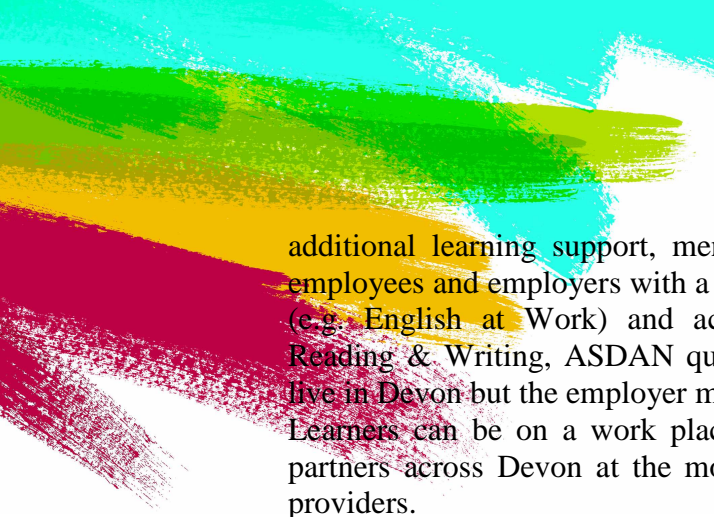
**1. Welcome and introductions**

Introductions were given around the table

**2. ‘Functional Skills’**

**2.1. Skills for Life**

Janis Blacklaw presented the Skills for Life Devon project where DCC is the lead partner. The main aim is to enhance Skills for Life qualifications, e.g. with



additional learning support, mentoring, childcare etc. It also aims to engage employees and employers with a range of non-accredited preparatory programmes (e.g. English at Work) and accredited programmes (Speaking & Listening, Reading & Writing, ASDAN qualifications, etc). The learner does not have to live in Devon but the employer must have a Devon, Torbay or Plymouth postcode. Learners can be on a work placement or in secure employment. There are 15 partners across Devon at the moment including FE colleges and small training providers.

SME's have always been the focus but with no restriction re delivering to non SME's (employers with 250 staff or more). A restriction of 10%, then 25%, was imposed regarding delivery to Non-SME's which has meant less flexibility for the partners.

There is extremely complicated paperwork which keeps changing; this is daunting for partners.

A referral payments policy is being drafted in respect of employer engagement - £150 payment to referral agency when new employer is referred onto the project and then a further £100 when a learner starts (if within 6 months of employer referral).

We are currently looking at extending enhancement opportunities so the project can fund developmental work to embed Skills for Life into a vocational qualification.

There was a discussion about ways to break down the barriers. Not enough clarification from the LSC about evidence needed – has caused problems at audit review. Train to Gain flexibilities – now that T2G funds delivery, project supports enhancements which will largely be one-to-one support rather than groups, harder to hit targets.

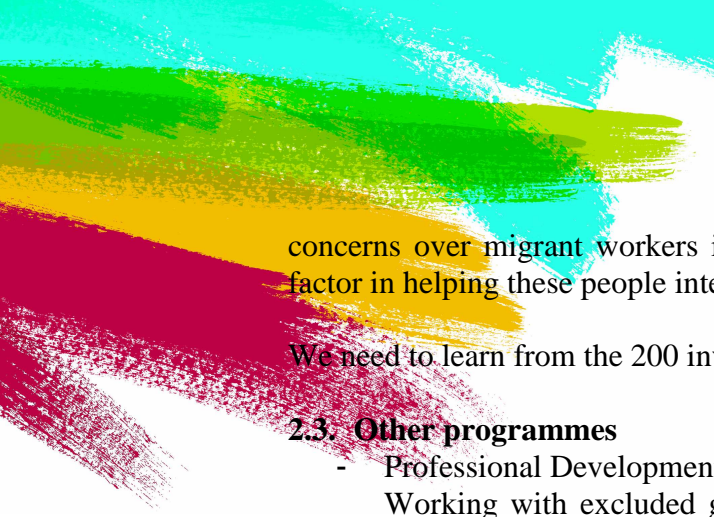
Please see attached the presentation given by Janis Blacklaw for more information.

*Action: Workshop to include PS4D, LSC, auditor and partners to gain clarity of the process.*

## **2.2. English @ work**

This initiative has been mainly funded by Devon Renaissance funding and has been a great success equipping people with an English qualification. Further Education establishments have been highly involved and all employers are very satisfied. A presentation of Employer Awards will be held and the press will be present. High priority to get this success into the media. This will be held at the next DEP meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

It has mostly been care and hospitality sectors who have been involved with the project. Devon ACL and colleges have been the providers. There have been



concerns over migrant workers in the recession but this programme has been a factor in helping these people integrate into society.

We need to learn from the 200 investments and create a legacy.

### **2.3. Other programmes**

- **Professional Development Partnership:**  
Working with excluded groups in Devon. This is focused on something other than academic qualifications. It is therefore more practical and has looked at deprivation and disaffection during the recession. This is not a completely new project but is looking for new partners. A number of candidates going into jobs have the qualifications for a job but do not have the skills to sell themselves.
- **Learning Disabilities:**  
Part of the Devon LAA is to increase the number of people into work who have a learning disability. This is done largely through an apprenticeship scheme. There are pilot groups in Torbay, Plymouth and Devon.

### **2.4. Links to worklessness**

One of the main problems is understanding the landscape in which we are working, how this sits with councils, groups etc.

A workshop regarding worklessness and young people will be held and the problem is increasing in this age group quicker than any other.

Welfare Pledge – getting unemployed back into employment. Job Centre Plus are still mainly working with the private sector. Need to get the public sector involved as the statistics shows that this will help get us out of the recession.

## **3. Data:**

### **3.1. Regional data from SLIM**

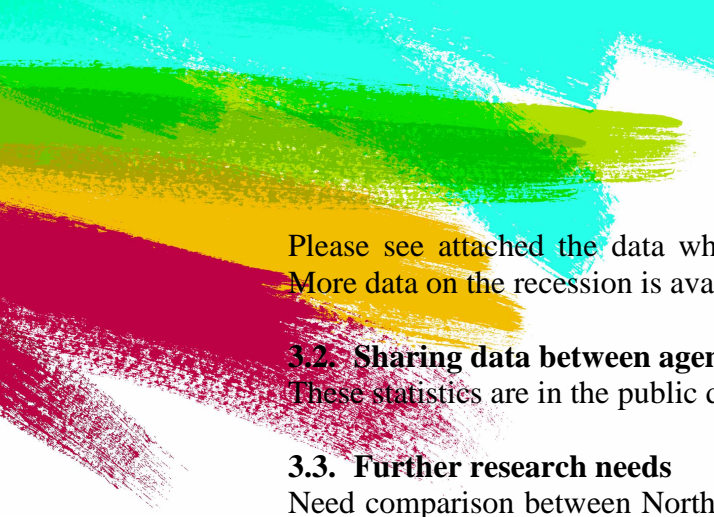
Ben Neild from SLIM presented the latest regional statistics during the recession.

Unemployment peak in the last recession was 2,500,000. Unemployment is not much lower in the South West as it was a year ago.

Men are being affected more in this recession than women. The number of part time male workers is increasing.

Young people (18-24), older people (50+) and men are more prone to redundancy. The older people who are made redundant are less likely to go back into employment after redundancy and therefore their skills are lost. The South West region has a low redundancy rate compared to the rest of the country. The manufacturing sector has a rate of 33.3% redundancy in the South West.

There has been a reduction in the number of notified vacancies, although the care sector still has a large number of vacancies.



Please see attached the data which Ben Neild presented for more information. More data on the recession is available on the SLIM website

### **3.2. Sharing data between agencies**

These statistics are in the public domain

### **3.3. Further research needs**

Need comparison between North Devon and South Devon and between rural and urban areas in the future. Also need to look at the increased trend of self employment and 3 day a week firms.

## **4. Rural skills issues**

RDPE Rural Development programme:

Possible barriers to skills developments in rural areas, for example, it costs a lot more money to send an NVQ assessor to drive to see a couple of people compared to those in urban areas.

There are 8 workshops across the region in the coming weeks and then one large workshop at the end of April from which a framework document will emerge. South West Food and Drink will then be the managing agent.

There is also an online survey to gauge opinions about priority support work.

DEFRA money – if you are a rural business but not in farming or forestry then it is very difficult to get engaged to utilise some of this money – 90% of the money is for agriculture.

## **5. Partner contributions to the seven themes of the PS4D Delivery Plan**

Contact was to be made to putting together data and anecdotal information regarding the seven main points of work going on in PS4D.

## **6. Updates from Workforce Development Groups and Employment and Skills Boards**

- North Devon Workforce Development Group: In a bit of disarray largely due to the changes in North Devon Plus. The action group are continuing to develop ideas. Torridge Skills Starters and Graduate Skills programmes are coming to an end. Currently awaiting confirmation of funding from LPS2 reward money. There is a good representation across the board in this group. There are projects coming to an end this month and there is no funding to take these forward until June at the earliest.
- South Devon: First Core Partners Group meeting has been held, employers group meeting scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> April. Focusing on skills and aspiration in order to affect the productivity and growth in the area. From speaking to key employers in the area it is clear that the agenda should be focusing on business survival rather than growth at the moment.
- The cohort after school is most likely to be made redundant and therefore need to give them the skills to get back into the workplace.

## **7. Regional and local round up**

- Project called Advance in Devon and Cornwall has been running for 18 months which aims to link vocational qualifications to HE
- New diplomas to be delivered in Devon from September and schools and colleges are recruiting now. 14-16 engagement programme in Exeter and Teignbridge is to be rolled out across the country in September.
- Connexions: expecting increased funding for Next Step to provide adult guidance
- Job Centre Plus: Recruitment has increased 50% and so they are recruiting for another 140 staff with another 100 by end of July.
- Jen: Trained 260 people in tourism
- Devon ACL are providing short courses for people who are redundant
- Unlike the JISC central organisation, the JISC-RSC South West is a support and advice service and does not have access to funding for e-learning development and most JISC central funding is HE centric. Nevertheless since August 07 we have formed good working relationships with organisations who do have access to funding like the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL), National Institute for Adult Continuing Education, The Association of Learning Providers, BECTA etc. These organisations provided Work Based Learning specific versions of their e-learning development courses which had a level of capital funding attached to successful completion.  
Altogether this has resulted in identification and potential investment within the South West between November 07 and June 09 in the capital side of e-learning development of around £756,000.  
As most of the capital funding for Devon was connected to providers working in both Devon & Cornwall it is difficult to be precise as to the proportion of this capital funding Devon has benefited from, our best estimate is that this is between £280,000 and £320,000.
- WAM no funding post March and are struggling to identify match funding
- Dartington Hall Trust are bidding for a school for social entrepreneurs and are currently looking for equipment for this school.

## **8. Notes from the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January and actions arising**

Any queries/alterations contact Andrew Lightfoot and Jenna Corke.

## **9. Confirm date of next meeting: 22<sup>nd</sup> May, Okehampton**