

Productive Skills for Devon

20th January 2009, 2pm start, Cardinal Newman Centre, Exeter.

Present:

Tim Jones (Chair)	DCBC
Tony Skeel	LSC
David Rowe	University of Plymouth
Dee Rogers	Job Centre Plus
Janet Sinclair	Job Centre Plus
Steve Smith	DCC
Stewart Horne	West Devon Business Information Point
Jennifer Brogan	DCC
Jeremy Filmer-Bennett	Devon and Cornwall Business Council
Tim Beavon	West Devon BC
Trevor Day	Independent Consultant
John Davey	Connexions
Philip Oldfield	Exeter City Council
Tom Bailey	
Geoff Hallet	Connexions/ Devon Education and Business Partnership
Greg Davies	Community Council of Devon
Alan Gorman	South West Pound
Tracy Morris	
Andrew Lightfoot	DEP
Peter Norris	Torbay and South Devon
Caroline Applebee	on behalf of Margaret Davidson (DCC)
Jenna Corke	Scribe

Apologies:

Liz Abell	Devon Renaissance
Craig Marshall	Training Provider Network
Andrew Ashley	Enterprise Plymouth
Anne Barnett	DCC
Caroline Murphy	Train to Gain (Business Link)
Tracy Hill	Integria
Kate Foster	University of Exeter
Philip Done	NWDWDAG

Margaret Davidson (Caroline Applebee attending on behalf of Margaret).

1.0 Welcome and Introductions.

Introductions were given around the table

2.0 Impact of economic recession on training and skills needs.

A recent national report was discussed and the need to re-skill employees rather than just up-skill is important.

Some of the impacts of the recession on skills are:

- Employers are recognising the value of skilled employees and are beginning to talk about managing cash flow in different ways before redundancy sets in.

- The cost of redundancy is approx. £16,000 per person
- Many companies are reducing down to 4 day working weeks which maintains jobs and skills.
- Graduates are looking at broader careers. They are no longer head hunted
- The effect on apprentices who are not yet fully skilled and are training is not yet known
- There is an influx on unemployed young people
- High level NVQ training has been hit. Increase in unemployed young people
- We will not see the impact on people who have received a reduction in overtime or night working and those reduced to 3 or 4 day weeks.
- Pharmaceutical and agriculture businesses are doing well due to the low currency which means they can export more
- 90,000 people in construction are being affected due to the current recession compared to 500,000 people in the last recession.
- The effects are not the same across the county. For example, Bideford has more unemployed people than vacancies whereas Exeter has more vacancies than unemployed people.
- Hospitality and tourism – these sectors are predicted to do well this summer as it will be cheaper to go on holiday within the country.
- We need to work out the final outcome and adjust accordingly.

3.0 Local Employment Partnerships: Job Centre Plus

Local Employment Partnerships (LEP's) involve Jobcentre Plus and local businesses working together to introduce priority customers (lone parents, people with health conditions, or people who have been unemployed for 6 months or more) into the work place. The aim is to place 250,000 priority customers into vacancies by December 2010. There are currently 2,255 employers in Devon and Cornwall participating in this initiative. To date (09/01/09) Devon has helped 2101 customers back into work.

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has provided funding to certain providers to deliver pre-employment training packages. Normally, the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) and the LSC provide a two week pre-employment training course.

LEP pre-employment training delivered for the retail trade, resulted in 63 course starters and 29 job entries which is 46% success rate (38.5% success rate in the tourism industry and 51% success in the food industry).

The new ASDA store in N.Devon offered 49 priority customers work due to LEP adjustments. Please see the attached document for other success stories.

Despite the economic downturn employers are still recruiting although this is mainly in the private sector, not in the public sector. Only 2.5% of priority customers obtained work within the public sector.



4.0 Local Employment and Skills Boards

Tony had prepared a report for Productive Skills for Devon in June 2008 which was the basis for the agreed approach in Devon. The Regional Skills and Employment Partnership had commissioned some work to identify action and plans in each county/unitary area: the draft report for Devon had been in circulation. The proposed arrangements were due to be discussed at a regional event on 26th February.

It was noted that the proposal for the RDA and local authorities to manage the integrated Regional Plan meant that strong sub regional arrangements involving the private and voluntary sectors would be even more important.

Round up of agenda items 2 to 4:

We need a joined up approach and so a small working group to look specifically at the implications of the recession was suggested.

There are a number of shared agendas within the group looking at the impact in terms of geography and which sectors are most important to Devon.

Most construction businesses are small/medium employers. These people have un-transferable skills. Apprentices often want to stay with the employer and do not have the skills to transfer anywhere else.

Many jobs are not as defined as they used to be and so people can adapt and move on.

5.0 PS4D Delivery Plan update


A table was circulated showing growth in level 3 attainment among the workforce in Devon of 3.4% during 2006-2007. The target for the 3 year life on the LAA was 4%. However, the confidence level for this figure is $\pm 3\%$. Therefore, this is encouraging but we can not be complacent. There will be further reflection on any amendments necessary to the Delivery Plan at the next meeting.

ACTION: Small working group to be formed to look at implications. This group should meet before the next meeting. Andrew Lightfoot to arrange

6.0 Rural/Land based businesses and the take up of Train to Gain

Stewart and Leanne presented a report on the take up of Train to Gain in rural areas.

West Devon BIP work with 1000 rural based businesses each year. Approximately 60-70 businesses have been surveyed to see what barriers they experience to stop them taking up training. 53 of these businesses had 0-5 employees and so were small businesses.



They participated in an average of 3-4 training sessions a year. College based training was least popular. Larger urban businesses knew about Train to Gain. 40% said they had seen the T.V campaign. Only 13% knew how to contact Train to Gain.

Falling incomes and more regulation deters employers from investing in training.

Business Link was the most preferred route to contact for help. Accountants and solicitors came out worse.

Lack of time and cost leads people to not attend training courses. Child care was also an important issue.

ICT training is most popular but financial and management training is also wanted.

Location and times of training are important to suit the businesses.

Please see the attached report for more information.

7.0 EU programmes

EU master class 29th January. Graham Watson shall speak at this event and the South West Brussels Office will give an update on EU funding programmes and policies – 40/50 people developing/running programmes.

8.0 Notes of the meeting held on 24th October 2008

All agreed

9.0 News round up

- Dave – RAE learning innovation grants and funding.
- Torbay and South Devon are supporting apprentices and offering bonuses to employers. 70 young people have benefited so far. Leadership and management funding so college part funds the cost of some training. Beacon South West are promoting best practice between companies and making companies aware of public funding on offer.
- Janet – capturing good practice from other areas about worklessness and educating through workshops.
- Steve – engaging local employers through innovative mainstream opportunities in over 50's.
- Jennifer – tourism skills training sold out. Reinvigorate Devon Ambassadors programme
- Philip – worklessness agenda pilots in Exeter – 40 groups in St Davids to write work programme
- Geoff – there are 5 diplomas for 14-19 year olds to be taught from September onwards
- Alan – research on generic skills on employability



Date of next meeting: 18th March at Pynes Hill Court, Job Centre Plus office