

Employment and Skills Advisory Panel (ESAP)

Tuesday 8th December 2020, 10:00 to 12:00

Microsoft Teams.

	Agenda Item	Lead	Additional Information
10:00	1. Welcome, Apologies Declarations of Interest	Simon Telfer	
10:05	2. Minutes from Last meeting	Simon Telfer	Minutes provided
10:15	3. National Employment and Training Initiatives	Clare Hughes	Paper 1 Input from all on apprenticeships and traineeships, Verbal update from Bev Moxon, DfE - Apprenticeships Verbal update from Graham Metcalf, DWP - Long Term Unemployment
10:40	4. Online Jobs and Careers Fair	Natalie Poole	Paper 2 Please have a look at the platform and the exhibition stands in advance of the meeting www.greaterlincsjobsfair.co.uk
10.55	5. ESF and Skills Support to the Workforce	Clare Hughes	Paper 3 Discussion and decision
11:15	6. Institutes of Technology	Val Braybrooks	Verbal update
11:25	7. DfE Consultations	Janet Meenaghan	Paper 4
11.35	8. Brexit and Post Covid World	Simon Telfer	Discussion
11:50	AoB		



**Minutes of the Greater Lincolnshire
Employment and Skills Advisory Panel**

2nd October 2020
Via MS Teams

	Actions
<p><u>Panel Members present :</u> Pat Doody (PD); Val Braybrooks (VB); Jason Parnell (JP); Melanie Weatherley (MW); James Pinchbeck (JP); Janet Meenaghan (JM); Joanne Woodhouse (JW); Rachel Linstead (RL); Angela Borman (AB); Andy Harsley (AH)</p> <p><u>Panel Apologies:</u> Simon Telfer; Ian Dickinson; Cllr P Bradwell, Cllr C Leyland</p> <p><u>Other attendees:</u> Amanda Bouttell (AB), Natalie Poole (NP), Sue Fielding (SF -in place of Graham Metcalfe); Pete Holmes (PH - BEIS)</p> <p><u>LEP Secretariat</u> Clare Hughes (CH) Ruth Carver (RC) Laura Spittles (Note Taker)</p>	
<p><u>1.0 - Welcome</u> The Chair welcomed the Board to the meeting.</p>	
<p><u>2.0 - Minutes of the last meeting</u> No matters arising</p>	
<p><u>3.0 - Operational - Activity since last meeting</u></p> <p>The Chancellor made announcements on 8th July regarding a whole host of skills schemes. CH is leading the workforce strand of the LRF Economic Recovery Group. Two short term groups will be created from this work. The first group is the Kickstart Monitoring Group with the first meeting being held on 9th October. The second group will be a Redundancy Response Group. There are lots of support areas available but these groups will look at how we can help Businesses and individuals further. Another area to focus on through these groups will be looking at the knock on effect to the supply chains.</p> <p>The LEP are using Shared Comms Message - highlighting that there is support available.</p> <p>The Enterprise Adviser Network has progressed successfully over the past few months in working with schools. There are currently 48 schools and colleges of 60 signed up.</p> <p>The Online Jobs Fair is starting to take shape and will soon be launched. The LEP are working with a local supplier to create this new platform. Employers will be able to upload material and have one to one sessions with individuals looking for employment. Further ideas to improve this platform include Careers Fairs to involve schools and colleges.</p>	

<p>The Government recently announced a £900 million Getting Building Fund to help deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure across the Country. The LEP have been awarded £25.8 million of this for the area. Board Members are asked to give thought as to what sectors and areas could benefit most from this scheme.</p> <p>The first LEP Skills Conference was due to take place in March. Due to Covid this was cancelled and rescheduled to October but then cancelled again. Currently there are no plans to reschedule this again. <i>CH has asked for any volunteers (most likely in the new year) to brainstorm new ways of running this conference. Board Members to email CH direct with interest.</i></p>	All
<p><u>4.0 - Employment Summary</u></p> <p>Sue Fielding presented the Board with the latest figures from DWP in Graham Metcalfe's absence. The paper showed the latest Claimant Count Figures in Greater Lincolnshire.</p> <p>Compared to August 2019, the numbers of claimants has increased in Greater Lincolnshire by 109%; and it is 87% higher than in February 2020. It is anticipated the number of claimants will continue to rise through September and October.</p> <p>Data produced in August showed that over 135,800 people in Greater Lincolnshire had been furloughed at some stage since the introduction of the scheme - 27% of the total eligible workforce. This is below the national average of 30%. The furlough scheme is due to end on 31st October.</p> <p>The current for DWP focus is on young people and the Kickstart Programme has seen a lot of interest. The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create new 6-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. Youth Employment Coaches are available to help support this.</p> <p>Another new programme due to commence is JETS (Job Entry Targeted Support) and is dedicated to supporting those left jobless due to Covid-19. The programme will also give job hunters the boost they need to return to employment through an action plan agreed with their personal Work Coach, peer support and opportunities to build their skills.</p> <p>There are many other DWP Programmes that have continued running throughout the past few months.</p>	
<p><u>5.0 - SAP Programme (next steps)</u></p> <p>CH provided the Board with an update regarding the progress of the national SAP Programme and the activity that the ESAP is required to carry out this year.</p> <p>The ESAP took on the responsibilities of a SAP, and the LEP and Department for Education (DfE) have a Memorandum of Understanding to carry out these responsibilities in return for £75K. That amount was provided in 2019 as a one-off payment, and an additional 75K has been provided in 2020, along with extra responsibilities.</p> <p>All SAPs are required to produce a local labour market and skills analysis and a condition of the funding is that they must build their internal capacity to produce this in-house.</p> <p>CH asked the Board to consider whether a new <i>Task and Finish Group</i> needs creating to look at various items within this piece of work, such as milestones for</p>	

<p>completing the analysis and progress reports.</p> <p>The Board discussed that a Task and Finish Group seems the best way forward to report back to the whole ESAP Group so that various work can be signed off. <i>Anyone interested in being on the group to email Clare.</i> Dates will be looked at to hold these meetings.</p>	All
<p><u>6.0 - Mid Term Recovery Plan</u></p> <p>A short term recovery plan covering the near term commitments and actions across strategic objectives was produced by partners earlier on in the year. It sets out commitments and actions from local authorities, private sector, third sectors and education organisations to outline the activities needed to put in place to immediately respond to the risks posed by COVID-19 to the economy and business community.</p> <p>Building on the short term recovery plan, the LEP is currently leading the production of a medium term recovery plan which will outline the strategic objectives over the coming 3-5 years. This strategic plan, which is currently in development, will link strongly to the Local Industrial Strategy objectives and identify the priorities to drive recovery across the area.</p> <p>CH to circulate.</p>	CH
<p><u>7.0 - PM Skills Announcement and 'High Value' Courses</u></p> <p>High Value Courses - trialling this year for 18-19 year olds to provide more options, help prevent unemployment. A number of courses/sectors that are important locally are not included or described as 'high-value'. College groups and other training providers to understand more.</p>	JM
<p><u>8.0 - A.O.B</u></p> <p>It was discussed that papers are needed to be emailed to the Board further in advance so everyone has time to read them before the meetings. Every effort will be made to issue them one week in advance.</p>	CH
<p><u>Next meeting - 8th December 2020</u></p>	

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to update ESAP members about the new employment initiatives announced by the Chancellor in July and November 2020 as part of the Government's response to Covid:19.

It is important that the Panel finds out if schemes are working well locally so that information about any barriers or challenges can be fed back to national Government through the SAP Programme team and the new national Skills and Productivity Board.

Recommendation

That there is a short standing agenda item at each future quarterly meeting and monthly briefing that partners feed into in relation to the participation and success of these schemes.

1. **Kickstart** - Six-month work placements in 'new' jobs, aimed at those aged 16 to 24 who are currently out of work, fairly 'job-ready' but have not been able to find work. The initiative, announced in July, went live on 2nd November and the last six-month placements will start in June 2021 to end in December 2021.

A number of national (Tesco, Superdrug) were amongst the first placements nationally to go live. The placement approval process is currently taking DWP nationally around 4 weeks given the high interest in the scheme.

How it works - simplified:

- Employer creates a placement description and submits to DWP;
- DWP approves it and puts the placement on a database that can only be viewed by the Job centre and the unemployed person.
- A jobseeker and Job Centre work coach consider suitability for placement, leading to application.
- The employer will undertake a selection process.
- DWP will pay the employer 100% of wages at NMW for up to 25 hours, NI Contributions etc.
- DWP will also pay the employer £1500 per placement to fund as they choose on the job start-up costs, e.g. uniform, hard hat, IT equipment and other practical materials, and in-work training to develop transferable skills to increase chances of longer term work.

Employers are required to agree to 30 placements over the length of the initiative.

What is a Gateway Organisation?

- If an employer wants to offer fewer than 30 placements they can approach a Gateway Organisation who will act on their behalf with DWP.
- The only difference to the above process is that the Gateway Organisation will submit the employer's placement description to DWP, and DWP will pay the Gateway Organisation £1500 to hand over to the employer.
- The Gateway Organisation will receive £300 per placement for being the interface between the employer and DWP, collating the details, and acting as the accountable body.

In some cases the Gateway Organisation might be in a position to offer training to the employer, and the employer might want to use some of the £1500 to pay the Gateway Organisation. That agreement takes place outside of DWP arrangements.

How is it working locally?

Employer demand to use the Kickstart scheme is high across Greater Lincolnshire and there are likely to be thousands of placements available for young people. Hundreds of applications have already been submitted to DWP nationally and are waiting for approval.

Some local areas are working closely together, for example North East Lincolnshire has several Gateway organisations and they share numbers so that they understand local demand. Similarly, a number of organisations are working closely in West Lindsey, including WLDC who have 30 of their own placements, Acis and others.

Local Gateway organisations currently include (subject to change):

Abbey Access Training
Acis Group Limited
Boston College
Choose ICT Ltd
City of Lincoln Council
East Lindsey ITEC LTD
Lincoln College
The Lincolnshire & Rutland Education Business Partnership
The Network CIO (Lincoln)
Steadfast Training Ltd

A Kickstart Monitoring Group has been established and met a few times, with initial objectives to share best practice, understand how the scheme is being implemented and help simplify messages so that partners can raise awareness.

The group may have a longer term focus to review how Kickstart trainees are able to find work, including Apprenticeships, once their placement is complete. The Group is led by C Hughes with attendees from DWP, DfE, all of our Local Authorities and District Councils and Federation of Small Business.

For more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

To search for Gateway Organisations: <https://secure.dwp.gov.uk/find-a-kickstart-gateway>

2. Apprenticeship Incentives - available from 1st August 2020 to 31 January 2021, as announced in July 2020, and extended to March 2021, as announced in November.

£2,000 for taking on 16-24 year old

£1,500 for taking on someone aged 25+

The new incentive can be spent on a wide range of costs to support the apprentice, including wages, travel, mentoring.

Existing Employer costs:

All employers must pay the wages of an apprentice, at least £4.15 p/h and more depending on age and stage of the apprenticeship.

- Some employers pay for all of the apprenticeship training through the payments they make monthly to the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Employers who don't pay the Levy are required to pay 5% of the training costs, the rest is subsidised by Government.
- The smallest employers - fewer than 50 employees - don't pay for any of the training of the apprentices is aged 16-18 (or 19-24 with a Health & care Plan)

Additional announcements:

Apprenticeship levy flexibilities - From August 2021, employers who pay the levy will be able to transfer unspent levy funds in bulk to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the introduction of a levy matching service.

Flexible Apprenticeships - Work will be taking place to test approaches to supporting apprenticeships in industries with more flexible working patterns, for example seasonal variation, in response to the Prime Ministers call for portable apprenticeships.

How is it working locally?

Local intelligence suggests that the numbers of people starting an apprenticeship are down and that even in sectors where employers are operating fairly normally they are waiting for things to be more certain and stable before committing to a programme that is at least a year long.

Bev Moxon, DfE - verbal update.

3. Traineeship Incentive - £1000 payment to the employer per traineeship taken on, and new eligibility: Young people aged 16-24 and up to and including a Level 3 qualification. End date?

Traineeships are an existing programme that combines work placements and training for young people who want a job or an apprenticeship but do not have the appropriate skills or experience. Can last from 6 weeks to 12 months and a wage is not paid.

An employer might choose to pay the young person, and for things such as travel and subsistence, but they are not required to.

Someone who has completed a traineeship might be ready to progress to a Kickstart placement or an apprenticeship.

How is it working locally?

Bev Moxon, DfE - verbal update.

4. Restart - announced 25th November 2020 - A DWP led 3 year programme for unemployed people who have been unable to find employment for over 12 months' worth £2.7bn.

This follows predictions that unemployment is likely to peak next year. In a worst case scenario we could see unemployment rates of almost 12%. If we assume this to be broadly the same in Greater Lincolnshire it could mean just over 60,000 people in unemployment in our area.

Graham Metcalfe, DWP - verbal update long term unemployment

Recommendations

That there is a standing agenda item at each future quarterly meeting and monthly briefings that partners feed into in relation to the participation and success of these schemes.

Background

As highlighted previously a new platform has been created to help fill the gap left by physical jobs fairs that took place around the area, led by Job Centres/DWP.

The new jobs fair platform was launched for its first 'live' event on Wednesday 11th November 2020 at www.greaterlincsjobsfair.co.uk

The platform enables multiple employers to message chat or have face to face conversations with jobseekers simultaneously for the duration of the live event.

During the live events pre-recorded videos, top tips from employers, information about a sector etc. are played.

The platform is free for exhibitors and members of the public, to use.

Exhibitors are required to register in advance and attend for the duration of the event. Members of the public can attend on the day at any point during the live event.

In-between the live events i.e. when employers are not at their exhibition stands, the stands will remain in place with information for job seekers to look at.

Feedback and Next Event

Feedback from the first event has been overwhelmingly positive. The ability to collect information on which exhibition stands or topics receive the most interest is also proving to be useful. There were 408 visitors to the fair and 57 exhibitors.

A further 11 live events are planned over the next year and the next one will take place on 16th December.

All future events can be found at <https://greaterlincsjobsfair.co.uk/page/upcoming-fairs>

Members are asked to consider the following:

1. A couple of exhibitors have asked for ideas to help them entice people to click through to their stand and interact with them. What can exhibitors do to make their online exhibition stand more enticing?

(Ideas received so far: upload a video introducing yourself rather than a video about your business to the exhibition stand; In the exhibition stand short summary say that if you receive 100 visitors you will donate to charity).

2. Do you have any videos of jobs in your sector, or tips for job seekers that can be uploaded onto the platform? Or would you be interested in creating a short video?

Please have a look at the platform and the exhibition stands in advance of the meeting www.greaterlincsjobsfair.co.uk

Purpose

To brief members of the panel about the progress of the Skills Support to the Workforce programme, its role in support to redundancy, and to facilitate a discussion about the reach of training across geographies and sectors.

This paper refers to a spreadsheet that is provided separately and will also be shared on screen during the meeting.

Background

1. SSW is the largest European funded training programme in the area.
2. It was commissioned by the LEP using the European Social Fund (ESF), procured and managed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), who provide the match funding, and the contract is held by HCUK, an arm of Hull College.
3. The scheme fully funds eligible* training for individuals who are in work, with the aim of helping them to progress and the business to grow/be more productive.
*hundreds of courses up to and including Level 2 qualifications are eligible to be fully funded, but Level 3 and above are restricted in line with national policy.
4. *Funds can also be used to support individuals in the workplace at risk of redundancy.*

The Contract

5. The contract began on 1st April 2019 within an original end date of July 2021 and has been extended financially and in time to March 2023 or until funds last. The contract cannot be extended beyond then or be increased in value.
6. The total contract value to 2023 is £10.8M. It is split into funds for learners starting on a course, funds for the actual training, and funds for potential progressions. See Tab 3 of the accompanying spreadsheet. £3.63M has already been paid by the ESFA to HCUK.
7. The contract stipulated that the contractor must cover the whole of the Greater Lincolnshire Area, and that delivery in each Local Authority area should be proportionate to the number and type of businesses within that area.
8. It also stated the main growth sectors for focus were:
 - a. Agri-food (food and drink manufacturing, agriculture, agri-tech),
 - b. Manufacturing, (including engineering),
 - c. The visitor economy (incorporating hospitality, leisure and retail)
 - d. Health & Care
 - e. The low carbon sector, (including off-shore wind operations),
 - f. Ports and logistics.

It was not stated or expected that the focus should be only on these sectors.

The Training

9. The training is delivered by HCUK and 22 subcontractors, or 'partners' in and around Greater Lincolnshire.
10. Some partners specialise in training for particular sectors.
11. Training can be 'regulated' or 'non-regulated'.
12. Training is not funded at cost but funded per learner according to pre-set payments, regardless of how much or little it costs to deliver it. Some examples of payment are shown on the accompanying spreadsheet, Tab 4.
13. In addition partners are paid £200 for every learner that starts training - see Tab 3 of the accompanying spreadsheet.
14. In order to incentivise training that leads to a benefit for the individual, a payment is made to the partner if the individual progresses in some way. For example partners are paid an additional £250 for every learner that has an in-work progression - see Tab 3.

Current Situation

15. 3,612 people have benefitted from training through this programme since 1st April 2019 to October 2020, and have undertaken 5,362 learning aims.
16. The construction sector has received a larger proportion of training than any other sector and will be limited from now. This was due to 4 delivery partners specialising in construction.
17. Would expect more training to have taken place in South Kesteven and South Holland given the number of employees in the area.
18. Some partners have worked with predominantly very large businesses resulting in large number of learners in one go. A process is in place to track this.
19. Non-regulated learning tends to be much shorter than regulated learning, and therefore the ratio of training spend to start payments is very different.
20. One partner has a contract that will run out of start payments very soon.
21. Outside of the contracts that other partners already have, there is little funding left for new start payments. This happened in the previous SSW contract.
22. The ESFA can vary the overall contract from time to time by deducting funds from one line in the contract to another BUT they are usually very strict about what can be moved.
23. For example, increasing the funds to start more new learners at the expense of funds for actual training can raise questions about the effectiveness of the training. Contracts are also scrutinised more closely when every single learner on a particular course has an in-work progression resulting in £250.

24. Start payments and progression payments tend to be a vital part of a training contract enabling the partner to cover their costs.

25. A meeting is taking place on 10th December with the ESFA, the LEP Skills Manager and HCUK.

Recommendation

- In the short term that the ESAP supports the Skills Manager to ask the ESFA to increase the number of learners permitted to start training via SSW;
- That the LEP seeks additional funds from the ESF Central Reserve, and match funding, to commission additional training in sectors or locations or to people that are in need;
- Additional recommendations are expected to come out of the discussion.

Janet Meenaghan will introduce a consultation relating to Level 3 qualifications, panel to decide if it wishes to submit a response and what steps it will take to collate evidence.

1. Review of post-16 qualifications at Level 3: Second Stage

This consultation is the second stage of the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England. It focuses on level 3 qualifications and seeks views on proposals for the groups of qualifications that would continue to be funded alongside A levels and T Levels.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/review-of-post-16-qualifications-at-level-3/>

BTECs, HNCs and HNDs are available at the moment alongside the 3 routes below. If employers are keen to support the continuation of these qualifications then the ESAP may wish to submit a response to the consultation, as there is some concern that these might be dropped.

The 3 routes that will be available to students at 16 are:

- i. A Levels (lots of generic options for academically-minded students who can pick and choose from a wide range of subjects)
- ii. T Levels (students limited to one career route, and will be required to undertake 350 hours of industry placements)
- iii. Apprenticeships (students limited to one career route and have to gain employment).

Consultation closes 15 Jan 2021

2. Post-16 Level 2 and Below Study and Qualifications

DfE want to improve study at level 2 and below, ensuring that students have clear and coherent pathways to good outcomes. Before we set out detailed proposals, we want to know more about what is working and what more level 2 study needs to do to support all students.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/level-2-and-below-call-for-evidence/>

Consultation Closes 31 Jan 2021