

Professional Careers Education and Guidance Forum Wales

Mercure Holland Hotel, Cardiff, Tuesday 21st May 2.30pm – 4.15pm

MINUTES

Welcome, Introductions and Matters Arising

Action

Those present:

Jan Ellis, The CDI (minutes); Carolyn Parry, CDI Cymru Wales (Chair); Sharon Evans, NHS Wales; Becky Watkins, Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water; Angela West, HEFCW; Hayley Dunn, Chwarae Teg; Adrian Rabey, The British Training Board; Lorraine Davies, DWP; Angie Oliver, NHS Wales; Mia Rees, The Prince's Trust Cymru; Michelle Gunn, The Prince's Trust Cymru, Kathryn Robson, Adult Learning Wales, Karen-Ann Doleman, Welsh Government, Kate Owen RCTBC.

Apologies:

Ciara Bomford, Careers Wales; Mark Owen, Careers Wales; Lesley Richards, CIPD; Sarah Finnegan Dehn; Emma Verrier, WISC; Tim Opie, WLGA; Derek Hobbs, Careers Wales; Jane Goodfellow, AGCAS Cymru Wales; Fiona Jones, DWP; Sam Evans, Welsh Government; Jane Lewis, SW Wales RSLP.

Introduction:

Jan Ellis welcomed the new faces around the table each of whom outlined their interest in the Forum and the services they had to offer.

Jan outlined the purpose and history of the forum: to bring together people in Wales who work in career guidance or have an interest in career development. It is a forum to share thoughts and ideas, to network and to develop collaboration.

There are three key pillars for the group

- To be the voice of the career development profession in Wales
- To share best practice and research
- To address issues relating to CPD and workforce development

Meetings so far have attracted a mixed audience dependent on topics, e.g. research in the sector, the changing labour market, neurodiversity.

Jan introduced the theme for this meeting: "Supporting employability for Wales" and welcomed the first speaker, Rachel to the Forum as a 15-minute stand in for the planned speaker, Edwyn Williams, of Welsh Government.

First presentation: Employability Plan, Welsh Government

This presentation gave an insight into the background of the Welsh Government's Employability Plan, published in 2018 and its targets for the next ten years. This work now forms part of the portfolio for the Minister for the Economy, Ken Skates who also has responsibility for Careers Wales.

The plan has four key elements:

1. Providing an individual approach to employability support;
2. Focus on employers to upskill workers and support staff, providing fair work
3. Responding to the skills gap in the work force, and
4. Preparing for the radical shift in the world of work

The speaker reported that headline employability statistics were heading in the right direction and particularly in the context of inactivity, but there were still some stubbornly low figures which needed improvement.

A number of key targets/activities have been set:

1. Low productivity in Wales will be improved via investment in skills development and training
2. Improvement in working age unemployment and inactivity rates
3. Eliminate the gap between Wales and the rest of the UK in qualification levels
4. Reduce the level of young people aged 16-24 with a NEET profile
5. Identify a target for increasing the number of disabled people in work
6. Work in partnership with Public Health Wales to increase employer engagement in Healthy Working Wales Programme

Our speaker introduced a holistic alternative new programme - Working Wales, the topic of a later presentation (see below) which aims to remove barriers to accessing work. She also gave an overview of the role Regional Skills Partnerships have to play including their work in auditing specific sectors which provides labour market intelligence about where skills and jobs will be in the future. She cited examples of new projects around transport and better broadband connections to improve connectivity overall and highlighted the importance of looking at wellbeing, and equality of access issues.

Personal learning accounts will be available for individuals from September in North and South Wales.

Presentation 2: Working Wales, the new employability service for Wales, Emma Benger, Working Wales (Careers Wales)

Launched in June, Working Wales places a strong focus on an individualised approach for adult clients. The aim is to reduce complexity across Wales and resolve the different barriers to work, faced by both rural and urban clients.

Emma outlined how employers and academics had identified 39 barriers experienced by service customers, some of whom experienced multiple barriers in their attempt to access work.

Working Wales aims to provide a one stop shop and single-entry point into employment and training through marketing and stakeholder engagement. WW has a positive focus on the unemployed and economically inactive/facing significant barriers. It also offers an improved digital gateway (www.workingwales.gov.uk) which has a consistent approach supported by digital campaigns. The new "support finder" tool includes all Welsh Government and ESF programme and will enable WW staff to be aware of what's available for customers.

The new approach offers:

- Provides an enhanced assessment of needs (including barriers)
- A new common referral form
- Provides potential for enhanced referrals
- Is available through all Job Centres, community centres and via outreach in cold spot areas with appointment booking online.

Anyone over 16 and no longer in compulsory education is eligible regardless of location and personal circumstances and it is open to those underemployed and working. Support is provided face to face, at live events, in groups and across digital platforms.

Overall the aim is to help people get back in to work whether they need information, advice or specialist career guidance from trained advisers.

Jan thanked both speakers and commented on the quality of their presentations and the clear evidence of a well thought out policy being translated into clear and transparent services to help customers.

AOB

No AOB was recorded for the minutes.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting is Tuesday 24th September at 2.15, venue to be confirmed. Please send agenda items to Carolyn in advance of the meeting.