**Inspiring Talent Group Meeting Notes**

**Date**: Tuesday 20th April 2021

**Attendees:**

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| **Name** | **Organisation** |
| Caroline Donald | Edinburgh International Festival |
| Dr Robin Westacott (Chair) | Heriot Watt University |
| Fiona Forrest-Anderson | Edinburgh Napier |
| Fiona MacFarlane | Morham Solutions |
| Graeme Davis | IT Foundations |
| Hannelie Meintjies | Sykes |
| Jamie Brown | FWB Park Brown |
| Joanne Davidson | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce |
| Lucy Everett | University of Edinburgh |
| Phil Ford | SDS |
| Rebecca Neish | Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce |
| Stuart Turnbull | Jacobs |
| Susie Higgins | DYW |

**Apologies:**

Barry Nicol, Majella Sweeney, Michelle Minnes, Robert Thornburn, Roberta Porter, Steve Haldane, Stuart Cronin

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome
2. Introductions
3. Update on local Labour Market Intelligence
4. Discussion of priorities and suggested activity for the group
5. Ideas for future guest presenters
6. Update on Inspiring Stories campaign
7. Update on Edinburgh Business Resilience Group employability sub-group
8. AOB
9. DONM

**Actions:**

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| **WHAT** | **WHO** | **WHEN** |
| Fiona FA, Majella and Caroline to discuss opportunities for collaboration on recruitment issues  | Fiona FA, Majella and Caroline | By next meeting |
| Distil discussion on priorities and suggested activity into action points and circulate for comment | Robin | By next meeting |
| Ask someone from the City Council to speak to the group about their work on pulling together various employability scheme | Joanne | By next meeting |
| Email Robin with any suggestions for future speakers or action points | All | By end of the week |
| Chamber update talent group about inspiring stories publicity | Harriet & Joanne | Next meeting |
| Promote events that the Talent group are linking with – Rebecca will send details | All/Rebecca | By 19th May and 2nd June |
| Arrange another meeting for next 6-8 weeks | Harriet | ASAP |

**Meeting Notes:**

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| **Item 1** | **Welcome** |
|  | Robin opens up and chairs the meeting, which is taking place virtually. Welcomes everyone and sets out the agenda for the meeting. |
| **Item 2** | **Introductions** |
|  | Robin welcomes new members to the group: Hannelie Meintjies, Jamie Brown (who is replacing Ailsa Sutherland), Stuart Turnbull and Susie Higgins (who is replacing Michelle Fenwick who is on secondment). Everyone introduces themselves |
| **Item 3** | **Update on local Labour Market Intelligence** |
|  | Phil – the [SDS website](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/skills-planning-alignment/covid-19-labour-market-insights/) has monthly updates on labour market insights* We’re now entering a slightly new phase of lockdown, things are starting to look up, but many sectors still facing challenges, esp. given the heavy debt burden many have built up over the past year
* Unemployment is reasonably stable. The hope is that as sectors reopen, many of those currently on furlough will be able to return to work, but there is some increase in unemployment expected as furlough comes to a close
* Unemployment is significantly higher amongst under-25s
* January GDP declined by 2.3% - the 3rd consecutive fall after 6 months of growth – despite some growth in production and construction sectors
* In Edinburgh, 124% increase in Universal Credit claimants March 2020-Feb 2021
* Job postings have gone up 94% since April 2020 in Edinburgh
	+ Opportunities in health and social care, IT and financial services especially
* Expecting to see an expansion in green jobs, digital, health and social care, but manufacturing is expected to struggle
* Expect to see increasing number of jobs in tech across sectors

Jamie – asking if there’s any analysis on the impact of the past year on apprentices?Phil – numbers of apprentices have gone down, but various Govt. measures (e.g. Adopt an Apprentice, grants etc.) have helped to mitigate the impact* Figures on this should be published around 9th June
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| **Item 4** | **Discussion of priorities and suggested activity for the group** |
|  | Robin – suggestions for priorities include:* Helping companies to understand and access support for upskilling and reskilling existing staff
* Encourage companies to provide work placements for school leavers to help them gain experience
* Corporate Social Responsibility has been shown to be important for recruiting young people, so we could help employers to showcase the work they’re doing and help them engage with young people
* We also need to look at what we can do to support hospitality

Fiona FA – at Napier they’ve been looking at both this year’s graduates and those who graduated last year, and these cohorts are keen to speak to/hear from employers* Perhaps a role of this group in organising employers roundtables where young people get to talk to employers, perhaps organised on a sectoral basis
* A regional approach would work well

Jamie – in the lead up to COP26 they’re running 5 business forums, one of which is going to be around green skills and new types of roles* Perhaps something for this group to link into or expand upon

Fiona M – feels we really need to focus on young people as they’re really badly affected by the pandemic* We could also support businesses to harness all the employability support that is available, and help them give real opportunities to young people
* We’ve previously talked about the scope for some kind of match-making service between employers and job-seekers – this could now be really valuable

Graeme – agrees that there’s a real need to help employers access the support that is available, to bring together all that info into a single resource that shows businesses what paths are open to them and what is available* Esp. for SMEs it can be really difficult to navigate the employability landscape

Caroline – agrees that this would be useful, even for larger organisations* There are so many options and it all needs to be streamlined and made coherent
* Also a need for more than just 6 month placements – also need employability support throughout and onward support to turn placements into last employment

Jo – City of Edinburgh Council are doing a lot of work on employability services at the moment, and have appointed someone to coordinate various different services. They’re trying to create a single, central point of entry and contact for both employers and job-seekers – we should try to get that person to speak to the group about this work* Agrees that there is a particular need amongst young people, but there are a lot of actors and services in this space, and we need to make sure that whatever we do is complementary to these efforts
* Would be useful to map the funding and schemes available to see where we can best add value
* Suggesting holding another Inspiring Stories event at some point over the next year?

Lucy – echoes this – we don’t want to replicate work that’s already being done* They are currently working with other universities on graduate employability support and trying to create space for graduates and employers to speak
* We need to use positive news stories to engage with young people and with people facing redundancy etc. to show them that there are actually opportunities out there

Fiona FA – it would be useful to ask Chamber members what employability support they actually need and we can then broker that serviceHannelie – there is often a need for candidates to better understand how to make themselves attractive to employers, perhaps more support for this would helpStuart – during lockdown they have been running virtual work placements, but they’re keen to work with other companies, and smaller companies, to give more opportunities to school kids to get this experience* looking to partner with others and work together on a coordinated approach to this

Harriet – there’s recently been reports of hospitality companies in England, and esp. in London, struggling to recruit, partly because of Brexit – given how dependent Edinburgh hospitality was on EU nationals pre-Covid this may become an issue for us as we start to reopen – something to watch out forJo – concerned that the impact of Brexit on talent availability is being masked by CovidRobin – will try to distil what we’ve just discussed into action points and will then circulate these for comment – ACTION  |
| **Item 5** | **Ideas for future guest presenters** |
|  | * Jo to ask someone from the City Council to speak about their work on pulling together various employability schemes – ACTION
* Email Robin with any ideas for future speakers – ACTION
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| **Item 6** | **Update on Inspiring Stories campaign** |
|  | For the Inspiring Stories event in January, which this group co-hosted with the Inspiring Communities group, we got organisations to send in ‘inspiring’ stories of the work they had done during lockdown to look after their workforce, help their communities, etc. These stories were then showcased at the event. We have since worked with a PR company to work these up into 3 press releases – one focusing on charities, one on businesses, and one on the festivals (EIF and Edinburgh Science Festival). These have been sent to a few local news editors* We’ll update the group on any coverage
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| **Item 7** | **Update on Edinburgh Business Resilience Group employability sub-group** |
|  | Jo – we convened the EBRG in November in response to Covid and are currently trying to pull together a prospectus document to make asks of policymakers, but also offers. The group has 5 sub-groups, one of which was focused on employability. They’ve talked about a number of possible initiatives, e.g.:* Initiatives to target you people at an earlier stage to create a skills pipeline
* Policies around digital skills and upskilling/reskilling
* Cross-sectoral approaches to learning from each other on transferrable skills etc.
* Life-long learning and making the most of the talent of older cohorts, e.g. possibly revising Individual Learning Accounts
* An example from Singapore where you get ‘citizen credits’ to incentivise investment in your lifelong learning
* Incentives for businesses to invest in future skills and existing employees
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| **Item 8** | **AOB** |
|  | Rebecca – there’s a couple of events in the Chamber calendar that are really relevant to this group:* 19th May - [The Value of Data to your Business](https://edinburghchamber.rubicrm.net/calendar_detail.html?guid=63E1E249-8875-430C-B4FD-DBDE5EA4DBC6&eid=89DB4D12-2469-407E-A962-FB12CC76E77D) – hosted with CodeClan, and will also be looking at getting these skills into your business. This will be open to non-members too
* 2nd June – event with the Lord Provost, looking at ex-military and business: what support businesses need to give and what benefits there are to hiring ex-military personnel. Hoping to bring in a couple of members of the group on this
* If members could promote these events through their own channels that would be good for the group as well – ACTION
* Rebecca to send info on the events that the group can use to promote the events – ACTION
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| **Item 9** | **DONM** |
|  | A date will be set for 6-8 weeks’ time |