



**Minute of Dundee Fairness Commission
Held on Tuesday, 24th November, 2015 at 6.00 pm
In Central Baptist Church, Ward Road, Dundee**

Present:

Councillor Jimmy Black, Dundee City Council, Chair	Elizabeth Kane, Community Representative
Councillor Laurie Bidwell, Dundee City Council	Satwat Rehman, One Parent Families Scotland
Erik Cramb, Dundee Pensioners Forum	Gerry McLauchlin, NHS Scotland
David McIntosh, Police Scotland	Alison Henderson, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce
Denise McCaffrey, Sidlaw View Primary School	Marjory Stewart, Dundee City Council
Mike Arnott, Trade Union Representative	Ginny Lawson, Brooksbank Centre
Douglas Robertson, University of Stirling	
Drew Walker, NHS Tayside	
Colin McCashey, Adult Support & Protection Committee	
Mary Kinninmonth, Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau	

In attendance:

Peter Allan, Dundee City Council	Allan Millar, Employability Manager, Dundee City Council
Derek Miller, Financial Inclusion Officer, Dundee City Council	

Apologies:

Ginny Lawson, Brooksbank Centre	Grant Ritchie, Dundee & Angus College
Eddie Smith, Police Scotland	James Thomson, Member of Scottish Youth Parliament

I WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Black welcomed members and speakers to the meeting. Members of the public were also welcomed, and invited to participate in any discussions, which were to be held in a 'Roundtable' format.

It was anticipated that key findings from the discussions would assist in the preparation of a new Employability Strategy for Dundee City Council.

II APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted from Eddie Smith, Grant Ritchie and James Thomson. It was noted that David McIntosh was attending as a substitute for Eddie Smith.

III NOTE OF MEETING OF 27TH OCTOBER, 2015

The note of meeting of 27th October, 2015 was submitted and approved.

IV EMPLOYABILITY AND YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SESSION

Peter Allan gave a brief introduction, outlining how this session would take place. Key questions were tabled and groups would identify their highest priorities, after which Allan Millar would speak to his presentation.

Firstly members considered the question:-

“What would help to achieve Fairness in Dundee through employment?”

Top priorities were:-

- family friendly work policies
- Affordable training opportunities for people in the workplace
- Living wage and opportunities for progress
- Support to people furthest from the workplace
- The Living Wage

Allan Millar then gave the first part of this presentation, advising that a review of the Employment Service within Dundee was ongoing.

Challenges being faced included the high number of long term unemployed people within Dundee, distance of the client group from the labour market.

The jobs market within Dundee also was limited, with fewer opportunities within the public sector. However, there were more positive opportunities for young people.

Thereafter, group discussions continued, where members considered the next question:-

“From a Fairness perspective, do you agree with the challenges identified in the new strategy? What would you add or change?”

Members broadly agreed with the challenges identified but agreed that the following points be included:-

- People with a disability
- Ageism from employers
- Additional challenges faced by young people lacking experience
- Sustainability of workplace security, ie support/costs/in-work poverty
- Support services too disparate
- Procurement procedures
- Additional support for over 50 to enable them to be prepared for work and training
- Extra support to small businesses to assist their growth and recruitment of additional employees

Thereafter Allan gave the next part of his presentation, outlining proposed areas for development of the Employability Service, in particular for Youth Employability. To achieve goals, shortlife, partnership working groups would be formed, with a demand led approach. Services with a demand led approach would be integrated to assist those furthest from the workplace. The service Provision would be measured and improvements made where and when necessary. Joint staff development would continue and support services would be co-commissioned. An oversight board was to be established, to be chaired by David Martin, Chief Executive, Dundee City Council.

The final question was then considered:-

“What are your top priorities for action to reduce poverty in Dundee by helping young people and adults into work through better, joined up services and support?”

- Superior system of affordable childcare to be implemented
- Increase in in-work support to new employees
- Work Mentors
- Increased opportunities for social enterprise
- HR support and advice services to be available to small employers to help them succeed and expand
- Ongoing aftercare tailored to the needs of employees
- Involvement of user groups in planning stages

- concept of 'Wevolution' explored, ie the community set up self help services which can turn into businesses

Members agreed that it was important to ascertain and understand the needs of clients and provide a service that connected to them. Key points were:-

- Engage with unemployed
- Once in work, employers should commit to workplace training to allow employees to progress within the workforce
- Service users co-design accessibility of the service
- Not just employability but self-employability
- Support given to offenders when leaving prison

Allan Millar advised next steps would be to gather feedback from the consultation process, and have a further dialogue with stakeholders. Groups would be established before January 2016, and progress until their aims were complete.

On behalf of members the Chair thanked Allan for his presentation.

V UPDATE ON PROGRESS

(a) Members noted the following issues which had emerged from the discussion session:-

(i) Gendered Impact of Poverty

- Consider JRF paper on impact of welfare policy on single parents
- Prepare a matrix on protected characteristic groups to determine whether Fairness Commission recommendations reflect the disproportionate impact on women and single parents
- Sell to parents the benefits of early access to childcare and education for both children and parents (and measure take up not just availability)
- Satwat to circulate briefly on Early Learning Place and offer visit to Families House Nursery in Fintry; dates would be circulated in due course

(ii) Housing

- Tackle social isolation housing by signposting people to social prescribing and other services promoting positive mental wellbeing
- Examine the implications of high service charges for people in supported/homeless accommodation acting as a barrier to take up employment
- Promote further co-production of community resilience and spirit in areas with high intensity of social rented or private rented housing

(iii) Stigma

- Employability agenda offers a good way to examine stigma and disability
- There were benefits to the approach taken at Remploy/Dovetail
- Could Employer Recruitment Initiative be used creatively to provide opportunities to support people with disabilities into work?

(iv) Safe Places

- Colin to circulate briefing on Advocating Together's bid to the Rank Foundation on a network of safe places in the city centre. This could be a practical and supportive response to the stigmatising behaviour experienced by people with learning disabilities.

Concern was raised regarding the high level of benefit sanction in Dundee, particularly when compared to Glasgow. It was agreed that contact be made with DWP in Glasgow.

The process for future meetings/reporting was outlined and it was agreed that emerging issues had been identified which the Commission felt should have more in-depth discussion, particularly mental health and well being, and the impact of poverty on women and single parents. Additional meetings would be arranged to consider this within the new year.

(b) VISIT TO TRIAGE

Elizabeth Kane reported this had still not taken place due to inability of Triage to commit to this. This would be pursued with colleagues in DWP.

(c) LIVING WAGE EVENT PROPOSAL

Alison Henderson advised that Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce were hoping to have an event in November 2016. Members welcomed this, however, it was agreed that the possibility of Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce holding its own event around the Living Wage prior to the new minimum wage coming into force in April 2016 be explored.

VI DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 15th December, 2016 at 5.30/6.00 pm.

Jimmy BLACK, Convener.