

# Fife Voluntary Action Employability Project

## Summary Report, August 2014 to March 2015



The Third Sector Employability Support Project aims to:

- Improve the delivery of third sector employability services in Fife;
- Increase the ability of the sector to compete for funding and contracts;
- Raise awareness of the role volunteering plays in helping people build their employability; and
- Influence and communicate policy developments at strategic level.

From August 2013 – March 2015 we achieved the following:

### Improving delivery of services (Capacity Building)

We produced:- [Working for Fife: A Survey of Third Sector Employability Services in Fife, 2013](#), a report mapping third sector employability provision in Fife and highlighting key strategic development issues for the sector at that time.

As a result we:

Established the cross-sectoral Fife Employability Forum, (held quarterly), which hosts an average of 40 participants.

Previous topics include:

- Engaging with employers.
- Partnership working.
- Health and employment.

*“The event was very well organised with a variety of organisations...relaxed atmosphere...very informative”*

Developed and produced a monthly employability e-bulletin to share news, funding and policy developments relevant to employment provision in Fife.

- Current circulation is 265 unique e-mail addresses.
- On average nearly 50% of readers click on an article weblink.

The team have held over 18 networking and signposting meetings with new and existing services in Fife and acted as an advisory member on the Fife Rural Skills Partnership.

In September 2014 we co-ordinated the ‘Know Your Network’ event bringing together frontline employability practitioners and support services from across Fife, with 221 attendees throughout the day.

*“Very worthwhile”, “I was impressed with how professional the event was”*

We have organised three training sessions:

- ‘Measuring soft outcomes for employability’, attended by 14 people from 11 third sector organisations.
- Webinar on a new vocational education and training self-assessment tool – OWLS.
- Mental health and disability awareness training, attended by 12 people, 8 from third sector organisations.

*“Best day I've had at a training session in a long time.” – Mental Health and Disabilities Delivery Training attendee*

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### **Increasing capacity to bid for funding and contracts:**

In 2014 we facilitated the creation of the Fife Employability and Training Consortium (Fife-ETC), which brings together a range of third sector organisations and has successfully piloted delivery since October 2014.

*“Without FVA’s support the Consortium would never have got off the ground.”- BRAG Enterprises*

In partnership with Citizens Advice and Rights Fife we successfully applied for Bank of Scotland funding to deliver Financial Awareness workshops and create Financial Inclusion Volunteer opportunities.

In total FVA supported 12 funding applications for 8 different organisations.

### **Strategic Representation**

Over the past 18 months we have represented the third sector at 28 meetings of the Opportunities Fife Partnership Board and Youth and Adult Delivery Groups. This includes facilitation of the OFP Health & Disabilities Delivery Group. In these roles we have sought to represent the sector’s capabilities and challenges as well as ensuring that funding opportunities are openly publicised and commissioned.

We contributed to the development of the OFP European Social and Investment Funding Commissioning Framework.

We contributed to sub-groups looking at employer engagement, the use of Fife Online

Referral Tracker (FORT) and the development of the Opportunities Fife Partnership.

FVA has represented Fife at the national Third Sector Employability Forum and attended discussions with Scottish Government on the role of the third sector in employability provision.

### **Raising awareness of the role volunteering can play in improving employment:**

As members of Fife-ETC we have established provision to deliver enhanced ‘employability-focussed’ volunteering support through the Fife Voluntary Action team.

We have worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to improve the understanding of Jobcentre Plus frontline staff of the rights and opportunities involved in volunteering on benefits.

We have publicised research papers/strategies in our e-bulletin including:

- [Scotland's Economic Strategy](#), Scottish Government, March 2015
- [We've got work to do for better mental health](#): Transforming employment and back-to-work support for people with mental health problems, MIND, December 2014
- [Volunteering: a valuable pathway to employability](#), NCVO, March 2014

And we have also created 5 Community Jobs Scotland posts within Fife Voluntary Action.

*We think this is a really exciting beginning and are pleased to have received continued support for the work we are doing from the Opportunities Fife Partnership. With this in mind we would like to get your input to how we develop ‘phase 2’ of our work. [Click here](#) to help us shape the next 12 months.*