

# Note from meeting of Impact Forum Sub-group on the theme of Adult Learning & Work

23 May 2016

Present: John D'Arcy (Chair), Niall Casey, Brendan Murray, Emma Dunseith, Lorraine Boyd, Hilary Hanberry, Trevor Neilands, Colin Neilands

Apologies: Ann Marie Doyle, Ann Osborne

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## Current Issues

- meeting the impact of the rise of Corporation Tax - will this be reflected in updated Skills Barometer?
- Employability Skills still biggest issue identified by Invest NI, but with important proviso that so-called soft skills (critical thinking, teamworking, appropriate workplace behaviour etc.) are as important as qualifications
- Future Skills - need to invest in workplace training as majority of job replacements are from those already in work - higher level apprenticeships are one way to address this upskilling
- Joseph Rowntree Trust's latest report on poverty has emphasis on 'working poor' and the need to look at quality of jobs offered and not just quantity - <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/monitoring-poverty-and-social-exclusion-northern-ireland-2016>
- what is the current impact of adult learning in the workplace and how can providers enhance this impact?
- companies are needing to adopt new delivery mechanisms for training - largely digital
- the big problem is that adult learning is always in the position of addressing the deficit situation - foundation education ultimately needs to be address but it would be a distraction for the Impact Forum to start in on that debate
- there is a deficit of work experience possibilities for some young people, further reducing their chances of full employment
- what about successful models elsewhere? e.g. Finland

## What should Impact Forum aim to achieve by Oct 2016 with regard to this theme?

- awareness raised of the contribution of adult learning to employability and on-the-job training
- improved baseline to support evidence-based policy

- collation and promotion of broad variety of examples of good practice and individual learner stories - so Ministers can actually quote these
- generally raise enthusiasm for lifelong learning, showing its contribution to life and work
- explore the role that awards can play in awareness and enthusiasm raising - both need for new awards and greater promotion of existing awards

(there was some discussion as the nomenclature - adult learning/education tends to conjure specific images in the public's (Government's) head that does not match the breadth of learning experiences that we are trying to promote)

#### Suggestions for content of IF meeting on this theme

- Neil Gibson, Director of the NI Centre for Economic Policy at UU
- AONTAS
- Examples of good workplace learning
- Ask IF members to share their provision - as a cumulative paper, not for presentation
- Subgroup to meet again after the plenary IF meeting to advance its outcomes

#### Next Meeting of the Impact Forum

Thursday 22nd September in the Open University

#### Actions

**Colin** to approach Neil Gibson and AONTAS re presentations

**Niall and Hilary** to identify possible examples of good workplace learning

**Brendan** to forward details of recent Scandinavian visitors to DEL