**Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland**

**Implementation Steering Group Meeting**

**Friday, 3rd December 2021, 10.00 – 12.00pm, Teams**

#### Minute of Meeting

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| **Item** | **Topic** | **Lead** |
| 1. | **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies****In attendance:**Amanda Fox (AF)Andrea Glass (AG)Andrew Docherty (AD)Bill McMillan (BM)Chelsey Clay (CC)Claire Kemp (CK)Claudia Rowse (CR)David Reid (D Reid)David Richardson (DR)Henry Graham (Chair)Jackie Brierton (JB)Jimmy Ritchie (JR)Katie Fox (KF)Klaus Mayer (KM)Liz Barron-Majerik (LB-M)Lynne Gilchrist (LG)Mollie McGoran (MMcG)Muriel McKenzie (MMcK)Nick Sparks (NG)Stephanie Gordon (SG)Tom Hall (TH)**Apologies** received from: Marc Crothall, Donna Fordyce, George Jamieson, Graeme Ligertwood, Stephen Sheridan; Joanne Wallace; Bryan McGrath, Julia Latto.The Chair introduced everyone and thanked them for attendance. It has been two years since we had our last in-person meeting and the Chair reflected on those two years and recognised what the ISG has achieved in difficult circumstances since then. Apologies were read and thanks extended to those who have stepped in at short notice to cover for colleagues.The Chair then outlined some changes in membership:* Riddell Graham has retired from Visit Scotland and we will explore opportunities to fill this place;
* Colleen MacLean has left to go on to another job and Katie Fox is looking to identify a replacement from DYW;
* Jane McCormack has moved role within Scottish Government and Muriel McKenzie will seek a replacement; and
* Andrew Docherty is leaving SDS and this will be his last meeting with the group.
 | Chair |
| 2.  | **Minute of Last Meeting** Agreed with no changes required | Chair |
| 3.  | **Update** KF provided a quick recap of key updates, including the launch of the rural employer’s toolkit. The toolkit is available online, but there are also hard copies which will be available soon. Katie can arrange for hard copies to be delivered to any interested parties. KF also updated on new blogs and newsletters across a variety of topics as well as the process evaluation of the rural plan which is now underway. The inception meeting has already taken place and the first iteration of the SAPRS update report has been shared for review by the consultants.The consultants for the evaluation are keen to secure valuable member input to inform the evaluation. KF reminded members that today was the deadline for the opt-out of the consultation. Any members not wishing to have their contact details shared with the consultants as part of the evaluation should let KF know and she will not share them. KF then ran through summary findings from the members survey, and has already distributed key findings via email. A range of findings were provided, and we are pleased with how much members have been engaged and the ideas generated for future ISG delivery, newsletters, blogs, case studies etc.KF will work to implement the findings of the survey and is keen to engage members to ensure everyone has a voice in shaping ISG delivery in future.Nick Sparks (SRUC) – indicated that there is an opportunity to work with SRUC on communications internally and externally around the Plan and the ISG. He will work with SRUC colleagues to identify a lead to ensure they engage from a communications and marketing perspective.MMcG – really encouraged by the rural focus which is close to her heart, and keen to see what can be done with getting land based skills more broadly into learning pathways.  | Katie Fox  |
| 4. | **DYW Live** KM introduced himself then commenced a presentation on the DYW Live project – a virtual learning offer supporting both teachers and learners, support learning around employability, skills and pathways, and on a live basis.SDS Career Week was a big opportunity for them in November to help them engage; they are also running a Pathways Week in December 2021 and anticipate this will be just as popular a session.DYW Live sessions have had a significant impact, with over 47,000 engagements across the country. Based on rural areas, there is a relatively strong engagement from rural LAs, and DYW partners there are quite keen. Klaus has been encouraged by the relatively strong engagement with rural partners, and he outlined rural specific DYW Live content, around careers in areas such as aquaculture, land-based economy, tourism, and food and drink.They are constantly looking to update and revise the sessions they offer, and Klaus outlined the DYW Live offer across 2021/22 and beyond, including certified courses, more flexible delivery, enhanced programmes, and virtual work placements.KM outlined that whilst there is no hard evidence (yet) to indicate that additional pressures are being placed on teachers currently, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers are struggling to cope with demands. Projects like DYW Live may at first look like extra hassle, but they are not. They have found that people who have engaged with the project have really benefitted and enjoyed strong, positive feedback from learnersKM also indicated that it is difficult to gather information on those learners later in life, but he will check what he has and can share anything relevant with the group. He expressed that, overall, despite difficulty engaging with people initially, they – and participants – have found it a useful and positive experience after they have engaged.Klaus finished by setting out that for 2022/23, they are planning to run full courses on DYW Live, this is still in the planning stage, but will make it easier for schools to follow journey through. He made an ask of all partners to help spread the word about DYW Live. There is a clear appetite for these services, engagement and messaging is important to help raise awareness. There is also a DYW Live sub-group which has been set up for January 20th where we can identify opportunities for shared working. David Richardson indicated that the FSB has been a big supporter of DYW. Demographic change is such a big thing for the rural economy, however there are significant concerns around careers. People who are doing a lot of the jobs are, not always those starting their careers. Young people move away for a career, but people return for Quality of Life. We all need to think what the future for careers is in rural areas.The Chair answered, expressing an understanding of David’s perspective. Our focus should be on earning and learning in rural areas, and we must promote any of these kinds of opportunities where we can.Both Claudia and Mollie expressed a desire to follow up separately with Klaus around this work.**Action:** All partners to promote DYW Live activity as appropriate and an opportunity to attend the DYW Live sub-group meeting in the new year. **Action:** Klaus to follow up with Claudia and Mollie separately (KF to make introductions). | Klaus Mayer AllKM / KF |
| 5. | **Skillseeder** JR and LB-M then took the group through the Skillseeder app, which helps people find in-person and online training in land-based and related courses.Jimmy took the group through a video showing how the app is used, the functionality and content. He then took us through the website, giving a demonstration of how the site and app work using mountain bike courses. They have rolled out ‘green badges’ looking at green specific courses across a range of sectors - eco-friendly, climate mitigation etc. Also currently running projects which have a focus on women returners, to help create pathways for these females back into employment, and help diversify the workforce.JR set out that they have built a dashboard and a mechanism for collating and analysing data to help figure out what the user needs and wants, which will then feed back to the training provider. This will help the user experience and offering.LBM – This will bring all the information in to one place, rather than different people looking in different places for course information. This helps develop an idea of gaps, or if there is demand for certain courses in certain areas, and they can then flag this back to training providers.The future business model for Skillseeder is to maximise the number of users – it will remain free for users and once they have enough would ultimately look to introduce advertising. They have also considered charging training providers. Have been well funded so far by Scottish Government which has helped de-risk and expedite their work.A number of members indicated that they had had positive experiences with the platform and provided positive feedback.**ACTION:** Klaus and Jimmy identified areas for linking DYWLive with Skillseeder, and will pick up separately to discuss further. | Liz Barron-Majerik Skillseeder KM/JR |
| 6. | **My World of Work Job Profiles** SG joined from SDS to provide a run through of SDS’ My World of Work site (MyWow). She started by taking us through the job profiles on MyWow, and the various features, profiles and information which is included.The site has been developed in conjunction with young people – what sort of information do they want to see included, what kinds of format, the types of people they want to see reflected etc.SG acknowledged that some job profiles will soon be updated. They are currently missing what the next steps are for young people at the end of job profiles – but will reflect how to tie in with course and job search and Young Person’s Guarantee information.SG encouraged ISG members to have a look at MyWow and the job profiles, explore what works or what is missing in terms of content or courses and let her or KF know. SDS is happy to incorporate partner resources as appropriate. A session will be held in the new year on the MyWoW job profiles and the invitation will be shared with all members.  | Stephanie Gordon (SDS)  |
| 7. | **AOB and Date of Next Meeting**The Chair announced the four dates for the ISG meetings in 2022. Reflecting feedback that not everyone works on a Friday, some of the meetings have been moved to other weekdays:* Wednesday 9th March;
* Thursday 9th June;
* Wednesday 7th September; and
* Thursday 1st December.

AF raised two points of AOB:* The Land Based Learning Review is currently ongoing and the second commission meeting was held at the start of December 2021 to focus on how the work of the group should be structured in future. Further information is available [here](https://www.gov.scot/groups/commission-for-the-land-based-learning-review/); and
* Work has been progressing at pace around the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and JB from Growbiz has been feeding into this. AF will keep the group posted as this progresses.

David Richardson then set out that the FSB is currently surveying members across the Highlands and Islands, and made an ask of partners to help promote the survey if possible. The survey can be accessed at:<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/fsb-winter/> | Chair |
| 8. | **Meeting close** The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution, and the meeting was closed. | Chair |