

FIFE COMMUNITY GUIDANCE NETWORK
SUMMARY REPORT ON THE GUIDANCE RESOURCE
PROJECT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

As a result of a successful bid to the Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum, Fife Community Guidance Network secured funding for the development of a web-based guidance tool. Additionally a small amount of funding for the sustainability of the product was provided by Learndirect Scotland in relation to the Templehall IT Buddy Project.

The proposed aim of this tool was to start with introductory programmes within community based adult learning provision and to develop a web-based guidance tool which would map appropriate progression routes, possible exit points and potential destinations related to key growth occupational sectors in Fife.

The product was to be more than an information resource, but rather, a tool that could be used within a guidance process to illustrate a range of options and likely outcomes and consequences of learner decisions at different stages.

The Jays Consultancy was awarded the contract for this project in June 2006. It was agreed that Joy Boyle from The Jays Consultancy would present a three monthly progress reports to the Steering Committee commencing in September 2006. This is the final report.

1.2 Initial Meeting with Steering Group Members

At an initial meeting with Ray Blackley and Val Ormiston (members of the Steering Committee) it was agreed that the project would concentrate on the following Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) courses:

- Information and Computing Technology (ICT)
- Childcare/care
- Hospitality/Travel and Tourism

- Call Centres

It was also agreed that where possible the Scottish Curriculum and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) would link courses within sectors to show progression.

Clarification was given that this new resource will be used by practitioners **and** clients.

1.3 Project Team

Three colleagues were appointed in July 2006 to work on this project under my direction. They have expertise in different areas but two of the team have technical expertise in designing web pages.

At our first meeting roles were assigned to the different team members.

1.4 Starting Point

At the first meeting of the Project Team there was a lot of discussion around the base line for the project. It was agreed that the project would concentrate on a benchmark of existing community based adult learners wishing to progress. It was also agreed that we could use Fife Direct as a link for information on CBAL courses. However as all the courses are not listed on this database it was agreed that providing we have examples of the different courses available we could use these as starting points for our illustrative examples into:

- Advanced CBAL courses
- Further Education (FE)/Higher Education (HE)
- Employment.

2 Methodology and Results

2.1 General

It was decided to use a range of methods. Reading relevant articles on Community Based Learning such as *Overcoming Barriers; Enabling Learners (HMLe 2006)*, *Lifelong Learning – Building on Success (Scottish Executive 2006)* and using key words on the Internet for additional information. Meetings were also held with key personnel within community learning, local FE Colleges, employers and the voluntary sector.

Focus groups were held with community based and FE college workers over a period of one month.

2.2 Learning Opportunities

Feedback from the Focus Groups with community based/FE college workers was very positive. Especially from the community based workers as they felt that this is a resource that they could use with their clients as an interim measure before referral to a guidance adviser.

However there was some concern from this group about lack of access to the Internet in some of the community centres. It was suggested that it would be useful to have this information on CD/DVD, however as there are so many 'live' links to other websites this might be a problem.

As can be seen from *Appendix 1* the workers were encouraged to identify any of their learners that have moved into the areas of employability listed: Care/Childcare, Hospitality/Travel and Tourism, ICT, Call Centres/Financial Services. Construction was originally identified as another growth area but a decision was taken by the Project Team and Steering Committee to concentrate on the four areas above at this time. However, at this stage it was decided to add Administration to ICT as anyone working in an office environment requires computing skills.

As a result of the focus groups the community based workers supporting the CBAL programmes were encouraged to identify learners who would be willing to be used as illustrative examples on the website.

A decision had already been taken to use illustrative examples of 2006 Fife Adult Learner Award nominees on the Home Page. Additionally it was agreed that the 2007 Fife Adult Learners Awards would be promoted and that the profile of these awards in general would be raised.

2.3 Employment Opportunities

The Labour Market Intelligence for this report was provided by Fife's Economic Forum in their paper, *Fife Labour Market Overview (2007)*.

A number of local employers in the relevant sectors were identified and a letter was written seeking their assistance with the project (*Appendix 2*).

The response from most of the employers was very disappointing. However, by actively going out and talking to employers a range of employees have been interviewed to use as illustrative examples in the Employment Opportunities pages.

“The ‘visibility’ of employer involvement in programme design was a highly motivational factor for learners” (HMIE 2006:P17)

The methodology for this area was mostly around local newspapers and finding out what jobs were available in the three areas of Fife – West, Central and East. An Internet search was also carried out for employers in the four areas of employability identified and this has been reasonably successful. There are live links to a selection of employer's jobs/vacancies pages and this normally includes a brief on their current recruitment practices. There are also telephone numbers for potential employers who do not have websites.

2.4 Volunteering Opportunities

Information on volunteering in general was taken from the Internet, specifically a Scottish Executive Report on Volunteering (2004). Local information on volunteering was sourced by talking to the Co-ordinator from the local Volunteering Fife office in Kirkcaldy. Information leaflets on local volunteering were also provided along with their website address which will be used on the Moving On In Fife web page.

Four nominees from the Fife Volunteering Awards 2007 will be used as illustrative examples on this page.

3 Piloting of Product

There was a delay in piloting the product due to some confusion as to where the website was to be housed. However, web space was subsequently purchased along with a domain name. The domain name is:

www.movingoninfife.info

This is a stand-alone website but it will be linked to the Transitions home page and Fife Direct homepage.

The product has now been piloted with two different groups from a range of community based provision. The first pilot was mainly with community based learners and tutors. The second pilot was with participants at the Fife Community Learning & Development Partnership Conference held in Glenrothes on Monday 26 March 2007. The results of these two pilots are very encouraging (*Appendices 3 and 4*). The feedback suggests that this website will help to bridge the gap between community based learning, FE college courses, employment opportunities and volunteering. It would also appear to address some of the concerns expressed in a recent HMle report:

Effective collaboration with community learning partners had the potential to encourage and ease participation, and enhance the learning experience. Colleges worked with key partners through the community planning processes to promote access to learning. However, in most cases, local arrangements

for joint planning of provision to encourage and ease transition to full-time FE programmes were not well established.

4 Quality Issues

Once the website is live it will be shown to a member of staff from HMle to seek their views on the product in relation to their report (HMle 2006).

All learners/employees/volunteers used as illustrative examples have given their permission for their photographs and biographies to be used on this website.

5 Technical Information and Issues

Domain name: www.movingoninfife.info

Webhosting

- Site is hosted by eUKhost, using their Windows Gold package - £59.99 per annum, **renewable on 07/02/08**. (Domain name free with this package)
- Web Space – 2000MB i.e. 2GB (current usage is x MB)
- Bandwidth (traffic) per month – 30GB
- Site usage statistics: comprehensive information is available online, detailing site traffic e.g. site access, page hits, volume over time periods (hourly, daily, monthly)

Site Maintenance

- The site has been developed using Macromedia Dreamweaver, and incorporates MySQL code for accessing the internal MS Access database of the course provision.
- Dynamic content: Course database – will require to be updated a **minimum** of once per academic term (dependable, accurate source of data yet to be established)
- Live links to external homepages and sub-pages – require to be checked regularly for having become broken, particularly sub-pages,

which can be deleted or changed in content by the host. Software can be utilised to perform this checking.

- There are currently, as at 28/03/07, 32 home page links and 73 sub-page links. It was a design intention that site would be heavily populated with appropriate links and therefore this is likely to increase over time.

The Future – Possible Site Enhancement:

Ongoing design review of site, possibly by a local review team, to initiate and expedite:

- enhancement of content eg introduction of more occupation areas such as construction industry, new links (home page and sub-page) to identified relevant external sites, employer links, tips, enhanced database search, further utilisation of maps (potentially down to street level for colleges and local learning centres)
- standards compliance – W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) standards – accessibility issues etc

6 Sustainability

The Jays Consultancy has agreed that once the final product is live, probably at the beginning of May, back-up will be provided until end of January 2008 in the form of trouble-shooting etc.

General maintenance: ongoing review of site's static content – spelling, grammar, inconsistencies etc.

On-going training to members of the Templehall IT Buddy Project. This project is featured on the Moving On In Fife website.

7 Conclusions

- All in all the consensus of opinion is that this product is one that will be used by the wider Fife community and this is very encouraging.
- The SCQF works well on the database to show progression between the variety of courses featured. This should assist with guidance on progression routes to other community based or college courses.
- Initially the Project Team was disappointed that Fife Council computers were unable to use a Flash computer package which would have provided animation and interactivity to the website.
- Lack of co-operation from local employers, especially the larger employers, has been very disappointing.
- Because of a two week setback the database and some of the web pages will be 'fine tuned' over the next few weeks, but hopefully the website will be 'live' by the beginning of May.
- Next meeting with the Steering Committee on 27 April 2007 to finalise the project.

8 Recommendations

- There is a need to look at the sustainability of the product. If the website is well used (The Jays Consultancy will provide a report on the number of hits to the website at the end of October 2007) then the Fife Community Guidance Network will need to allocate funding for the extension of web space for the product. This will expire on 7 February 2008.
- It is important that this product is marketed well across Fife as a 'One Stop Site' for learning, employment and volunteering opportunities in

Fife. It has the potential to be used not only by community based learners and tutors but also those from Further Education colleges for exit guidance. A variety of other training and voluntary sector organisations could also find it very useful.

- Potential to promote to local employers as a way of advertising their organisation. Possible route of sustaining the product through an advertising fee.

9 References

Fife Economic Forum (2007) – Fife Labour Market Overview Report

HMIe (2006) – Overcoming Barriers; Enabling Learners – Report by HM Inspectors of Education for the Scottish Funding Council

Scottish Executive (2006) – Lifelong Learning – Building on Success: Edinburgh HMSO

APPENDIX 1**GUIDANCE PROJECT – MEETINGS WITH CBAL WORKERS**

Organisation:	Date:
Contact Name:	
<p>Give overview of guidance project. Project funded by Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum – Transitions for a web based guidance tool for existing CBA learners and their tutors to look at progression routes into other CBAL courses, FE/HE and employment within the areas highlighted by recent LMI. Will also use illustrative examples of previous learners.</p> <p>Will it be useful?</p>	
<p>What is your current practice?</p> <p>What is your role?</p> <p>Do you give guidance to your clients on progression routes?</p> <p>Do you encourage your clients to progress?</p> <p>What tools, if any, do you use?</p>	

Is there standard practice across Fife?

How many outreach centres?

How many computers with access to the internet?

Different subjects at each?

Do you track your learners? Yes/No
<p>Any learners gone into the following fields:</p> <p>Hospitality/Tourism</p> <p>ICT</p> <p>Care</p> <p>Finance/Call Centres</p> <p>Construction</p>
<p>Any questions?</p>

APPENDIX 2

16 February 2007

Dear

I am currently involved in a project, which has been funded by Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum – Transitions, to produce a web-based guidance tool for learners within the local communities in Fife to show how they can progress. As part of this tool we are planning to use illustrative examples of what previous learners have achieved through progression either into education and/or employment.

As your type of business has been identified as one which provides opportunities within Fife I am writing to ask for your assistance. I am hoping that we can identify members of your staff who have progressed from either community education and/or vocational education into employment.

I will telephone you in the next few days to see if you are willing to assist me with this project and if so to discuss the best way to take this forward.

Time lines are pretty tight as we have to produce the guidance tool by the end of March 2007.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Joy Boyle
Project Leader

APPENDIX 3

MOVING ON IN FIFE – GUIDANCE RESOURCE EVALUATION SUMMARY – 23 MARCH 2007

PILOT 1 - COMMUNITY BASED LEARNERS, TUTORS, A CAREERS SCOTLAND ADVISER AND A COMMUNITY EDUCATION WORKER

<p>1. What was your initial impression of the Home Page?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked it – simple and leads directly to different opportunities. But once in certain pages found it difficult to remember where I saw things. • I like the home page. Thought it was well laid out. Liked the info on Adult Learning. Well signposted for the 3 areas of information. • Very colourful, straight to the point, each step is easy to use. • The step by step instructions are too much text to read. Maybe a simpler step would be better. • Looks quite good. • Too many instructions and I was not encouraged to use them.
<p>2. Did you find the site easy to use? Yes or No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x No (dyslexic student) • 1 x Yes • Yes, once on the hyperlinks taking you into information. • Yes, fairly easy. Too much text on Introductory pages – more use of pics and symbols • Yes, but some parts have a lot of info/text on it. I liked the links to other websites. • Yes, Adult Learners profiles work well.
<p>3. Did you use the instructions and if so did you find them easy to use? If Yes, why? If No, why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, tend to look for appropriate links first. • Half and half, someone just learning to use websites may find it too much information to read, getting to the next step. • No, not to start with, due to a lot of information/text. • Yes, because it gives you step by step direction. • No, because I didn't understand what I needed to do (dyslexic student) • No, I am always wary of websites where you need lots of instructions .

<p>4. Will the information on the webpage be useful to you and learners? Yes or No If Yes, why? If No, why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it will help me deal with any queries that come my way. Also, I can see students using it themselves. It would also help me establish possible progression from courses that I run. • Yes, it will allow me to sit with a student and go through steps to progress on to further education at college or other options available for job prospects. • Yes, lots of info and links all from one website. Good helping learners think about and investigate progression. • Yes, it could be if it is simpler (Dyslexic Student). • Yes, because it will give you a guide to other courses available and job opportunities. • Yes, I like having lots of active links to other sites and organisations and it might be worth having a statement on the homepage advising that there are links to external sites.
<p>5. Any other comments you would like to make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intro to SCQG not very exciting. • I would use this website in the future to access further courses available and where they might be. Also for job opportunities by local area. • I found it upsetting and it has knocked what confidence I had in using a computer (Dyslexic student). • I look forward to using the live website once up and running. • Under 'show course' too many abbreviations; links should be a bolder colour to make the links more obvious; Fife Council and NHS are two of the largest employers in Fife, links to these should be more upfront; add 'select a course' at top of page as well. • Some of the links etc need to be corrected. However I think the site will be very useful. I can see students, tutor etc using it when needed.

APPENDIX 4

**MOVING ON IN FIFE – GUIDANCE RESOURCE EVALUATION SUMMARY – 26 MARCH 2007
PILOT 2 – FIFE COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE DELEGATES**

<p>1. What was your initial impression of the Home Page?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great, welcoming and bright. • Good • Colourful and inviting. Not sure about the roundabout – could signify ‘going round in circles’ • Bright – not intimidating! Informative • Like the concept of crossroads/roundabout • Like the colours. Clear type, not too busy • Good. Easy to read and understand initial topics and how to find out more in each. • Very easy to use, well designed. • Good, clear, easy to navigate from.
<p>2. Did you find the site easy to use? Yes or No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 x Yes • Yes, but I know how to use a PC and website. Some pages very long.
<p>3. Did you use the instructions and if so did you find them easy to use? If Yes, why? If No, why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, only a brief time available prior to workshops starting p.m. • No, website clear and well laid out • No, website very straightforward • No, easy to manoeuvre • Not this time • Joy was there to guide us • No, watched someone else do it – but seemed easy. • No, did not know they were there and it is easy enough without them.
<p>4. Will the information on the webpage be useful to you and learners? Yes or No If Yes, why? If No, why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, its not my area. • Yes, with very basic intro should be easy for individuals to use on their own. • Yes, a one stop shop for info.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, learners in the learning centre and in the Opportunity Centre can access it and then I can follow up with individuals to discuss ideas further. • Yes, good/easy links to other relevant sites e.g. information on occupations to job opportunities. • Yes, making the link between learning and employment opportunities on a local basis. • Yes, all information in one place with good inter-related links. • Yes, brings together a lot of useful information in one place. • Yes, good portal for all information.
<p>5. Any other comments you would like to make?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please add other Elmwood College learning centres to database. Will be good for exit guidance for students in FE colleges. • Will be very useful for staff and clients. • Like personal case studies from Fife – will encourage other learners. • Local focus good and links. How will it be kept up-to-date? • Links need to be up-to-date and course need to be kept up-to-date.

