

E-Brief - January 2019

Introduction

Welcome to the first ebrief of 2019. This e-brief is a little bit briefer than previous editions, most likely due the intense amount of activity pre-Christmas reported in the December issue, and our new programmes yet to fully get going. Having said that, there are still good news and successes stories to report which I am sure will be the first of many to come in this calendar year.

One of the things WEA Scotland discussed at the Strategy Day in December 2018 was circulating these ebriefs to partners or making partners and external stakeholders aware of them. All e-briefs published in the last twelve months are available on the website. It would be great if everyone could make their partners aware of these as it could be that there are many more ways we could work with current partners, if only they were aware of the range of activities the WEA can deliver beyond what we might be currently doing with them.

WEA News and Events in January 2019

WEA Strategy 2025

In late November and early December 2018, four Strategy Launch Days took place in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh and Leeds to launch the new WEA Strategy 2025. There was a fantastic turnout at all these events and a huge amount of ideas generated. It was agreed that as soon as possible, a summary report of all the ideas and contributions from these Strategy Days would be published pending the publication of a much more comprehensive in the relatively near future. This Summary Report from the WEA Strategy Roadshows is attached.

WEA Scotland Education Updates

Bank of Scotland Foundation Award to WEA in North Ayrshire

Following a bid made by Stewart Fraser, I am really pleased to announce that WEA has recently been awarded £10,250 from Bank of Scotland Foundation to support a project on financial literacy and financial inclusion. This funding will be used to improve the financial literacy skills of people in SIMD 10 and 20 post codes in North Ayrshire. In areas of multiple deprivations, poor financial literacy can have a disproportionately adverse impact on people lives particularly for speakers of other languages and refugees.

While there is often quite a lot of support for people who get into debt, there is much less support, knowledge and information available to prevent people getting into debt in the first place. This programme aims to plug that gap by delivering financial literacy and numeracy classes that will enable people to make better financial choices, meet the challenges of daily living, better manage their budgets and get the

most value from the income they earn or the benefits they receive. In doing so, the aspiration is that these learners will have the knowledge and skills to live a life free from debt.

This is a really innovative proposal from Stewart and will make a significant difference to the learners who are able to access this opportunity.

WEA Highland Link Up Project

Attached is a news feature in the Inverness Courier regarding an unsuccessful bid made to Highland Council for funding to support a proposed new project called Link Up. While the article reports the bid as unsuccessful, the article itself reads really well and the quotes from Judie Holliday position the WEA very positively.

It also strikes a very good balance between being disappointed at the outcome, but nonetheless still talking positively about the opportunity and about our positive relationships with partners. That is not always an easy balance to strike and it's quite easy to give negative comments at times like this which can come back to haunt you and frustrate future partnership working. Judie managed to avoid doing this and turn a potentially negative story into something relatively positive.

WEA Highland Mark Thomson Inverness Courier Interview

Also in Highland, one of the WEA's Education Co-ordinators, Mark Thomson was also interviewed by the Inverness Courier this month. As you can see, when not putting on innovative ESOL programmes for the deaf or enabling ESOL learners to acquire the language capability to pass their driving test, Mark somehow finds the time to be a DJ. So if you have never heard of "Karawane" and want to know more, then Inverness and the Black Isle would appear to be the place to go!!

<https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/Whats-On/Lead-Stories/Karawane-park-their-world-beats-at-the-Ironworks-23112018.htm>

Lloyds Banking Group, the WEA and Radiant and Brighter

The Executive Team and senior managers from Lloyds Banking Group recently attended a Care Employability programme being delivered by Sharon Ledger and Les Watson. The aim of this Care Employability programme is to secure jobs for the candidates with one of the care employers who are supporting the programme, Enable, Turning Point, Carr Gomm and Crossroads Care.

The candidates on the programme were referred by a social enterprise company called Radiant and Brighter. Radiant and Brighter aims to improve access to employment and educational opportunities and improve the life chances for (mainly) black African immigrants. This group of people are often the most marginalised and disadvantaged in UK society and the WEA is delighted to be working with Radiant

and Brighter in helping them fulfil their mission and make a positive contribution to each individual learner.

The programme aims to improve the employability skills of the participants by helping them with preparing CV's, making job applications and giving them the skills and knowledge to be well prepared for interview. As part of the programme, the Managers and Executives from Lloyds spent a morning interviewing each of the candidates providing mentoring support and giving each candidate valuable feedback on how to ensure they make the best of any job interview opportunity

The feedback from all the candidates and from the members of Lloyds Banking Group was very positive. I look forward to reporting about the candidate's successes in work placement and their eventual job destinations in future editions of this e-brief and have agreed to keep Lloyds Banking Group up to date with the candidates' progress.