

Agenda item 5

For information – an update on the work of the Vocational Training Group

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Summary

Update on the work that the Vocational Training Group has been doing to improve access to vocational training in and around Frome.

Somerset Skills and Learning will be presenting at the meeting about how they adapted their training delivery during the pandemic and new training needs that have arisen.

Vocational training group

The Vocational Training Group is made up of training providers and further education colleges that serve the town (SS&L, Bath College, Edventure); apprenticeship advisors (SkillUp Somerset); Critchill School and Frome College; JobCentre Plus; Mendip District Council and FTC, including Cllr Maxine Crawley who chairs the meetings.

The group has continued to meet up regularly on Zoom during the pandemic and this has provided a supportive and collaborative setting for everyone to share the challenges they have faced along with new ways of delivering training and new training needs.

Young people's input

In March 2021, we invited three young people between the age of 18 – 25 to join the group so that we could hear their thoughts regarding training, how they want to be communicated with, and how the pandemic had impacted on them in terms of work/ training opportunities.

They highlighted that for young people at the very start of their working career/ training, having a year out due to lockdown felt like a very long time and that it had created for some a sense of endless drifting. They felt it was hard to get motivated to start up/ go back to training or work with all the starting and stopping of the multiple lockdowns. Some had had very little contact with other young people, and there was also a strong sense of uncertainty and anxiety.

The idea of an event where training opportunities was promoted was welcomed; however, they felt that having an event that was just about training might not appeal to young people and that it might need to be a part of something wider, such as wellbeing.

Spring Forward section on website and event

The new [Spring Forward](#) section was launched on the FTC website last October. The section highlights training opportunities in and around Frome, and signposts viewers to training providers and support.

The Vocational Training Group is planning to take part in the Carnival Fun Day event in Victoria Park on 25 September to promote Spring Forward. There will be representatives from

the training providers at the event to talk about the scope of courses they offer and engage with people about training opportunities.

Kickstart Programme

The Kickstart programme was launched last year, and we have been promoting the scheme to local businesses. The scheme offers young people who are on Universal Credit a 6-month work placement and training. Edventure have taken on a key training coordinating role for the programme in Frome and have confirmed over 60 placements since the scheme was launched. Our new Trainee Ranger has joined FTC with help from this programme.