

EGF Andersen Consultative Meeting 18th May 2015

Rathkeale House Hotel

Attendance:

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| Chairperson: | Liam Woulfe |
| EGF Managing Authority (EGFMA): | John McDermott, Tim Freeman |
| SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit (EGFCU): | David Smith, Joanne Morrissey, Jim Wadden |
| Department of Social Protection: | Catherine Hurley |
| Enterprise Ireland: | Maeve Meehan |
| LCETB; | Aobhann Haverty, Breda Flynn |
| Andersen worker representatives: | Tom Hogan, Marie Brosnan, Jenna Bourke, Mary Blankinsop, James McNamara |

Apologies : Jim Lynch DSP, Paul Patton ETB, Seamus Hoyne LIT, Eamon Ryan LEO

Opening

The Chairman welcomed those present and offered the apologies for members who could not attend. He welcomed Catherine Hurley from DSP and Maeve Meehan EI to the meeting.

Matters arising

The minutes of the meeting of 17th November 2014 were presented and approved.

Member Updates

1. Second EGF Andersen Ireland Implementation Report.

Copies of the second implementation report were circulated to forum members. Mr John McDermott [EGF MA] presented the second implementation report to the forum. Mr McDermott focused on both activity numbers relating to the worker and NEET cohort. During the presentation discussion ensued on NEETs in particular and the low levels of take up. Members were informed that every possible effort was being made to reach and support as many NEET clients as possible. The forum was advised, that DSP were actively moving the boundary for NEET selection beyond Rathkeale into Croom, and Patrickswell.

The Chair queried the precise nature of guidance services offered to both cohorts. Mr. Smith, provided an overview of the services and options available. He also advised that the majority of Andersen clients were focussed on obtaining employment and the guidance, coaching, CV and interview training had been provided via the EGF Career Support Training Grant.

In response to a query from Maeve Meehan, Enterprise Ireland, Mr Smith said that guidance supports encompassed both 1:1 psychological counselling and educational assessments from specialist private providers under the EGF Training Grant measure in order to gauge accurately where development was most needed in order to bring clients closer to the labour market and eventual employment.

The Chairperson, in noting the labour market status of EGF redundant worker beneficiaries, asked what more in terms of additional supports could be offered – both for those who were in employment and those who were unemployed. Mr Smith said in terms of additional skills it was important to bear in mind that some of those who had found employment were, due to varying types of employment contracts, changing jobs quite frequently and in need of upskilling or re-skilling quickly as a result. This is where the EGF Training Grants measure came into its own and could provide quick, short term courses that led to a FETAC and/or industry-recognised qualification. There was, therefore, ample scope within this measure to address additional training supports that might be needed both to help try to secure employment for those unemployed and to maintain EGF clients who are in work to stay in employment.

The Chairperson also noted the 44 redundant worker persons who have yet to take up supports and asked what could be done to try and persuade the remainder to take up EGF interventions. Dave Smith assured the Chair that every effort would continue to be made to try and get those who had not taken up measures to do so. He also added that the 44 who had not yet engaged had been contacted numerous times but had so far chosen not to undertake anything. John McDermott pointed out that of those 44, 26 were listed as being in employment as at 31 January 2015 leaving possibly only 18 or less to concentrate on.

Jimmy McNamara (Andersen Ireland Redundant Worker Representative) asked how much money had been spent to date on delivering EGF supports. John McDermott said that due to the fact that the main declarations of expenditure had not yet been compiled or submitted by service providers this was difficult to gauge with precision except to state that it would seem likely that, despite the significant level of uptake of particular measures and also in the positive context of there being high levels of re-employment, final expenditure could be some way short of the original financial plan contained in the application. However, due cognisance should also be taken in terms of gauging the programme's success or otherwise of the final numbers of total beneficiaries assisted under the programme, the high quality of that assistance and the related labour market outcomes for beneficiaries.

The Chair and forum members thanked Mr McDermott and Mr Freeman for the detailed report and overview.

2. SOLAS EGF Coordination Unit Update

Mr Smith confirmed that the EGF office was open and staffed. Footfall and usage levels were quite disappointing. He also advised that the EGF offices were available to those agencies supporting EGF, should they wished to meet EGF clients. Ms Jenna Bourke, queried whether the EGF offices could be used by DSP directly. Ms Hurley responded stating that this would not be possible as the office has no ICT connectivity.

In relation to the NEET cohort of clients, Mr Smith confirmed that attempts to engage with those NEETs who failed to respond was meeting with very little success. Jim Wadden (SOLAS) said that he did not have a problem with non-engagement per se provided that the message had been clearly understood and that NEET persons themselves were in no doubt as to the kind of opportunity for betterment they were passing up. Tom Hogan (Andersen Redundant Worker Representative) called for another general push in the last year of the programme to try to get more clients to engage in undertaking supports. Mr Smith assured the forum that the EGF Unit would continue to encourage as maximum a take up of supports as possible before the end of the programme activity period.

3. Service Provider Updates

No current updates were provided by any of the Service Provider representatives in attendance at the meeting. However, Jenna Bourke asked the EGFCU about a suite of third level programmes being offered by UCC. David Smith confirmed that UCC would be offering a range of courses at certificate and diploma levels covering a range of subjects that could be delivered locally in the Rathkeale area to save on travelling time and expenses. All courses would be subject to a minimum client take up number and David would provide further information to Jenna and her fellow clients following further contact with UCC.

Date of Next Meeting

To be agreed