

## SUSE / Apt PSP Conference 2022

It had been 3 years since we last came together as partners to talk about the issues that matter to us and the people we support. So much has happened and so much has changed and we reflected on that in the conference programme. There was a lot to talk about at our first hybrid conference.

The agenda was designed to be informative, challenging and entertaining. We heard from Richard Lochhead, MSP for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work, plus other main stage speakers, as well as our panel of experts. The panel discussed the post-Covid labour market and economy.

We also celebrated the achievements of those who completed the Inclusive Workplace Award, a particularly special achievement as many completed their award during the pandemic.

### Inclusive Workplace Awards

The award recognises organisations that are forward-thinking about equality and adopting diversity practices. Congratulations to the following organisations on their achievement:

ABM - Union Square	Holiday Inn Express Greenock
Belville Community Garden Trust	People Know How
Diageo – Shieldhall	Scotrail
Dundee & Angus College	Scottish Power
Falkirk Council	The Apprentice Store
GTS Solutions	University of Edinburgh

### Sponsors

We'd also like to thank our event headline sponsors, [ENABLE Works](#), as well as [Fedcap Scotland](#) and [DFN Project Search](#) for their support.

## Emerging Themes

The conference discussed some important emerging themes relevant to our sector:

- Future of Supported Employment in light of the Government review that has been commissioned and the opportunities to advance Supported Employment in Scotland
- Our new Quality Standard, how we get good quality services for everyone who needs them and recent changes in the funding landscape and policy developments.
- Levelling Up agenda and the Shared Prosperity Fund and how this may benefit disabled people
- Next steps for Apt PSP to ensure it meets employers' needs, puts people with lived experience at the forefront of delivery and makes progress towards a Centre of Excellence for Scotland.
- Post Covid recovery and implications for delivery services. What does this mean for how and where we work as organisations, for example flexible working. How we can ensure that disabled people get access to the opportunities that exist in a tight labour market.

## Breakout Sessions

During the day, 11 breakout sessions were held for both in-person and online delegates. These sessions were designed to run as workshops involving delegates in discussion and activities and covered the following topics:

1. The Supported Employment Guarantee
2. Supported Employment Quality Standard
3. Maximising the Contribution from People with Lived Experience in the PSP
4. Delivering a Centre of Excellence for Scotland's Employers
5. Quality Assurance in the PSP
6. Flexible Working in the Post-Covid Economy
7. Why Employers Should Recruit Disabled People
8. Enabling Partnerships
9. We can work too - part of Scottish Learning Disability Week 2022
10. Website Accessibility
11. The Scottish Government Disabled Peoples' Employment Team Information Session

## Session Overview – What you told us

### The Supported Employment Guarantee

This workshop was an opportunity for delegates to explore and develop the principles which underpin the concept of a Supported Employment (SE) Guarantee.

- Everyone should receive the same service and experience regardless of location.
- Opportunity to further develop digital access to services which started during the pandemic.
- The need for reliable, quality-assured data. Good data can assist in service planning and informed choices for potential participants.
- The need to define “quality” and the processes by which it can be measured fairly.
- The need to ensure that the people who deliver the SE provision are appropriately skilled, remunerated and developed as experts.
- Provide a clearer ‘career path’ for practitioners that could identify appropriate mentoring, coaching and development opportunities.
- Share resources more effectively to be able to move to person-centred services to meet individuals’ needs.

However, delegates highlighted points that would need to be addressed in order to deliver a step change in supported employment services:

- Digital barriers such as access, availability and ability
- Who would be responsible for monitoring and evaluating quality?
- The challenge of working towards person-centred services poses questions about availability of information and criteria for accessing services.

### Supported Employment Quality Standard

The workshop gave delegates the opportunity to review the proposed Supported Employment Quality Standard for Scotland and provide feedback on the key performance indicators under the four categories:

- Leadership & Management
- Client Satisfaction & Feedback
- Provider Staffing
- Provider Achievements.

The KPIs were well received by delegates and added that a KPI on safeguarding should be included and that staff training should include mental health awareness

When considering the client journey delegates suggested:

- Ensuring the Service Agreement is discussed and signed at the start of the process would help with engagement.
- Providing information and access to support for smaller organisations who may struggle to deliver all the job support that is required on their own.
- Building employer capacity to train staff in systematic instruction and claim Access to Work to pay for the time they spend job coaching.

The Quality Standards were well received. Delegates welcomed the idea of a kite mark and would be happy to take part in any piloting of the standards.

[The full draft Quality Standard is available to read here.](#)

## Maximising the Contribution from People with Lived Experience in the PSP

In this workshop, delegates were asked to discuss two questions: what does the next stage look like, and how do we develop our current team?

Social media campaigns:

- Attract more people with lived experience by advertising
- A campaign to help remove barriers
- Get case studies out across socials
- Videos – provided by members/ future members
- Reaching out to lived experience groups – focus groups recruiting i.e. social media groups.

Encourage more employers to participate:

- Speculatively reach out to employers – attract them to us
- Promote good practise by employers e.g. Diageo
- Incentives for employers – what will attract them.
- Use good practise across the PSP to promote ease of culture change
- What are they missing out on by not being a part of it?

Use previous experience to create a structure on “how to do it”

- Promote that reasonable adjustments are easy to implement
- Put effort into getting to know employees from first interaction
- Help employers remove fear of disability or using wrong terminology
- Positive about disability and an open culture
- Ensure companies are using supported employment services – 3<sup>rd</sup> sector/ charities etc.

Support people with lived experience:

- Develop ways to improve confidence of disabled people when applying for work
- To be an advocate for disabled people or groups
- Help disabled people / those with lived experience to lose their fears or negative judgements
- Advertise paid roles within the PSP specifically for disabled people
- Pay disabled people to be involved under permitted work or opportunities that do not to impact benefits
- There is a need to advertise to more 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to get those with lived experience onboard
- Be an advocate of driving policy to remove the 16 hour minimum working requirements from employment programmes
- Create a group with members with lived experience, not necessarily through the partners.

The feedback above will assist in informing an Action Plan that will be produced by the lived experience team. The Action Plan will identify areas that the team will work on over the coming year and how the team will approach this, as well as the intended outcomes and outputs.

## Delivering a Centre of Excellence for Scotland's Employers

This workshop, the first of ongoing consultations, focused on three key areas:

1. Lived Experience – how do we ensure that disabled people are at the heart of the Centre of Excellence, informing and influencing its work and driving continuous improvement?
2. Location – is a Centre of Excellence a physical place? Is it virtual? How do we serve the whole of Scotland?
3. Products/Services – what should a Centre of Excellence actually deliver? Is it face to face or virtual (or both)?

Many themes and discussion points emerged from this initial consultation, the highlights of which are below.

[To read the full summary of the workshop please click here.](#)

### Lived Experience

The Centre of Excellence (CofE) should be managed and staffed by disabled people, with the majority of training and services being delivered by disabled people. A prerequisite to this would be that more training and support be provided to disabled people to allow them to have active and meaningful roles in the CofE.

### Location

To be able to serve the whole of Scotland, the consensus was to have a small central base and then have ways to work both virtually and locally. In an ideal world, all 32 local authorities would each commit to providing some space for a defined amount of time each month, providing a local 'hot desk' network that covers all of Scotland. This would reflect a commitment from all LAs to reducing the Disability Employment Gap.

### Products and Services

Ultimately the CofE should provide HR support for employers to develop processes around accessibility and inclusive practices. This may include:

- Inclusive induction programmes and employee support plans
- Inclusive adverts, application forms and interview guides
- Provision of good online tools tested by employers and endorsed by disabled people
- Training and Advice
- Mentoring – someone embedded within an organisation for a period to support change

A proposal for the ongoing sustainability of a CofE was to provide a basic package offer which is free, then bespoke offers that incur a cost for employers, which should include an initial evaluation and Action Plan and delivery of that Action Plan.

It is important that this initial consultation is followed up and widened to include as many people as possible. This is partly to help inform the business case for supporting a Centre of Excellence going forward, but also to ensure that it is designed in a way that directly responds to the needs of those who will benefit most from its work.

## Delegate Feedback

“Inspiring day for #ENABLEWorks as headline sponsor of @SUSEScotland's #PartnersInProgress conf. Particularly encouraging to hear recognition that supporting more #disabled ppl into the #workforce through #SupportedEmployment can help address #LabourMarket challenges”

**Ashley Ryan, Director of ENABLE Works.**

“Thanks to all at @SUSEScotland for a conference that engaged us in conversations on improving employment outcomes and opportunities for disabled people.”

**Scotland Versus Arthritis.**

“What an Awesome (virtual) Day at the @SUSEScotland @apt\_scot Annual Conference. What an Amazing Set of conversations and workshops today also. Thank you for @SUSEScotland for allowing us (@SCLDNews) to hold a workshop as part of #LDWeekScot2022”

**Cameron McDonald Smith, Development Worker at SCLD.**

“Had a great time @SUSEScotland conference. So important to work together in partnership to close the disability employment gap. @MuseumsGalScot #SUSE2022”

**Markus Offer, Skills Development Manager at Museums Galleries Scotland.**

“Great event today, and seeing all the pictures I wish I could have joined in person but delighted [the] Scottish Union of Supported Employment made the event hybrid and accessible online”

**Gemma Falconer, Operations Manager at ENABLE Works.**

“So important to have collective discussions around the #DisabilityGap and ensure #NoOneLeftBehind and #UKSPF post #Brexit delivers for the people we support, particularly during such a transitional period in Scotland. We must ensure there is no gap in service availability, particularly for #disabled people who are already disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of #Covid. As a Trustee of the Scottish Union of Supported Employment I know first-hand of hard work going in to ensure #SupportedEmployment secures its place in Scotland's employability services as we know this delivers for #disabled people. Well done to all involved today, an inspiring event.”

**Lianne Williams, Depute Director of ENABLE Works and SUSE Trustee.**