



**SUSE E-bulletin 22**  
**December 08**

**Season's Greetings  
and Best Wishes for  
2009**

See the potential within



**Welcome to the December edition of the SUSE E-bulletin.**

A very successful 10th Annual SUSE Conference took place last month at Rothes Halls, Glenrothes. Keynote speakers were Mike O'Donnell, Partnership Delivery Manager for Workforce Plus, Michael Chapman - Economist, the Rev Erik Cramb, Ros Micklem - Director for Scotland, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Feedback on the Equality and Diversity Training was provided by Ian Watson of Law at Work, and Mike Evans - EUSE president stated the way forward for the European Union of Supported Employment. Alan Weaver, Chair of SUSE gave the final Call to Action, drawing together the points that had been raised at the Conference Workshops, and gave the closing address.

Delegates were also introduced to the new SUSE Website by Vickie McElhaney of Screen Media and it is hoped that SUSE members add information to, and fully use the new website as a valuable information tool.

**[www.susescotland.co.uk](http://www.susescotland.co.uk)**

A full conference report will follow in next year's bulletin.

Pictured are Michael Chapman, Cllr Elizabeth Riches who welcomed everyone to the Conference, Sandra Wilson of Fife Employability Network, Alan Weaver—Chair of SUSE, Brenda Moran of Scottish Enterprise, and Callum MacGregor of Fife EmployAbility Team.





This year's Scottish Business Diversity Awards were held following the SUSE Conference Dinner, at Balbirnie House Hotel. This year's finalists all qualified for the National Final as winners of SUSE Regional Diversity Awards.

Employer engagement is critical to ensuring a diverse workplace. The growing interest in the regional and national awards provides a unique opportunity for service providers to promote employers and acknowledge good practice. This year's finalists represent a range of industries and organisations, large and small, who have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and provide an inspiration to Scottish Businesses. In an exciting development this year's event saw the presentation of the first winner of a new Social Enterprise/Social Firm category. With a number of strong finalists this has provided a worthy addition to this year's winners.

A Civic Reception was hosted by Provost Frances Melville on behalf of Fife Council. A Keynote Address was given by The Rt Hon Anne McGuire MP, MP for Stirling, who also presented the Overall Winner Award. Recruitment Awards were presented by Cllr Elizabeth Riches - Depute Leader of the Administration of Fife Council. Retention Awards were presented by Councillor Tim Brett. Social Enterprise/Social Firms and these awards were presented by Ros Micklem, National Director, EHRC Scotland.

Royal Mail has shown commitment to all nine elements of the Local Employment Partnership Agreement, ranging from Family Friendly policies such as term-time working and flexible shift patterns to a diversity website to provide easy access to a comprehensive pool of diversity related information. The business works with Enable Scotland on work placements with a view to offering a contract at the end of the placement. Thus far, 15 people have progressed from placements to permanent contracts. Placements have the support of managers, a buddy (usually the workplace coach) and weekly contact with a Recruitment contact.

Royal Mail attracts applications from a rich and diverse mix of people and has put in place various strategies which display its commitment to employing people from diverse backgrounds.

### Overall Winner Royal Mail - Glasgow





## Recruitment Winner Strathclyde Police - Glasgow

This business's Diversity Team has been working tirelessly to try to engage with ethnic minorities and disabled people, including running specific events to demonstrate the many opportunities available. At one event a colleague with

MS highlighted the support he receives in the workplace to help allay the fears of those attending. The team has set up a specialist recruitment website with advice, named contacts on diversity matters and details of vacancies.

After finding that the Standard Entrance Exam was proving a barrier to certain groups, a programme to help prepare for the exam has been introduced which has reduced the fail rate from 40 to just 5%. The amount of work the Diversity Team carries out with its limited resources is truly exceptional.

## Recruitment - Runner-up Asda - Forth Valley

This business supports staff from diverse backgrounds through the recruitment process, from helping applicants with literacy problems with the application form to taking a flexible approach during induction to ensure that they accommodate needs including disability or religious belief. The business recently offered a work trial to a client with aspergers which he completed successfully and now works for the business 16 hours a week. One adjustment has been to guard against stress by allowing him to take his breaks at the same time while other staff vary their break times.

The business employs a number of people with disabilities as well as staff from the other equality strands including - 25% of the workforce is from the 50+ age group.



## Recruitment - Highly Commended HRM Homecare - Inverclyde and Renfrewshire



HRM Homecare advertises vacancies clear job description and person specification to ensure that its recruitment is based on skills, competence and experience. Staff are trained in disability awareness to reduce the risk of prejudicial attitudes affecting decisions and on equality and diversity to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities. This business monitors its recruitment process and regularly reviews its statistics to ensure that it attracts the best quality candidates from a variety of backgrounds. Through actively promoting itself as a Disability Symbol Employer and its overall recruitment policy, the business the business employs a number of staff from diverse backgrounds.

## Retention Winner Craigie Equestrian - Grampian



This business demonstrates an exceptional insight into the problems caused by anxiety, depression and lack of confidence and provides a very high level of support. One member of staff has a mild learning disability and limited literacy skills. He has always found it difficult to integrate and is socially isolated in his home life. He has been mentored in the workplace, encouraged to attend training and given support financially and with transport which has helped him to achieve a certificate of competence in welding. Transport is also provided to get him to work when he can't get a lift and the company's clear instructions and positive reinforcement have helped him to develop new skills and gain confidence.

Another member of staff with an extreme generalised anxiety disorder and clinical depression had to leave her previous job because of closure. She has found the transition into a new job very difficult but has received total support and been constantly reassured that she will not lose her job.



This business supports people from diverse backgrounds and with varying abilities to retain their

## Retention Runner - up Malcolm Allan - Forth Valley

employment by ensuring the job is correct for the individual. A disabled member of staff had a specific role within the company which was showing signs of reduced demand. The company re-assessed his skills and identified a new role for him. He was supported by other staff members to learn his new role and training and expectations for rate of work were individualised for him with no time restrictions.

Due to the nature of his disability he experienced a period of ill health and was not at work for almost 4 months. The company kept regular contact with him and implemented a phased return to work with full support. He has now recovered and resumed his normal duties.

## Retention - High Commended Methven House - Fife

This business's philosophy is that everyone has a valuable contribution to make, regardless of any disabilities or difficulties. This philosophy is admirably demonstrated in the efforts made to retain valuable staff. The process is built on an overall approach of seeing barriers as positive learning opportunities and a belief that nothing is impossible.

A young lady who is a wheelchair user and able to move only her right hand joined the business on work experience. She was so successful that the placement was extended while a new position was created that utilised all her skills and abilities and would allow career progression.

An automatic door answering system has been installed and she has a height adjustable desk. Equipment has been rearranged to allow her to access everything she needs.

She has started an SVQ iii in Business Administration arranged and financed by the business.

This business's philosophy is that everyone has a valuable contribution to make,



## Social Enterprise Winner Grangemouth Enterprises - Forth Valley

This business has an open door policy when it comes to recruitment and works with a range of providers and partner organisations both locally and further afield. Recruitment processes are flexible and the business is happy to make adjustments, even substantial adjustments to premises. The business is constantly looking for ways to expand and has recently developed a new enterprise which has created two additional jobs.

Following the recruitment of an employee who is a wheelchair user, access ramps were added, a workbench was lowered and duties were altered as appropriate. To support an employee with literacy and numeracy difficulties, the business installed specialist computer software to correct spelling when typing/booking goods in. A deaf person in a delivery and collection driving post has received in-work support including a buddy system to help with settling in and communication issues. Colleagues have learnt basic sign language symbols and communicate through a note system. This business has shown a real passion in assisting people from disadvantaged backgrounds into work.



## Social Enterprise - Runner-up Borders Green Team - Borders



The Borders Green Team is an emerging social enterprise offering opportunities to disadvantaged people. The majority of current trainees have learning disabilities. The business offers job tasters and work experience, and trainees are supported at all times whilst encouraged to be as independent as possible. Local volunteer business leaders run the company and have proven to have a good insight into the trainees' needs. Training plans are written and reviewed regularly to ensure that all trainees experience as many different tasks as possible. Confidence, assertiveness, self-esteem, social skills and being part of a community has increased dramatically in all the Ways2Work clients who have gained their skills with their Green Team experience.

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please email it to: [shona.davidson@fife.gov.uk](mailto:shona.davidson@fife.gov.uk)**