

Ballater Youth Training and Employment Report

November 2018

Prepared by Marr Area Partnership

Executive Summary

Issues had been raised around youth employment in Ballater for some time regarding the challenges and barriers faced by employers and employees.

A short study was commissioned by Ballater Royal Deeside Ltd on behalf of the wider stakeholder group which had formed to discuss the issue and agree the scope of the study.

In summer 2018 in conjunction with the stakeholder group, Marr Area Partnership developed a series of survey questions and methods to explore the issues with employers, young employees aged 16-25 and pupils in full time further education aged 16-18. The study focussed on 5 employment sectors and surveyed employers, employees in each sector and pupils at Aboyne Academy.

The study identified a number of barriers to youth employment in Ballater including transport costs, additional learning pressures and job advertising. Employers appeared unaware of some of these issues and there was a perception that without making a full commitment to work employees were not demonstrating a readiness to be employed.

The study also found that employers were missing a potential group of youngsters who were not necessarily immediately work ready but with some nurturing and flexibility, they could become committed employees.

The study identified that the type of jobs available to young people in Ballater are overwhelmingly customer facing in retail or hospitality, however many young people would like jobs that are either in other sectors or are not customer facing.

Recommended outcomes of the study included improving the methods used to advertise jobs, which will involve several different organisations (Aboyne Academy, libraries, BRD, BBA); supporting and strengthening links to the employability service with the possibility of setting up an employability hub; promotion of jobs in sectors other than retail and hospitality while also promoting non-customer facing roles in these two latter sectors; improving links between Aboyne Academy, Ballater Business Association and other such organisations in Ballater to explain what employees and employers expect from one another but also to explain the barriers they feel are preventing them from getting a job/finding good employees.

Introduction

In April 2018 a number of meetings arose after a query was raised about using community funds to support or help with training relating to youth and unemployment in Ballater.

A number of stakeholders came together facilitated by Aberdeenshire Council, BRD and Marr Area Partnership to explore how to look into the issue. A wider stakeholder group consisting of BRD, Aberdeenshire Council's Community Learning and Development team and the Employability Service, Marr Area Partnership, Ballater Business Association, Ballater Group (Rothsay Rooms, Highgrove Shop and Ballater Station), Skills Development Scotland, and Aboyne Academy formed and agreed that a greater understanding of youth employment needs and opportunities was required before any specific action could be taken.

A range of survey techniques were proposed, the scope and parameters agreed between the stakeholders and undertaken through the summer months.

The work looked into 5 sectors of employment

- Land based work
- Hospitality
- Care
- Trades
- Retail

The information collection was then split into 3 areas of investigation

1. Employers in Ballater
2. Youth employees between 16-25 not in full time education
3. Youth 16-18 in full time education

The methods for collection of the data were, paper survey forms for each category, focus group discussions and one to one interviews

In all cases the information collection focussed on 3 themes around existing opportunities, barriers and solutions.

More supplementary information was also collected about the sectors of employment, ages and specific questions around training and qualifications. This includes how Aboyne academy supports older pupils in gaining the necessary skills and qualifications for entry into the work place. (see appendices for survey questions)

Results

Employers in Ballater

A total of 9+ employers responded to the surveys sent out via BBA and by walking round Ballater and handing out the surveys to employers not on the BBA list. A selection of these employers were asked to take part in interviews to get a more thorough understanding of the issues. The following questions were put to them, followed by their responses.

How many young people apply to jobs advertised? Those in the retail and hospitality sectors have more young people applying than in other sectors.

What are the barriers to employing young people? Accommodation, transport – access and cost, availability, long-term commitment, finances (small business), unprepared for the work place.

Do the young people that you employ have the appropriate skills? Yes, yes, no – lack of commitment, work ethic, no, yes

What training can you give young people? Modern apprenticeships, work placements, promotion, apprenticeship, apprenticeship, all mentioned in survey, relevant training, possible direct employment by company, apprenticeships, work placements, internal training, promotion.

What roles as an employer do you struggle to fill? Seasonal staff, casual work, none, all jobs (hospitality), any roles (lack of applicants), housekeeping, food and beverage, kitchen, finance

What would make a difference to you as an employer, to enable you to employ more young people? Better transport links, affordable accommodation, regular work, staff retention, better and cheaper public transport, more affordable housing, young people understanding that working in hospitality doesn't always mean customer facing jobs.

Interviews with employers

A low work ethic was mentioned frequently, coupled with a poor attitude, lack of desire and motivation. It was suggested that work is not the priority for this age group, and is seen as a social thing, rather than a necessity by which money is earned. They expect work to be easy and are surprised when it isn't. They want to know what they can be offered, rather than the other way round. The best young people are predominantly those who going on to university, yet there are opportunities within the hospitality sector to progress and work elsewhere.

Those not in full time education aged between the ages of 16 and 25

In the retail sector one of these work positions was going to become permanent and the person was being trained to take over the business as it was family owned.

In the hospitality sector of those employed and not in full time education two had come from families with a strong work ethic and their training and pay was commensurate with their positive attitude.

The opportunities presented to them were the training options to take on more responsibility and the increased wages that brought.

In the land sector, the added training for new skills were opportunities to the 16-25 year olds and opened up possibilities to move between forestry, horticulture, fishing and game keeping.

In a number of retail and hospitality positions interviews there were respondents who were at university and returning during holiday or weekends to work. Many of these respondents were frustrated with the cost associated with travelling as well as the delays if using public transport.

These issues were encountered by all respondents.

Those at Aboyne Academy between the ages of 16 and 18 (S5 and S6) not intending on going into further education once they leave school

Community Learning and Development together with Skills Development Scotland held a focus group with Aboyne Academy pupils in years S5 and S6 who live in Ballater and the surrounding area. Seven surveys were returned. The following questions were put to them, followed by their responses

If you have a part-time job, what area of employment are you working in? Hospitality, hospitality, retail, hospitality, hospitality, trade.

What training and/or skills development have you completed or are still completing? None, none, child care course,, first aid, work experience in Ballater Nursery, money management and personal finance in Maths, work experience as a PSA at the Primary School, personal finance and maths at school, work experience - classroom assistant at Crathie Primary School, hospitality at NESCOL for 2 years, work experience at the Cow Shed in Banchory working in kitchen alongside the chef, hospitality with NESCOL, work experience at a solicitor for a week.

What makes it difficult to find work in Ballater?

Most jobs are already taken as they are full-time. Jobs aren't advertised towards young people. Maybe there could be advertising on social media or in the co-op.

The jobs aren't appealing and are all hospitality.

Lack of communication for other types of jobs. Age limit.

There is a lack of communication in letting people know that there are jobs available. Bus service is terrible.

Lack of communication, informing young people of job opportunities.

Transport.

Lack of communication.

Transport is terrible around Ballater.

Age restrictions.

There is not a lot of communication which means we don't know about jobs available.

Have to be 16.

Do you know of any opportunities that employers can give you while you are working?

No, no, apprenticeship, training, apprenticeship, apprenticeship and training, apprenticeship and training.

What need do you think there is for employment for young people in Ballater? More jobs available for young people, wider variety.

More variety, more interesting jobs.

More accessibility to retail jobs.

Too many cafes, shops but age (16+) is a problem

What would make a difference to you?

Better advertising of jobs – social media, notices. Jobs aren't filled as nobody knows about them.

If opportunities were advertised more effectively.

Better notice boards. More advertisements.

Better advertisements of vacancies: posters, Facebook

Better advertisements for vacancy, posters, Facebook

Better advertisement, using social media

Better advertisement and notice board.

Below is a summary of the focus group discussions

- All but one possessed a part time job mainly in retail or cafes.
- Many complained about a lack of variety in the types of employment available to them in that all that's available is café or retail work. Also, that those vacancies which existed were not advertised very well.
- One complained that most employers she had come across stick rigidly to a 16 years of age limit. That person suggested that she was ready and willing to start part time work at 14 years of age.
- Most complained about the bus service in Ballater and how it was nearly always late and often broke down.
- Most agreed that word of mouth is the main way information is spread in Ballater about vacancies. Indeed, one person suggested that lots of the smaller family owned companies in Ballater, tend to only employ their own family members or family friends.
- Most agreed that local employers should take the lead and do more to advertise their vacancies properly and that there should exist a dedicated Facebook page targeted towards young people living in Ballater; listing vacancies, events etc. They all applauded Shorty's Ice Cream parlour for using Facebook to communicate to them and how they advertised vacancies.
- Interestingly, many also mentioned the lack of vacancy information placed on local notice boards like the Ballater Green notice board. We questioned this and found that nearly all check these conventional noticeboards as well as face book.
- One suggested that the big hardware store in Ballater? (NB I didn't catch the name) didn't even bother to advertise the vacancies that existed.

- Another was impressed by the level of training offered to her in her part time job in a hairdressing salon. She suggested that this was probably not always the case in other part time jobs.
- Most agreed that as young people they have lots of home work to complete and extra curricular activities available to them out with normal school hours e.g. volunteering, sport related, music practice drama clubs etc. So, contrary to popular belief, their time is actually limited and that many of these activities actually overlap into their weekends. One suggested that there should be more short-term opportunities available, more flexibility in the hours required to work and that companies should use a rota of young people. A rota would help them plan their life better, so they could opt in and out of part time employment in order to keep their job but also fit in the extra-curricular activities.

Conclusions

For simplicity we have summarised the conclusions under the three groups that we interviewed.

Employers

Poor work ethic, young people wanting to calling the shots about time and duration of working and work being seen as a social thing rather than a necessity were perceptions echoed by many employers. There was also a strong feeling that the work was out there but not being taken up by young people locally.

Employers stressed that they had some very good employees but they were not in the majority. It was not possible to quantify this

Sole traders expressed difficulty to offer work because of financial constraints and in one case there was a reluctance to give on the job training as once skilled, employees were then setting up independently indirect competition with their former employers

Work not a priority for this age group was a common thread with employers

Being paid living wage makes a difference instead of minimum wage

Lack of commitment

Room for promotion in retail and hospitality and opportunity for new locations

Larger hospitality and care employers can offer more than is perceived e.g. IT, Legal admin and not necessarily be customer facing. Link to recommendation of greater awareness raising by **employers**

After some informal discussion with the primary school head teacher it was confirmed that the more able pupils move away from Ballater with their careers and there persists a feeling amongst some of the community that education is of no relevance. This attitude translates into a real lack of aspiration and drive from some children. She has tried to address this with exploring option with the children for future career opportunities through carers' fairs and external speakers.

16-25 employees

Jobs not well advertised was often mentioned and there here appear to be few jobs outside of hospitality and retail. Both modes of traditional and social media advertising were regarded as appropriate.

In one case there was a perception that there was a reluctance of employers to take on 14-16 year olds with reduced hours.

Transport issues especially the bus, timeliness, costs (public and private) were cited often.

Small family businesses only taking on family members was an issue regarded as reducing opportunity for others.

16-18 in full time education

This group is still in education and take part in a number of extracurricular activities and there was a distinct perception that this was not recognised by employers and the flexibility that this needed

Time issues of travelling are a further dimension to the need for flexibility when it comes to weekend or evening working options

Jobs not well advertised again came up with this group

Local work experience opportunities were good as were in-school training around personal and money management as well as vocational training through NESCOL as well as local apprenticeships.

Shortfalls in the approach

Only on reflection of the responses can other questions emerge which would have supported and added to the robustness of the findings. One particular avenue of questioning which did emerge in informal interviews but was not informally raised was the projected career aspiration of the respondents. This might have further validated the findings that the employees raised about the improved work ethic often came from those set on a goal of further education or employment. Similarly because we didn't ask about parents education and employment, it is difficult to correlate a good work ethic at home and that of the young people interviewed.

Recommendations

Job advertising. It is clear that young people fail to find out about jobs in Ballater and that a broader range of places in which jobs are advertised would help. Young people look for jobs not just on social media, but also rely on more traditional methods such as the notice board on the Green. Therefore it would make sense to try and co-ordinate at least 3 places where the same jobs could be advertised. This could include the Co-op, Ballater Community's Facebook page, the noticeboard on the Green, BBA and BRD's websites, as well as Ballater and Aboyne libraries. Aboyne Academy can play a role in spreading the word to the pupils.

Employability Hub. It was suggested that an employability hub could be set up in Ballater that would run on a regular basis. This would allow young people to find out about jobs, but also prepare CVs, and learn what skills are required for specific jobs. It would be beneficial if local employers could attend the hub to explain what they expect of employees.

Promoting a wider range of jobs. Whilst the majority of jobs in Ballater for young people are in the retail and hospitality sectors, it is clear from the research that not everyone wants a customer facing role, and many want to find work in other sectors. Therefore employers (perhaps through the BBA) together with the Academy should be explaining what different types of jobs are available, what type of person such a role would suit, and what type of career path this could lead into.

Better co-ordination between employees and employers. There appears to be a lack of understanding in what employees and employers expect from one another, but the Academy is ideally placed to help with support from BBA, the Employability Service and BRD.

Firstly, young people need to explain what issues face them when applying for jobs, and often these factors are out with their control such as unreliable and expensive public transport, time pressure from extracurricular activities, time taken to travel around Deeside, as well as a misconception of the minimum working age, (or at least they need a platform or mechanism where this information is supported by the likes of the academy, the BBA and SDS and so on)

Secondly, employers must explain to young people what is required when holding down a job, what skills are required for the different types of job available, and how much or otherwise an employer can offer in terms of flexibility.

Thirdly, the Academy can work closely with employers in Ballater to explain both the academic and vocational options (i.e. foundation apprenticeships) available to pupils in order to obtain qualifications and the wide range of courses that they can study, so that employers can support young people in their career development and potentially employ better skilled people in their businesses and organisations.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Employer Questionnaire

Ballater Youth Training and Employment

Marr Area Partnership (MAP) has been commissioned by BRD plus project partners (BBA, Aboyne Academy, Aberdeenshire Council, Skills Development Scotland, Hilton Grand Vacations, Ballater Group) to determine the demand for training and skills to support improved employment opportunities for young people in Ballater and Crathie; this is an issue that has been highlighted in the recently published Community Action Plan. If the results demonstrate that there are gaps in provision, BRD plus project partners will work towards putting a scheme in place that would improve the current situation for both employers, employees and potential employees.

Initial research will focus on 3 groups: employers in Ballater and Crathie; those not in full time education between the ages of 16 and 25 (both employed and unemployed); and those at Aboyne Academy between the ages of 16 and 18 not intending on going into further education once they leave school (S5 and S6).

The project will focus on 5 identified areas of employment that are significant in the context of Ballater:

- Land based sector (including estates, gardening etc)
- Hospitality (hotels, cafes, pubs, restaurants)
- Care sector
- Trades
- Retail

MAP will send out a survey to all the businesses in the area, and will also conduct focus groups and one to one interviews in order to get a thorough understanding of the issues. Your assistance in filling out the survey below will help us to determine what support may be required.

Questionnaire for employers

How many people (male/female) aged between 16 and 25 do you employ? Is this full-time or part-time?
How many people aged between 16 and 25 apply to jobs that you advertise?

What are the barriers to you employing young people?

Do the young people you employ have the appropriate skills and training to do the jobs available? If not, what skills are they lacking?

What training and other opportunities (i.e. apprenticeship, qualifications, promotion, Academy work placements) can you give young people?

What roles as an employer do you struggle to fill?
If you have proposed development plans, what roles would you be looking to fill?

What would make a difference to you as an employer, to enable you to employ more young people?

Appendix 2

Employee Questionnaire

Ballater Youth Training and Employment

Marr Area Partnership (MAP) has been commissioned by BRD plus project partners (BBA, Aboyne Academy, Aberdeenshire Council, Skills Development Scotland, Hilton Grand Vacations, Ballater Group) to determine the demand for training and skills to support improved employment opportunities for young people in Ballater and Crathie; this is an issue that has been highlighted in the recently published Community Action Plan. If the results demonstrate that there are gaps in provision, BRD plus project partners will work towards putting a scheme in place that would improve the current situation for both employers, employees and potential employees.

Initial research will focus on 3 groups: employers in Ballater and Crathie; those not in full time education between the ages of 16 and 25 (both employed and unemployed); and those at Aboyne Academy between the ages of 16 and 18 not intending on going into further education once they leave school (S5 and S6).

The project will focus on 5 identified areas of employment that are significant in the context of Ballater:

- Land based sector (including estates, gardening etc)
- Hospitality (hotels, cafes, pubs, restaurants)
- Care sector
- Trades
- Retail

MAP will send out a survey to all the businesses in the area, and will also conduct focus groups and one to one interviews in order to get a thorough understanding of the issues. Your assistance in filling out the survey below will help us to determine what support may be required.

Questionnaire for those aged between 16 and 25

Are you in employment in Ballater? If so, are you full or part time?
Which of the following areas of employment are you working in? (land based, hospitality, care, trades, retail)

--

If you are not working in Ballater, what do you think are the barriers to finding employment in Ballater?

--

What training and/or skills development have you completed in order to get a job in your preferred sector (both at school and college)?

--

What barriers are there to getting suitable training and skills?
--

--

What are the opportunities (i.e. training, apprenticeship, qualifications, promotion) that you are aware of that employers can provide you with through employment?

--

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What kind of work opportunities for young people do you know of in Ballater?b. What would you like to see? |
|--|

--

What would make a difference to you with regard to your job prospects?
--

--

Appendix 3

16-18 Year Academy Questionnaire

Ballater Youth Training and Employment

Marr Area Partnership (MAP) has been commissioned by BRD plus project partners (BBA, Aboyne Academy, Aberdeenshire Council, Skills Development Scotland, Hilton Grand Vacations, Ballater Group) to determine the demand for training and skills to support improved employment opportunities for young people in Ballater and Crathie; this is an issue that has been highlighted in the recently published Community Action Plan. If the results demonstrate that there are gaps in provision, BRD plus project partners will work towards putting a scheme in place that would improve the current situation for both employers, employees and potential employees.

Initial research will focus on 3 groups: employers in Ballater and Crathie; those not in full time education between the ages of 16 and 25 (both employed and unemployed); and those at Aboyne Academy between the ages of 16 and 18 not intending on going into further education once they leave school (S5 and S6).

The project will focus on 5 identified areas of employment that are significant in the context of Ballater:

- Land based sector (including estates, gardening etc)
- Hospitality (hotels, cafes, pubs, restaurants)
- Care sector
- Trades
- Retail

MAP will send out a survey to all the businesses in the area, and will also conduct focus groups and one to one interviews in order to get a thorough understanding of the issues. Your assistance in filling out the survey below will help us to determine what support may be required.

Questionnaire for Aboyne Academy pupils

Do you have a part time job in Ballater?
If you answered yes which of the following areas of employment are you working in? (land based, hospitality, care, trades, retail)

--

If you don't have a job in Ballater, do you have a job elsewhere? If so, where and why?

--

What training and/or skills development have you completed or are still completing in order to get a job in your preferred sector (both at the Academy and at NESCOL)?

--

What do you think makes it difficult to find work in Ballater?

--

Do you know of any opportunities (i.e. training, apprenticeship, qualifications, promotion) that employers can give you while you are working?

--

What need do you think there is for employment for young people in Ballater?

--

What would make a difference to you with regard to your job prospects?

--

Appendix 4

Pupil table outlining all education (including vocational) options

See attachment Senior Phase choice sheet