

**LANCASHIRE HR EMPLOYER'S FORUM – 21 November 2019**  
**Chair's Report**

**HR Practitioner's Point of View:**

- 1. Members of Staff on Maternity Leave – ability to keep in touch** – ask for contact email address from employee, so whilst they are off, should you need to contact them, to inform them of ie Annual Staff Conference, you have their details to hand. We obtain this information during the maternity risk assessment carried out at the initial stages of the pregnancy. *Recent case criticised an employer for emailing a colleague on maternity to their “office email”, which whilst they still had access too, did not necessarily check regular during their maternity leave.*
- 2. Mental Health – support for employers to support their employees – Able Futures** – funded by the Department for Work & Pensions, via Ingeus – offer face to face counselling an ongoing support – more information – [www.ablefutures.co.uk](http://www.ablefutures.co.uk) or contact Angela Han, Business Account Manager, email – [ahan@ingeus.co.uk](mailto:ahan@ingeus.co.uk) or mobile 07384 513798 (note on annual leave 27/11 to 12/12).
- 3. Issuing of Fit Notes in the future** – involved in a consultation regarding health professionals, in addition to GP's issuing Fit Notes – suggestions being Mental Health Professionals, Pharmacists.
- 4. Returners** – involved in a Law Society Programme to support Returners to the sector. Worked successfully at Forbes. Flagg, UCLan (University of Central Lancashire) undertaking a research project on Returners. Their key question, is how you “attract the returners” to your vacancies.

**Sharing of Information:**

- 1. National Apprenticeship Week 2020 – bringing forward to February 2020, from March 2020** if you are planning any PR activities.
  - **SORTED** – reminder the online brochure now incorporates higher level and degree Apprenticeship provision available from Lancashire based Training Providers, including Colleges and Universities – **brochure online** - [www.lancsforum.co.uk/sorted/](http://www.lancsforum.co.uk/sorted/).
  - **Levy Payers** – suggestion the Government may remove funding for the Higher Degrees and put a salary cap of £30,000 for employees obtaining funding. Keep a watching brief of changes coming through.
  - **Lancashire Apprentice Ambassador Network** – The Lancashire Work Based Learning Executive Forum are continuing to recruit employer ambassadors and apprentice ambassadors to the Lancashire network, now up to 80. Ambassadors promote the benefits of apprenticeships to employers and young people in schools and colleges. For further information [www.lancsforum.co.uk/apprentice-ambassadors/](http://www.lancsforum.co.uk/apprentice-ambassadors/)
  - **Lancashire Work-based Learning Forum (LWBLEF)** who are committed to supporting their members (Colleges, private Training Providers and Universities based in Lancashire) to provide the highest quality of Work-Based learning opportunities has a new Forum Manager – Tim Cutler – [tim@lancsforum.co.uk](mailto:tim@lancsforum.co.uk) telephone 01254 306831, [www.lancsforum.co.uk](http://www.lancsforum.co.uk)
- 2. Lancashire Enterprise Advisor Network** – currently comprises of 130 schools and colleges, with 120 matched with at least one volunteer business leader (Enterprise Advisor) – anyone interested in working with a school or college in their area – supports CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and raising the profile of your business and other local businesses in the area – for further details: <https://lancashirean.co.uk/>
- 3. Lancashire's Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) – The Fast Track Digital Workforce Fund** is a £3 million, joint venture between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership (LDSP) and aims to help employers, in the Greater Manchester and Lancashire areas, to address their specialist digital skills needs through short, innovative, bespoke training. This is not a fund about basic digital skills. They are looking at the need for people in priority areas such as cybersecurity, data science and manufacturing - process control and AI/Robotics. Or other shortage digital skill areas; digital marketing and software development (outside of central Manchester). Any area of medium to high level digital skills that can evidence a need will be considered and can be for roles across sectors or within the digital sector. Looking for Register of Interest from employers who have hard to fill digital vacancies and linking with training providers – Colleges, Universities, other community or charity organisations by 21 November 2019. Fund formally opens on 29 November 2019 (closing 31 January 2020) and there is an Engagement Event – 4 December 2019 to hear further detail of the fund. All documentation on the fund will be launched on 29 November 2019 on <https://procontract.due-north-com/opportunities>

For more information please contact Coordinator – Kerry Harrison – [kerry.harrison@lancashirelep.co.uk](mailto:kerry.harrison@lancashirelep.co.uk)

4. **European Social Funds in Lancashire** – new Projects commenced 1 April, which ensures a continued offer of support to Lancashire Employers:

**UpSkilling Lancashire** – provides an organisational analysis to employers who are looking to develop the skills and capabilities of their workforce, increasing their competitiveness and productivity. The team will support employers identifying their training and organisational needs, in order to achieve future growth and strategic objectives within their business. New website now available:

[https://www.uclan.ac.uk/business\\_at\\_uclan/upskillings-lancashire.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/business_at_uclan/upskillings-lancashire.php) For further information – Charlotte Duffell [CDuffell1@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:CDuffell1@uclan.ac.uk)

**EngineE** – supporting Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing sector businesses to build their capacity to embrace professional and technical development opportunities, increase access to higher level apprenticeships and build capacity by enabling the embedding of technical skills provision. For further information – Annette Sudds [a.suddes@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.suddes@lancaster.ac.uk), website <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/EngineE>

**For Reference – Networking Opportunities:**

Lancashire CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development - Lancashire Branch – website – [lancashire@comms.cipdmail.com](mailto:lancashire@comms.cipdmail.com)

Keep up to date with our Forbes team by following us on Twitter - [@Forbes\\_solicitor](https://twitter.com/Forbes_solicitor)

**Upcoming Forbes Events:**

**Mock Employment Tribunal** – 26 November 2019, 8.30am to 11.30am – Prairie Sports Village, Burnley

**Joanne L Pickering, Chair – Lancashire HR Employer’s Forum**

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For past reports or presentations visit [www.cbpartners.org](http://www.cbpartners.org) click on the business section and the link to Employer Forums.