

# STRATEGIC LABOUR MARKET GROUP – PROPOSED FUTURE DISCUSSION TOPICS

## Background

1. To date the SLMG have discussed the **Labour Market Strategy Measurement Framework** and **Brexit**. These discussions have been characterised by:

(a) a practical need to be able to demonstrate progress against the five outcomes set out in the LMS and to ensure appropriate read-across into other key areas of work such as the Inclusive Growth agenda and the SG Economic Programme; and

(b) identifying and developing key factors, challenges and actions in terms of prioritising and evidencing our policy goals within the context of the Brexit negotiations, particularly in respect of discussions with UKG over the coming months (including for example, feeding in to the response submitted in respect of the call for evidence from the UK Migration Advisory Committee).

## Discussion

### Brexit

2. Looking ahead, Brexit will continue to be an area where we need to remain alert to the impact on the Labour Market both in terms of not just future **Migration Policy** and access to the Single Market (Free Movement in particular), but also in terms of issues such as **The Social Pillar**. It is anticipated that the Group may therefore want to return to Brexit (specific elements of the negotiations and post-Brexit impacts) at least once over the next few meetings.

**Ask: Do members agree that Brexit and EU-related policy development affecting the labour market should be revisited? Is there any particular timeframe which the Group feels make sense, e.g. post phase 1 Brexit discussions, but once we have greater clarity on UKG Immigration policy proposals?**

### Employment Law

3. Future meetings will also draw on priorities drawn from key Scottish Government documents such as the Programme for Government. **Employment Law** has been identified as a key lever in helping Scotland meet both its social and economic ambitions and work is currently underway to develop a high-level discussion paper for publication in the Spring setting out the case for new powers to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. The views of the SLMG will be an important aspect of examining the case and for identifying the priority issues for Scotland. This will also factor in links into social security and employability. This will likely focus on **workers' rights**, but will also consider points such as the **National Minimum Wage/Real Living Wage; Zero Hours Contracts** (Note: it is likely that we will want to consider how we break down the issue of employment law as it is too big a theme for a single meeting).

**Ask: Are the Group content to agree the employment law and how it could support Scotland’s ambition of becoming a Fair Work Nation, should form the theme of at least one future meeting and that the next meeting in the Spring of 2018 would be an opportune time?**

#### **Automation**

4. **Automation** (including wider technological change and impact on the labour market) is proposed as another topic which the SLMG could usefully consider. There is extensive research currently underway in this area and the best timing for this discussion has yet to be determined, though perhaps the summer on 2018. Some horizon scanning will be undertaken to identify expected publication dates of key research papers and to also establish when policy and analytical teams in Scottish Government would find it most beneficial to draw on the collective expertise of the SLMG. Many of the themes already identified above have a cross-cutting element and most, if not all, could act as a driver or an inhibitor to progress around development and adoption of automation and new technologies in Scotland, so timing and focus will again be important.

**Ask: Are the Group content to add Automation to the proposed themes for future meetings, with a provisional slot in the summer of 2018?**

#### **Fair Work**

5. In terms of current planning, it would seem to be a gap in the work of the group if it did not consider **fair work**, and the role of fair work in supporting: supply of labour; job design; productivity; skills development etc. There would be a clear need to ensure that any discussion within the SLMG was complementary to the work of the **Fair Work Convention**. In that respect, the SLMG discussion may be characterised more around the macro-level interventions which might be required. If the Group are in agreement that this would be an appropriate theme, then SLMG Secretariat propose to discuss with FWC Secretariat to develop an appropriate topic for discussion. The need for involvement for engagement with others including SDS is also recognised.

**Ask: Are the Group content to agree in principle to a Fair Work themed meeting?**

#### **Other Research/Publications**

6. Strategically, we will also be looking to align the work of the SLMG with other key publications and considerations which will form themes for future meetings, such as the focus on the “**Older People and Employment in Scotland**” research paper published in August and discussed today as part of the Scottish Government’s Social Research series.

**Ask: Are there any other key studies in the pipeline that the Group would like to consider or jointly feed into? The Secretariat will continue to Horizon Scan and offer topics for the Group to consider.**

## Summary

7. In summary, but in no particular order, proposals for the potential themes for the next 2 years of meetings are as follows:

- **Employment Law** (to be broken down into issues such as NMW, Real Living Wage, Workers' Rights; Zero Hours Contracts, etc – potentially 1-2 meetings)
- **Automation/Technological change and impact on the labour market**
- **Fair Work**
- **Brexit** (re-visited including Migration potentially 1-2 meetings)
- **Other Research/Publications** (ad-hoc/proposed by members)

8. Clearly new issues may arise during this period which would merit the attention of the SLMG and we will continue to horizon scan with policy and analytical colleagues for issues of interest.

### Recommendation:

- That the Group notes (and offers further comment), or agrees the proposed forward work plan for the SLMG and further notes that the Secretariat will develop further advice as regards sequencing on the proposed meetings.
- Also, that the Group agrees that the theme for the next meeting (proposed for March 2018) will be focused around employment law and how it could be developed to support Scottish labour market needs.

**Strategic Labour Market Group Secretariat  
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