

NEWS RELEASE - 11 March 2021

GOVERNMENT FUNDING CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN RETURNERS IN SCOTLAND

Women Returners, a social business, has received Scottish Government funding to host a Return to Work Connection Event on 18th March to create hiring opportunities for women returners with employers from the finance, fintech and professional services sectors.

There has been a highly positive response from leading Scottish employers, with 11 signed up to attend: Phoenix Group, Burness Paull, DAC Beachcroft, Deloitte, BlackRock, FDM Group, Hymans Robertson, J.P. Morgan, St. James's Place Academy, TSB and Waterstons.

The virtual event aims to tackle the challenges being faced by women trying to return to the professional workplace after a long career break of 12 months or more for childcare, caring, health or other reasons. It is an opportunity for women returners to start conversations with employers about current or future roles. For employers it is the opportunity to meet with a high calibre, highly motivated and diverse talent pool of professional women.

Claire Newcombe, Partner at DAC Beachcroft, comments: "Our Reconnect Programme has been really successful with the support of Women Returners, whose expertise has been invaluable in creating the programme. We have already recruited several returners with more due to join shortly. We are excited to be part of the Return to Work Connection Event and looking forward to meeting more talented and experienced professionals."

Tamar Hughes, Group Head of Talent and OD at Phoenix Group says: "We're delighted to be supporting Women Returners at the Return to Work Connection Event which will see our team help women who are looking to get back into the world of work. We know that having a diversity of thought, experience and outlook within our business will help us better understand our customers and meet their varied and changing needs. We look forward to meeting the returners at the event and giving them the tools and confidence to excel."

Charlotte Darling, now a Manager at TSB, participated in Women Returners' Scottish Government funded *Returners to Financial Services Scotland* programme in 2018, said: "Women Returners propelled me back into the world of work after a four year career break. The programme and coaching gave me the confidence and support I needed to believe in myself, and the connection event helped me to secure a permanent role."

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It was a fantastic and inclusive group that helped us to focus on our key skills and what we could deliver for employers.”

Susan Bell, CEO at Waterstons, comments: “We’re delighted to be taking part in the Return to Work Connection Event with Women Returners. At Waterstons recruiting talented people is one of the most important things we do. We never underestimate the value that people can bring to us based on their previous life and work experiences. While technical skills can be learned, what matters to us is a desire to learn, be curious about our client’s businesses and be passionate in wanting to help them succeed.”

Hazel Little, Client and Programme Director at Women Returners, said: “Women who have taken career breaks already face multiple challenges at the point of returning to work, from their own loss of professional confidence to recruiter biases against people without recent experience. During the pandemic, these challenges have been magnified for women who have a gap on their CV as they struggle to compete in a climate where each job vacancy receives hundreds of applications.”

“That’s why we are delighted to have received the Scottish Government funding to help break down these barriers for women in Scotland, by providing career coaching and working with hiring employers to create this connection event. Our hope is that it bridges a gap for women returners to get directly in front of employers to demonstrate their value.”

“Increasing numbers of employers are recognising the value that returners bring to businesses. Their talents have grown and expanded on career breaks where they might have raised a family, started a home-based business, lived abroad, done voluntary work or cared and advocated for elderly parents or foster children.”

Little continues: “Finding diverse and experienced talent can be challenging for companies of all sizes and sectors. Women returners are a pipeline of new talent which employers are really happy to invest in. Returners bring a width and breadth of unique skills, experiences and perspectives gained from their career breaks, in addition to their professional training and experience.”

The event is the second part of Women Returners’ *Return to Work Accelerator* programme. The *Return to Work Bootcamp* ran throughout February and March 2021 and provided career coaching to 70 women returners with tailored support to address the practical and psychological barriers of returning to work.

Women returners interested in attending this free event can sign up before 16th March 2021 at:

<https://womenreturners.com/opportunities/scotland-return-to-work-accelerator-event/>