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*Innovation Fund –
Sharing the benefits*

Introduction

In April 1998, the New Deal Task Force commissioned Victor Adebowale, Chief Executive of Centrepont, to chair a working group to examine how New Deal could best meet the needs of the most disadvantaged young people.

The group produced the *Meeting the Needs of Disadvantaged Young People* report which concluded that New Deal required “little additional money nor radical change [to] the programme design”. However, the group indicated that where their recommendations had financial implications, a pilot should be undertaken to test the cost/benefit.

The New Deal Innovation Fund has therefore been developed to finance innovative approaches to deliver New Deal locally which cannot be supported within existing budgets and forms part of the New Deal Continuous Improvement Strategy. It is the test bed for ideas and activities that will increase performance outcomes and extend our knowledge of what works in helping people to move from welfare into sustainable work.

This is achieved by inviting all sectors of the community to tender for funds to implement projects that will enhance the delivery and outcomes of New Deal and thus, employment rates in their locality.

The good practice drawn together in this booklet is as a result of the first two rounds of the Innovation Fund where recommendations from the Adebowale report have been taken forward by Employment Service and by organisations from all sectors of the community. Roughly falling into nine themes, the 55 projects have provided us with many innovative ideas, new approaches and success factors.

This booklet does not contain a comprehensive description of all 55 projects, instead it provides information about a limited selection of projects to illustrate the main key benefits and features of success which have emerged in each of the nine themes.

Next Steps

Although Rounds 1 and 2 of the New Deal Innovation Fund are now almost complete, the Innovation Fund continues to support the development of New Deal and other new policies. At present Round 3 projects, many focusing on demand-led strategies to inform how we involve employers and address skills shortages, are going live and will be operational for up to three years.

We are currently in the process of designing the next phase of the Innovation Fund bidding process to provide us with yet more innovative ideas, new approaches and success factors to meet the challenges laid out in the Green Paper *Towards full employment*.

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Addressing the needs of severely disadvantaged groups

A number of Innovation Fund projects used different methods to test ways of helping severely disadvantaged groups gain access to employment. These projects included:

- case managing homeless people through a ‘Foyer’ – a centre which provides a range of specialist help; and
- using the Probation Service to address the particular problems faced by offenders in the New Deal.

Key benefits

- The centres help to make the New Deal programme more accessible to those with negative perceptions of Jobcentres.
- The more relaxed working environment of a centre is better suited to uncovering the particular barriers faced by homeless disadvantaged clients.
- The centres are able to provide access to a wide range of specialist help including housing advice, jobsearch support, basic skills training, help with debt management and tackling alcohol/drug abuse. This one-stop help minimises the number of inter-agency referrals so that clients are less likely to drop out.
- A dedicated placement officer from the Probation Service is a vital link between ex-offenders and the local partnership of Employment Service, Probation Service and employers.
- The placement officer provides one-to-one support and counselling for clients and actively markets them to those local employers with a known positive attitude towards employing ex-offenders.

Features of success

- The Probation Service acts as a specialist agency and progresses offenders into jobs who would otherwise have little or no opportunity to experience the working environment.
- The use of an outward bound course enables ex-offender clients to build trusting relationships and allows them to gain much needed confidence and self esteem.

- ⦿ One-to-one support provided by the Probation Service placement officer enables clients to recognise their own barriers to employment, such as the lack of basic skills.
- ⦿ The placement officer, using his considerable commercial experience, identifies and markets ex-offenders to those employers who are known to be willing to give them a chance of employment.
- ⦿ The placement officer offers post-placement support as needed to those ex-offenders who have gained employment, thus helping to reduce the likelihood of them dropping out.
- ⦿ Despite the difficulties in working with homeless people, almost a third of participants have secured employment through the two projects using centres focused on helping this greatly disadvantaged group.
- ⦿ The appointment of a New Deal Personal Adviser for the Homeless who works within the centre and is therefore not associated with the Jobcentre or seen as part of the establishment is an important element in success.

PROJECT DETAILS

Foyer Centre in Nottingham: Greater Nottingham Unit of Delivery/Bestco/YMCA

Contact: Max Unwin (ES)

Telephone: 0115 909 5000

The partnership of Bestco from the voluntary sector, the Employment Service and the YMCA jointly addresses the particular problems faced by homeless young people in the New Deal who are amongst the most severely disadvantaged in finding work. Their aim is to recruit young people who are eligible for New Deal but who are not joining due to barriers presented by the current entry arrangements. The project supports New Deal clients by testing flexible arrangements designed to improve access and provide a holistic model to tackle the 'no job – no home – no job' cycle.

Foyer Licensed Centre in Newtown Powys: Powys Unit of Delivery

Contact: Alan Jones (ES)

Telephone: 01938 525213

This project provides accommodation for homeless people as well as a single point of entry for clients and referrals to obtain help and support from the specialist services provided by the centre and the New Deal Personal Adviser for the Homeless.

Dorset Probation Service: Dorset Unit of Delivery

Contact: Rob Sly

Telephone: 01202 276064

This project addresses the difficulties faced by known offenders in the New Deal. A dedicated placement officer offers counselling and support to offenders both pre- and post-employment and markets them to local employers.

Providing post-placement support

A number of projects tested the possibility of increasing job retention rates through post-placement in-work support for employers and clients. A variety of approaches were adopted in which support was given to clients and/or employers. All the projects employed a dedicated support workers to offer specialist help. Three of these projects included:

- ⦿ providing a full-time support officer who acted as counsellor and adviser to clients;
- ⦿ using a programme of support for both young clients and employers; and
- ⦿ providing an aftercare support caseworker to monitor and help New Deal leavers.

Key benefits

- ⦿ The support officer's development of close links with specialist agencies provides clients with access to specialist services such as debt counselling, housing services, health services and childcare arrangements.
- ⦿ Clients find having someone to help them through the early stages of working in a new job gives them confidence and a sense of security.
- ⦿ Close partnership working between local organisations enables the project officer to negotiate reduced bus fares for participants. These reduced transport costs are seen as particularly beneficial during the early days of a new job when money for many clients may still be tight.
- ⦿ The support officer's work with clients enables employers to reduce their turnover of staff by lowering drop-out rates.
- ⦿ The support officer not only provides assistance to clients trying to overcome initial employment difficulties, but also provides advice regarding career progression, helping clients to look to the future.

Features of success

- The use of support workers indicates that post-placement support reduces the number of claimants re-registering at 13 weeks by at least half. Clients closely monitored in 'experimental' and 'control' groups show there is clear indication of the value and effectiveness of this type of service; two-thirds of those asked agreed that it had been useful.
- The support officer is now recognised as a specialist working in a multi-faceted role acting for both client and employer as counsellor, mediator, adviser, confidante, coach and broker in terms of getting the right kind of help when needed.
- Adviser commitment is increased by using handouts and aide-memoires supported by a series of training events, two-way discussions and ongoing re-familiarisation throughout the life of the project.
- The work support officer can provide a full induction service if the employer is unable to do so.
- A consultation conference prior to the launch of projects brings a wide range of committed local agencies on board.
- Successful schemes focus on rebuilding clients' self esteem and confidence, enabling them to contribute positively to their own progression.
- Regular communication between clients and employers from the beginning and throughout the support period is essential and enables the support worker to resolve any difficulties more easily.

PROJECT DETAILS

**Right Start – In Work Services:
Dunbartonshire Unit of Delivery**

**Contact: Helen Meenan
Telephone: 01389 823300**

This project was designed to address the high turnover of clients entering unsubsidised employment, who lost or gave up their jobs within the first few weeks because of difficulties in adjusting to the pressures and expectations in the workplace.

**ECO ACTIF: SMEEK
(Sutton, Merton, Epsom, Esher
and Kingston) Unit of Delivery**

**Contact: Vanessa Unsworth
Telephone: 020 8700 3654**

This project helps employers to understand the needs of the young people they are recruiting who have difficult personal circumstances. This project tackles these difficulties by offering a support programme to both clients and employers and uses a mixture of training sessions with staff managers and seminars with local employers.

**Community Links: Wise Group:
Newham Unit of Delivery**

**Contact: Dean Weston
Telephone: 020 7301 6822**

This project employs an aftercare support caseworker to track, monitor and help New Deal leavers from an Option and gives support to former New Deal clients in work. The caseworker provides specialist advice and counselling covering a range of services so that jobs can be accessed and sustained.

Reaching the excluded and those dropping out

The New Deal has experienced relatively low participation rates among black and ethnic minority communities and some groups of young people who exist outside the margins of the official system. Several Innovation Fund projects address the needs of such disadvantaged young people by employing outreach workers to try and bring them into New Deal. This type of project included amongst other ideas:

- funding an outreach worker to promote New Deal within an Asian community; and
- employing a group of outreach workers who focus on Jobseeker's Allowance claimants who have not already joined New Deal and on those who have but are in danger of dropping out.

Key benefits

- Long-term relationships of trust have been developed with individuals. This process requires a one-to-one approach, patience, and flexibility of attitude and working patterns.
- By making wide-ranging specialist expertise available, individuals can access assistance from organisations with experience of working with ethnic minorities and other marginalised groups.
- The outreach worker raises the knowledge and awareness of New Deal Personal Advisers (NDPAs) and providers regarding issues of concern to clients from minority ethnic groups, with the benefit of greater understanding to both.
- Close working relationships are being developed between NDPAs and community workers with ongoing, positive results for both the Employment Service and the ethnic communities involved. Once relationships are established, community groups tend to go on using NDPAs as a resource.
- Outreach workers are able to overcome cynicism and motivate young people into the belief that New Deal offers a viable route to securing employment and that New Deal does in fact have something very positive to offer.

- The network of outreach advisers explored and developed a range of ways to deliver the Full Time Education and Training option through off-site opportunities.

Features of success

- The outreach worker in the Asian project is well known to the local community and uses a flexible approach to meet clients in local community venues or in their homes. He discusses and promotes the benefits of New Deal to young Asians and their families on a one-to-one basis. He has also formed very strong links with Jobcentre staff who are closely involved in initiatives within the various Asian groups.
- Mentoring, guidance and advice is offered to those interested in work opportunities – especially women. Help is also provided in compiling CVs, completing application forms and practising interview techniques, and updates on the latest New Deal vacancies are available.
- Establishing a multi-agency resource centre with a drop-in facility that is not obviously connected to the Jobcentre encourages relationships of trust and also allows young people access to a wide variety of useful services.
- Positive marketing raised the awareness of the project in the local press and a ‘Jobs Bazaar’ was held to promote careers not normally pursued by ethnic minority clients. A jointly organised and hosted New Deal/Asian Business dinner also produced positive results with more employers signing up.
- In one of the projects, funding is used to allow a range of partners to provide additional outreach services via their existing networks. Support workers are able to overcome barriers by improving communication and targeting their help appropriately.
- Outreach workers help people overcome the multiple barriers to joining New Deal such as dealing with the fear of commitment and mistrust of the benefits system. They can also help participants appreciate the benefits to be gained from training and participating in New Deal.

PROJECT DETAILS

New Deal Outreach Project: Rochdale Unit of Delivery

Contact: Pauline Hardwick (ES)
Telephone: 0161 253 3678

This project aims to provide support and guidance to those within the Asian community in Rochdale who are not engaging with New Deal. An outreach worker with close connections to the Employment Service and other agencies offers support and guidance to the local Asian Community. The outreach worker also provides advice to employers and training providers regarding relevant cultural issues that could be seen as barriers to employment and training.

Outreach Innovation Fund Project: Cheshire Unit of Delivery

Contact: Ian Spenser (ES)
Telephone: 01244 583146

This project aims to promote New Deal positively to potential New Deal clients by visiting local communities and holding events in their locality. Clients who express an interest in joining New Deal are then referred to an Outreach Personal Adviser who will visit them in a convenient location. The aim of the Outreach Personal Adviser is to help clients to overcome the barriers they may face when joining New Deal.

Overcoming the barriers faced by clients in remote rural areas

A labour market barrier commonly faced by New Deal clients in remote rural areas is limited access to personal or public transport. A number of methods of increasing mobility were tested including:

- ⦿ loaning a fully insured motor scooter to enable New Deal clients to take jobs they would otherwise have declined due to access difficulties; and
- ⦿ refurbishing a bus designed to take New Deal services to rural communities.

Key benefits

- ⦿ Provision of a moped for clients has helped to improve job access and job retention amongst those taking part.
- ⦿ Imaginative schemes like these projects have a very visible element to their provision. They are consequently able to attract media attention and in the process achieve a high profile.
- ⦿ The design of the refurbished bus project was developed together by the partners who were responsible for its implementation. This gives a strong sense of ‘ownership’ of the scheme to those involved.
- ⦿ The bus takes services offered by the Employment Service to the most disadvantaged groups, thereby helping to overcome the transport difficulties in the local area.

Features of success

- ⦿ The moped scheme was well publicised and an actual scooter was displayed in local Jobcentres. News of the scheme was spread by word of mouth as much as by formal publicity and clients were reported to have asked, unprompted, if they could be taken onto the programme. The scheme is very popular with young people and few incidents of misuse and defaulting have been recorded.
- ⦿ The mopeds are fully insured and taxed. All necessary accessory equipment is provided, along with training in basic maintenance, rider instruction and counselling to those using the scooters.

- A Steering Group undertook the day-to-day running of the project which resulted in good communication and a strong team spirit. This close partnership also helped to resolve any issues that arose, such as those around Health & Safety.
- The moped partnership was able to provide a seamless integrated service by networking with local organisations.
- The bus project makes information available to potential New Deal clients in remote rural areas. Induction days help promote a greater take up of New Deal Gateway elements as well as allowing private counselling space. Information is also provided for those who are moving into Full Time Education and Training, the Environment Task Force, the Voluntary Sector or Follow Through.
- The driver of the bus acts as a counsellor and NDPAs make appointments for the next time the bus visits the nearest calling point to the young person's home. The client can therefore access a wide range of help from the information library as well as adviser services.

PROJECT DETAILS

'Two Wheels to Work': Heads of the Valley, Abergavenny and Caerphilly Unit of Delivery (HOVAC) and Bridgend & Newport Units of Delivery

Contact: Howard Reed (ES)

Telephone: 02920 424270

This project targets New Deal for Young People clients and New Deal for Long Term Unemployed clients and aims to overcome poor east-to-west transport links in the South Wales Valleys. Clients on either of the New Deal programmes can access a fully insured motor scooter for up to three months if they are assessed by their New Deal Personal Advisers to be eligible for the provision.

Bus Project: Dumfries and Galloway Pathfinder Adult Guidance Network and Dumfries and Galloway Unit of Delivery

Contact: Audrey McGee (ES)

Telephone: 01292 666460

The aim of this project is to overcome the transport difficulties experienced by rural communities in the Dumfries and Galloway area. The project aims to take the Employment Service and New Deal to the communities themselves. It involved the refurbishment of a bus with facilities such as a New Deal Personal Adviser, job vacancy details, material on training and education from further education colleges and health authority assistance on drug and alcohol related issues.

Strengthening pre-employment collaboration with employers

A number of projects aimed to stimulate employer involvement in New Deal and help them meet their recruitment needs. The approaches three of these projects tested included:

- ⦿ using a client liaison officer to work closely with local firms and match appropriate Environment Task Force (ETF) clients with employers' vacancies;
- ⦿ employing two business advisers who worked with small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), advising them on suitable training provision for New Deal clients and provided general business advice; and
- ⦿ using the employer subsidy to help New Deal clients become job ready through appropriate training before starting work.

Key benefits

- ⦿ Projects provide continuing support as long as necessary to clients once they are placed in a job.
- ⦿ The establishment of strong links with employers is seen as an important element in helping clients back into work. These links also generate fuller information on forthcoming vacancies.
- ⦿ One of the projects offers the screening, selection and putting forward of suitable job-ready clients to employers. This service has been well received, as employers consider the process to be particularly time consuming.
- ⦿ Additional training and support is offered, including advice on nutrition, how to open a bank account or set up a direct debit, as well as providing information on jobsearch activities.
- ⦿ Project staff's knowledge of locally-available training courses was particularly valuable to SMEs.
- ⦿ Employers welcomed the construction of personal training plans for New Deal recruits by the project advisers.

Features of success

- ⦿ Independent business advice is given to help small businesses recognise the value of introducing a New Deal jobseeker into their organisation.

The role of the business adviser covers:

- undertaking a ‘needs analysis’ with/for the employer;
 - generating a job description or role definition and effective action plan; and
 - investigating the availability of Training Providers and customising the training to match particular client needs where necessary.
- ⦿ The business adviser works closely with other partners to research other ongoing activities, so that businesses could be made aware of them and avoid potential conflicts.
 - ⦿ One project employs a liaison officer to approach and work with local firms to identify suitable vacancies and match ETF clients to them. The project offers continuing support once clients are placed into jobs.
 - ⦿ The type of service offered by an effective intermediary is important. It must be relevant to the local labour market and the intermediary must enjoy credibility with employers.
 - ⦿ Key selling points to an employer are that there is no additional charge for the service and that the adviser has good first-hand knowledge of the clients and extensive local business knowledge.

PROJECT DETAILS

Engaging Micro and Small Businesses: Suffolk and Waveney Unit of Delivery

Contact: Annette Pottinger
Telephone: 01502 403286

This project aims to encourage the involvement of SME employers in New Deal. The project has employed two business advisers who visit local small employers to market the New Deal to them and to encourage them to recruit New Deal clients when vacancies arise. The business advisers also help to draw up training action plans for New Deal recruits that employers have recently employed and provide advice on the availability of suitable training in the local area.

Client Liaison Officer Project: Wigan Unit of Delivery

Contact: Joanne Kenny
Telephone: 01942 752181

The project attempts to encourage employer participation in the ETF New Deal option. A client liaison officer works closely with local employers, identifies their vacancy needs and matches appropriate ETF clients to the employers' vacancies. The project also provides support for clients once they become employed and helps clients overcome any difficulties they encounter.

Tayside and CWG Training: Tayside Unit of Delivery

Contact: Audrey McCabe
Telephone: 01382 373093

This project makes use of the employer subsidy to address the motivational problems characterising some of those eligible for both New Deal for Young People and New Deal for Long Term Unemployed. Personal advisers and Gateway providers refer clients to the project CWG Training then prepare participants for work and arrange company visits, work experience, work trials and shadowing.

Improving the employment focus of the Full Time Education and Training option

Several Innovation Fund projects aimed to improve the employment focus of the Full Time Education and Training (FTET) option. A consortium of five colleges applied a ‘Jobs First’ approach that included:

- employing an adviser to work closely with employers and the college to arrange suitable work placements for clients on the FTET option; and
- introducing a ‘buddies’ system where clients are placed with a mentor whose role is to provide personal support to the New Deal client throughout their college life and into employment.

PROJECT DETAILS

‘Jobs First’ Project: Knowsley College

Contact: Michael Ratcliffe

Telephone: 020 7840 5334

The project aims to increase the retention of New Deal clients accessing the FTET provision and to improve job outcomes. An induction programme has been created for clients to have a ‘taster’ of the provision available and ensure the course is suitable for them. The project also features an enhanced range of jobsearch materials and supports clients during the application and interview stages of finding work.

‘Jobs First’ Project:

Lewisham College

Contact: Michael Ratcliffe

Telephone: 020 7840 5334

This project pilots employability certificates based on local employer needs. It seeks to improve the soft skills of FTET participants by awarding the certificates which include data on the individual’s punctuality, attendance patterns, communication skills, teamwork and self presentation measured against six grades.

Key benefits

- Employing an adviser whose specific role is to liaise with the college and employers to arrange work placements ensures that these placements are closely matched to clients’ skills.
- The ‘buddy’ system helps clients adjust to the college environment, thereby improving retention levels on courses and increasing the number of qualifications gained and job outcomes.
- The extent to which projects are able to provide intensive support is vital to clients’ success on the FTET option, because college attendance may represent the turning point in an individual’s life. Matching clients with young ‘buddies’ is proving effective because they are able to empathise with participants.
- Clients are attending courses on confidence building, communication skills and problem solving in addition to their chosen course because the lack of these skills is often a barrier to employment.
- The introduction of a work placement programme is creating good links with local employers and has developed colleges’ knowledge of local employer needs. As a result of these close links, companies now notify colleges of vacancies.

Features of success

- The main focus throughout the buddy scheme is on preparing and supporting clients into work. At the appropriate time for each individual, staff match them to realistic vacancies and act as an advocate of the client's skills and abilities to the employer.
- Projects provide induction/assessment programmes and, in some instances, a number of 'taster' days to allow time for students to understand fully and decide if the FTET and the chosen course are right for them.
- The most successful projects are characterised by the ability of providers to encourage clients to view FTET as a means of finding and keeping a job. Positive results come from those projects which identify the employment goals and aspirations of clients at an early stage and work steadily towards them.
- Successful projects have been able to provide customised, one-to-one support, motivating clients and building long-term relationships that support them into and during employment.
- Initiatives such as an 'Employability Skills Certificate' and a 'Passport' are used to record client information such as skills, career history, references, CVs and any qualifications.
- A 'Go to work' programme was created to include visits to firms, work sampling, shadowing, work-based projects and structured work placements.
- A human resource consultant was employed who focused support on confidence building, attitude, experience, qualifications, appearance, communication skills, self expectation and problem solving.

PROJECT DETAILS

'Jobs First' Project: Blackpool and Fylde College

**Contact: Michael Ratcliffe
Telephone: 020 7840 5334**

This project uses a 'buddy' system whose aim is to increase retention on the course by pairing students with a mentor. The buddy supports the student in the college environment, helps them with jobsearch activities and offers post-employment support.

'Jobs First' Project: West Cheshire College

**Contact: Michael Ratcliffe
Telephone: 020 7840 5334**

This project provides an enhanced jobsearch and work placement facility to FTET clients. A work placement adviser identifies the skills of clients and then matches these to appropriate work placements. The adviser also provides in-work support to those who have moved into jobs. Jobsearch training is provided to all clients as part of the programme and the adviser positively markets the skills of clients to employers with vacancies.

'Jobs First' Project: Colchester Institute

**Contact: Michael Ratcliffe
Telephone: 020 7840 5334**

This project involves a rigorous induction assessment to ensure that clients are placed on the correct New Deal option and course. Jobsearch is reviewed by an FTET adviser who can provide advice and support to clients. Good working partnerships with employers has meant that companies often inform the college of vacancies, thereby enabling the FTET adviser to help clients market themselves positively to employers in their search for work.

Encouraging clients to consider growing sectors of employment

A number of the Innovation Fund projects seek to raise the awareness of New Deal clients to the emerging job opportunities in the local retail, hospitality, tourism and childcare sectors. Two of these projects included:

- ⦿ using a multi-media CD-ROM package to promote training and job opportunities in the hospitality and leisure industry; and
- ⦿ using New Deal to recruit 'School Learning Assistants'.

Key benefits

- ⦿ Partnerships with local employers mean that projects have gained detailed knowledge of the job-specific skills required by local employers and have been able to focus provision accordingly.
- ⦿ The use of IT-based information on specific industry sectors means that these facilities are accessible to clients in rural communities and wherever clients have access to a computer with a CD-ROM.
- ⦿ For the school learning assistant project, close matching of the client's skills and the needs of the school has resulted in a relatively high number of trained classroom assistants entering employment. Retention rates have also improved.

Features of success

- ⦿ Workshops introduced the 'Springteractive' CD-ROM package to Gateway providers, Personal Advisers, and community organisations. They were trained in the use of the IT package; this enabled them to use the available laptop PCs effectively and helped them generate confidence and enthusiasm in their clients.
- ⦿ Clients are then encouraged to undertake the relevant training through the FTET option.
- ⦿ The package includes interactive information on job vacancies, shows sample CVs, and provides a matching facility against key criteria to indicate client suitability. The project compiled a list of training agents nationwide to support clients who need particular qualifications for tourism and hospitality vacancies.

- The CD can be loaded onto laptops and taken out into the communities or loaned to employers to encourage recruitment. The CD isn't area specific and can be used anywhere.
- Community groups are the greatest users of the 'Springteractive' package. Three local Gateway providers use it on a permanent basis and at least one college uses it on their Travel and Tourism course.
- A model recruitment and training package was developed for New Deal 18–24 and 25+ clients taking up subsidised employment as School Learning Assistants. Taster programmes, information and advice are tools used to encourage clients to consider a career in this area of work
- Local schools were marketed to attract the interest of head teachers. Support is given to participating schools with co-ordinated induction, training and support for jobseekers.
- The high quality of recruitment and training provided means that Learning Assistants have been able to support art, craft and drama activities, and have been used positively within the school environment.

PROJECT DETAILS

Cardiff Unit of Delivery/(Flintshire & Wrexham): Local Education Authority

**Contact: Rudolpho Barinowsky
Telephone: 029 2028 6484**

This project evaluates the potential of using New Deal to recruit learning assistants in schools. It also represents an opportunity to increase involvement of the public sector in New Deal. The project was originally suggested by the Welsh Office Minister Peter Hain in February 1999 and was made available through six local offices in the North East Wales Unit of Delivery.

**Dunbarton Unit of Delivery:
Dunbartonshire New Deal Strategic Partnership: Springteractive**

**Contact: Betty Law
Telephone: 01389 823410**

This project uses a CD-ROM multi-media IT package to inform and promote interest among New Deal clients training for and seeking work in the rapidly developing sectors of retail, hospitality and tourism.

Improving access to vocational training

Several Innovation Fund projects aimed to improve the quality and appropriateness of vocational training in the Employment option. Some provided additional support to employers in defining and accessing the training requirement while others enabled greater flexibilities as to when training could be taken. Three projects explored the following:

- improving flexibility in the training requirement by delaying the start of training until a suitable course was identified;
- employing a training adviser to help employers draw up Individual Training Plans (ITPs) and advise on funding; and
- creating a training budget by pooling the training grant allowance and negotiating the best possible value for money for New Deal trainees.

Key benefits

- The use of training brokers with detailed knowledge of local employers' needs and the services local training providers offer is a useful resource for employers, especially small and rural employers.
- Employers find it particularly useful that training plans can now begin some time after the New Deal recruit has been employed. This enables the recruit to develop knowledge of the company and understand how the training is appropriate to their work.
- The preparation of an ITP by the business adviser ensures that ITPs are tailored both to the needs of the New Deal recruit and the employer. It also improves the relevance of the qualifications that clients are working towards.

Key features

- Flexibilities are allowed which mean that the start of training can be delayed until suitable provision is available.
- The delayed start offers a solution to the difficulties experienced in a rural environment where the small flow of clients does not encourage 'roll on – roll off' provision, particularly within the local further education sector. It further ensures that an offer of employment is not withdrawn because training provision is not available within the specified time frame.
- The flexibilities meant that clients were not placed into inappropriate training simply to comply with the rules.
- The training budget project obtained the most appropriate training for a New Deal client without necessarily spending all of the £750 training allowance. This represented a considerable saving for the Employment Service. The budget was managed centrally by a third party which acted as a broker between employers and training providers. Having a central pool of funding greatly increased their bargaining power when purchasing training.
- The profile of the project was raised by the use of mailshots which targeted New Deal Personal Advisers and the project was featured in a local newsletter. A close working relationship between the Employment Service, Glasgow Access and the Scottish Enterprise also served to enhance the service the project offered to clients.

PROJECT DETAILS

**Yorks & North Yorks Unit
of Delivery: N Yorks TEC**

**Contact: Janet Taylor
Telephone: 01904 882041**

North Yorkshire ran two Innovation Fund projects. 'The Delayed Start' project dovetailed with 'The Training Advisory Service' project to offer a rounded service by helping employers and clients to access the most appropriate training available for their needs. The Business Advisory Service helped New Deal clients and gave help to employers drawing up ITPs as well as on funding issues.

**Glasgow Unit of Delivery:
Glasgow Development Agency:
Glasgow Access**

**Contact: Brian Fleming
Telephone: 0141 800 2221**

This project involves a partnership which includes Glasgow Access, which is the delivery agent and acts as an intermediary between employers and training providers relating to the £750 training grant. The grant is put into a central training budget and is used in a flexible responsive way to purchase value-for-money training for New Deal clients.

Improving the motivation and jobsearch of clients

Two projects focused attention on improving the motivation and jobsearch of clients and addressed this by:

- extending the availability of Jobseeker's Grant to help New Deal for Young People (NDYP) clients from New Deal options into employment; and
- offering a 'Recognition of Achievement' certificate which was designed to show significant improvements in a client's attitudes and skills.

Key benefits

- The extension Jobseeker's Grant payment enables clients to purchase necessary clothing for job interviews and work overalls that they would otherwise have struggled to finance.
- The Jobseeker's Grant provides clients with the capital to purchase necessary equipment to become self-employed.
- The award of a 'Recognition of Achievement' certificate helps to increase the self-esteem of recipients which can have a positive impact on their employment prospects.
- Some clients use the certificate to market themselves to employers.
- Employers welcome the achievement of the certificate by New Deal clients because it provides some indication of the conscientiousness and reliability of prospective employees.

Key features

- The project extends the availability of the grant to New Deal clients on options rather than confining the grant to those clients in Gateway or Follow Through.
- Clients wanting to apply for an extended Jobseeker's Grant payment contact their New Deal Personal Adviser (NDPA) who guides them through the criteria and payment issues involved. Each application is considered against the improved likelihood of the client moving into and sustaining work.

- Clients were encouraged to make a financial contribution to the cost of items sought. The way in which the funds were used varied greatly, from the purchase of a training course and associated equipment to an e-mail package to help a client start up a small business.
- Clients awarded Records of Achievement displayed increased confidence and sense of purpose. The criteria used for judging whether a client should be awarded the ‘Record of Achievement’ included:
 - significant personal development;
 - improved skills such as literacy and computer ability;
 - commitment to their placement over and above the New Deal requirement;
 - completion of the programme against the odds by clients who had led difficult lifestyles; and
 - clients who found employment.

PROJECT DETAILS

Bristol & South Gloucester Unit of Delivery

This project extends the availability of Jobseeker's Grant to help clients aged 18 to 24 to move from New Deal options into employment. Clients wishing to make use of this facility contact their adviser who matches their circumstances against the criteria to check if they are eligible for an award.

The award is used in a variety of ways to enhance the possibility of either becoming self employed or being able to access a job.

Crawley Unit of Delivery: Youth Clubs Essex

Contact: Gail Coshum

Telephone: 01737 755828

Non-funded bid to offer clients recognition for achieving unexpected goals and overcoming personal barriers. The project was about recognising New Deal clients who have significantly achieved whilst on the programme and acknowledge that achievement.

If you wish to find out more about any of the projects, please contact the Employment Service Innovation Fund Team. You should ask for Pina Wilkinson: Telephone 0114 259 5759, or Sue Bamford: Telephone 0114 259 5310.

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Serving People through Jobcentres