

REPORT TO WEST AREA PEOPLE BOARD
4th November 2014

West Community Work Clubs

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of its priorities for the year 2013 - 14, West Area People Board identified Job Prospects as a priority.
- 1.2 The People Board and Area Committee agreed the funding of community based Work Clubs to offer residents support to help them into sustainable employment.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The Community Work Club delivery commenced on January 20th 2014 and the locations and times of delivery were circulated to all members of Committee.
- 2.2 The work clubs continue to be marketed through the Jobcentre, social media and Intensive community engagement undertaken.
- 2.3 Since commencement from 20th January 2014:
 - 851 new clients have been registered for support
 - 177 client has secured employment
 - 129 clients have commenced training to support employment
 - 9 clients have set up their own business
- 2.4 As part of the original approval it was agreed to complete an on-going evaluation to assess the success of the work clubs and whether current delivery locations and times were fit for purpose. It was also agreed that lessons learnt would be shared with the DWP at regular intervals to ensure that the learning from the project was shared in a timely manner, to ensure maximum outputs achieved, in relation to service re-design and partner engagement, prior to the project closing in January 2015.
- 2.5 The VCS attended the West People Board in July 2014 to share their learning to-date in relation to Job Club delivery. An outcome of the meeting was to invite the DWP to attend the People Board in September.
- 2.5 The DWP attended the West People Board in September 2014, to hear from board members about how they felt the current learning from the Job Clubs could be used to influence service delivery and partnership working moving forward.

3. Ensuring Lessons Learnt – Partnership Working

- 3.1 As a consequence, Fiona Brown, Head of Transactional Services from within the Council, Berni Topham, Partnership Manager from DWP and Helen Peverley, West Area Co-ordinator met several times and also visited the Job Clubs being held at Pallion Action Group.

3.2 It was clear from the visit and discussion with the VCS, alongside robust evidence / data gathered from users of the Job Clubs, that referrals were currently inappropriate to the VCS. Pathways were not being followed and that immediate action was required to ensure that pathways were followed and that communication between the DWP and the VCS was improved to enhance partnership working and adopt the All Together Sunderland approach.

3.3 The following actions have therefore been taken, with immediate effect:

- Direct contact details shared between VCS and DWP
- DWP Staff to be trained to ensure that customers are referred onto the correct support pathway and that advice offered is correct at initial point of contact
- VCS to report to the DWP if incorrect referrals continue to be received (City-wide, B Topham contact details shared with all Area Co-ordinators)
- Benefit Adviser from Sunderland Council to attend the Work Clubs held at Pallion Action Group on a Monday and Thursday, on alternate weeks for a month to ensure referrals are correct and continue to witness potential issues and re-signpost accordingly
- Community Job Clubs to review their current caseload to transition incorrect referrals
- West Area Co-ordinator to meet regularly with the Community Work Clubs to share lessons learnt during delivery of actions noted within 3.3, particularly in relation to re-direction of 'wrong' referrals to ensure that pathways are used correctly
- Correct pathways to be placed within a diagram (to be produced by B Topham) and shared with the VCS, Members and Officers to aid improved and longer term communication/joint working

4. Empowering Volunteers to continue the support – Moving Forward from the Community Work clubs

4.1 To ensure that our communities continue to be supported in relation to seeking employment, the VCS organisations delivering the Community Work clubs could design and deliver a fully comprehensive training package that they could offer to a minimum of 15 venues in the west area of the City. These would include venues that have electronic village halls or any type of computer access where clients can complete job searches.

4.2 Each venue would have the opportunity to up-skill existing workers and volunteers on the basic knowledge that clients need to set up a Universal job match account including setting up emails, creating accounts and basic CV support.

4.3 All training would be accompanied by a comprehensive pack that will include the tools and support to ensure on-going learning for volunteers and staff of each venue including direct contact details for signposting including National Careers Service, Shaw Trust and Job Centre Plus.

- 4.4 Staff would be available to offer on-going support and arrange regular visits to venues to ensure any issues are quickly addressed.
- 4.5 Organisations equipped with this knowledge would then be able to independently seek external funding to support their services if desired.
- 4.6 The cost for this additional training and support including the comprehensive information packs, which would be retained by each venue would be £300 per venue. Therefore potential funding required is £300 x 15 venues = £4,500. To support this proposed outcome the lead agent would need to submit a change of use form to Area Committee to request an additional £4500 to the Community Work Clubs SIB project

5. West Intensive Recruitment Employment Support (WIRES) – Moving Forward from the Community Work clubs

- 5.1 The Community Work Clubs have been approached by local employers who wish to work with the Community Job Clubs to develop a programme of Intensive Recruitment Support for the West of the city.
- 5.2 To move forward immediately, to take advantage of this partnership, the Community Work Clubs would like to develop and manage a West Intensive Recruitment Employment Support (WIRES) programme, to run for one year throughout 2015, working in partnership with leading employers in Sunderland to directly refer those most near the labour market for vacancies.
- 5.3 The Community Work Clubs would deliver two-week intensive pre-employment workshops covering interview skills, aptitude tests, group work, CV's and literacy & numeracy skills as well as basic health and safety, to all the Community Work Clubs clients in the West Area of the City.
- 5.4 The Community Work Clubs would utilise a filter system, developed by working in partnership with employers, whereby the employers explain exactly what they are looking for from new employees and the Community Work Clubs can then work with the clients to ensure they are fully prepared for interview including training, CV development, raising aspirations and understanding the employers policies, procedures and basic expectations. If successful at interview a paid two week training period would be offered by the Employers, which may lead to sustainable employment.
- 5.5 The cost for this programme, which would be delivered by the current Community Work Club providers, for 12 months from January through to the end of December 2015, would be as follows:

Workshop Delivery would be 12 workshops in total throughout the year, delivered from the venues currently offering Community Work Clubs, by facilitators from Pallion Action Group.

Training: £2,000 however all provision would initially look to utilise activity which is already available such as FACL. Therefore cost would only be associated with anything additional and bespoke

Room Hire: Free, utilise current Community Work Club venues

Transport: £3,000 (12 workshops x 10 clients x £25 two-week travel allowance)

Staff: £23,997 one full-time member of staff including on-costs to deliver 12, two-week workshops throughout 2015

Administration Costs: £2,600 (£217 x 12 months)

Resource Packs: £2400 (120 clients x £20 per pack) for Clients to retain and present as part of their interview with Employers. £240 contribution from SIB, with remaining £2,160 in-kind.

Total cost: £31,837

6. Recommendations

6.1 Note the content of the report.

6.2 Consider and agree a recommendation for Area Committee in relation to:

- a) Empowerment and Training for Volunteers who will continue to support those residents with complex needs across the West.
- b) Extension to the Community Work Clubs - West Intensive Recruitment Employment Support (WIRES)