

# Pilot ready to fly

Sunderland City Council's Northern Way Worklessness Pilot is about to commence its 12 month delivery phase, as the new project **makeitwork - The Sunderland Way**.

Following the initial set up and consultation phase, the Pilot will begin in August 2007 to provide funding to a range of new engagement and delivery partners, who have been recognised as critical to our client's journey into employment, from 'earliest start (ie motivation to want to return to work) to 'latest finish' (sustained employment).

The Northern Way project will build on the strengths which currently exist in Sunderland's employment support partnership - The Sunderland Way. The project aims to:

- 'Initiate new client engagement channels & service offers that motivate the hard to reach groups to engage with and commit to the idea of returning to work'.
- 'Challenge support organisations to reconfigure service offers by sharpening focus on stabilising and building the capacity of hard to place clients'.
- 'Enhance employer engagement to improve take up of hard to fill vacancies and placement of hard to reach clients'.

## So far...

280

...clients, agents & employers attended the workshop events to contribute their ideas for improving employment opportunities.

43

...project proposals were created during the workshop events having been filtered down from hundreds of initial ideas.

112

...people attended the employers event to learn more about the pilot and tell us about their recruitment needs.

## Project timeline

### The Feasibility Project

A project using service design methods to understand how the journey towards and into the labour market could be improved for long term 'inactive' clients.



### The Workshop Events

Six events took place that set out to address the problem of how to improve employment opportunities for those facing various forms of disadvantage.



### The Employers Event

This informal event provided the opportunity for employers to be informed about the aims of the pilot project & voice their specific recruitment needs.



### The Pilot Project

The pilot project is due to commence in August 2007 with 125 organisations invited to tender for its delivery.

**Moving Forward:  
The Northern Way**

# Understanding Requirements

43 project proposals were generated during the Improving Employment Opportunities Event Workshops and a selection will soon be contracted out to specialist agencies who contributed to their creation. A sample of these proposals can be seen below:

## One-Stop Shop

"This is a one-stop shop proposal where staff will support and advertise vacancies across Sunderland. Staff will also monitor and review take up and will provide a brokerage service. Training will be provided to the private sector. Job carving and job coaching will be funded by a range of agencies."

## 'Can do' circle of support

"Develop circles of support built on a negotiated action plan (potential ability) to focus on a positive identity. This relies on Care practitioners capacity to look beyond stability of condition and practitioners capacity to take appropriate consideration of care dimensions."

## Hardest to reach clients

"This project would aim to: identify and engage with hardest to reach economically inactive people; identify opportunities for active participation in the community; ensure stability for progression. This project would require a coordinator as well as activity support officers. There will be a database and brochures of case studies and opportunities in the local area and outcomes will be measured by keeping in touch with clients."

# Key contacts

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# Way Forward

Partnership participation is the key to this project's success and this has been demonstrated by the meticulously planned Improving Opportunities events, which effectively engaged with the key players in the six disadvantaged sub-groups.

Contracting out of this specialist provision will commence in August with expressions of interest already being shown by over 100 organisations.

Sunderland City Council see their role as both co-ordinator and service facilitator thereby understanding the needs of all parties, namely: employers, job seekers, and service delivery organisations.

In essence engaging with employers to ensure that recruitment services for 'inactive clients' better meets everyone's requirements.

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*"Together we aim to work to develop a framework that meets both the recruitment objectives of Northern Rock, the ambitions and goals of the initiative and the employment/career aspirations of clients in the North East of England."*

**Simon Woodley - Northern Rock PLC.**

*"Those aged 50+ who want to work face an uphill task in the job market and this pilot is vital to find new ways to support this growing section of citizens to enable them to improve their quality of life. Their skills and experience must be utilised to benefit employers."*

**Alan Patchett - Age Concern**

*"The approach outlined in this review document is both inventive and creative, drawing on good practice and case studies from across the region to support those on inactive benefits move towards sustainable employment."*

**Shona Harper - Contact Centre Professional Ltd.**

