

TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

by Examining, Testing and Improving Service Quality

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1. Introduction

This study examines TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION (TSE) project, a cross border cooperation project funded by 2 Seas programme of the European Union. The TSE project's main aim is to provide three local public authorities in the cross-border area with the means to examine test and improve social inclusion. These public authorities are Southampton City Council (UK) - leading project partner, Gent (BE) and Rotterdam (NL) - project partners.

This study looks particularly at Southampton's activities and evaluates their progress and outcomes. The report will broadly look at overall collaboration of the three cities. The aim of this evaluation is not only to assess the project's activities, but also to draw constructive recommendations for each local activity and for the TSE project in general. Value for money is not considered in this study.

The research uses an evaluative case study approach. Qualitative research tools such as documentation analysis, in depth interviews or observation were used.

The report is divided into sections: first the structure of the TSE project is briefly described. This is followed by analysis of the project's three main activities. The main attention is paid to Activity 3 - all Southampton's interventions are described and evaluated. The report summarises lessons learned and recommendations for each local intervention.

2. Structure of the TSE project

The main aim of the TSE project is to: "Provide three local public authorities in the cross-border area with the means to examine test and improve social inclusion". The main aim is enhanced by three sub aims:

- look at the most important factors in social inclusion,
- bring together professionals who work to combat social exclusion
- test innovative methods of improving the position of those people who suffer from exclusion in our communities and neighbourhoods .

The project has three partners – Southampton (UK), Gent (BE) and Rotterdam (NL) and it consists of three activities:

- Activity 1: Strategic Management and Direction, Partnership and Structures
- Activity 2: Themes, Theories and Approaches – critical factor in social inclusion
- Activity 3: Local intervention and Peer Review

Additional activities are: Project management, Communication and Financial management.

Southampton's & Rotterdam's main focus was to pilot projects that provide training and employment opportunities for people identified as most disadvantaged. Gent was focussing on challenges related to accessibility.

The study was based in Southampton and focuses on Southampton's activities; therefore in the next sections Southampton's experience will be described.

3. TSE project Activity 1 and 2 – Southampton's perspective

Activity 1:

Strategic Management and Direction, Partnership and Structures – this activity comprises of the exchange of expertise between the three cities in the fields of Strategic Management & Direction; Partnership & Structures. Practically this means meetings and study visits hosted by each city with an aim to examine and appraise ways of working.

The main aim of Activity 1 was to collate, compare and contrast the partnership arrangements in each city and country that facilitates the strategic management and direction for their respective cities.

Southampton was chairing this activity and took the responsibility for the work of the group, the collection of different strategies from each of the other partner cities, producing comparative analysis and the final project report.

Activity 2:

Themes, Theories and Approaches – Critical Factors in Social inclusion – this group examined policies and approaches in the partner cities with the aim of looking at these from a practitioner perspective.

The aim of this activity was to collate, compare and contrast the policy and policy frameworks in each city and country that facilitate the social inclusion of those groups who are most disadvantaged in their respective cities.

This activity was led by Rotterdam. Southampton's role was to contribute to this activity through the delivery of seminars, workshops for practitioners, policy makers and actors on the themes and topics identified by Rotterdam.

This report looks at Activity 1 and 2 from the perspective of Southampton's local intervention practitioners and asks if they took part in those activities, what is their impression and if the activities were somehow beneficial for them.

Research tools

Interviews and other data from Southampton's local interventions

Findings

Southampton has developed 7 local interventions under the TSE project funding. These will be analysed later on. Below is described how Action 1 and 2 of the TSE project contributed to Southampton's local interventions.

Catering Training Programme

Some team members took part in these activities. During their visits in Rotterdam they saw some projects which were inspirational.

The first interesting observation was a café work environment in Rotterdam, where ex-offenders were trained for catering jobs. The café provided drinks and simple food. This project was in some ways similar to the Catering Training Programme, therefore it was beneficial to see how it worked in Rotterdam. Also it confirmed the thought that keeping the training environment simple is actually better for people to learn new skills.

Another interesting learning was from workshop for people with learning disabilities in Rotterdam. Southampton is now thinking to create something similar but on smaller scale.

Higher Support Needs

This project did not use any feedback or inspiration from Rotterdam or Gent, because they are not doing anything comparable.

Care Leavers

The reason why the Care Leavers project was developed was not only because of unemployment situation within the city and across the country, but also because of Rotterdam's project which was trying to encourage young people into health and care centre, that helped to focus Southampton's attention to meet some needs around the young people in Southampton.

Tackling Worklessness in Areas of Social Housing in Southampton

The team found it useful to see other projects in other cities. For example the way how job centre works in Gent was observed and the experience was presented to Southampton's job centre. Also the peer reviews and feedback from other cities influenced actions of the project (e.g. the idea to place an open bus in the areas of high Worklessness, and offer services from the bus – might be used in the future).

Exodus Project Supporting Young Offenders

This project team did not take part in Activity 1 and 2.

Promotional material

This activity did not use any feedback or inspiration from Rotterdam or Gent, because they didn't see any project that works with people with severe learning disabilities.

Service improvements – City Limits Employment

Not applicable.

Lessons learned

The main lesson learned is that it might be conducive to see what other cities do. The visits should be well planned so that teams get to see projects that are similar to their field of interest.

Another finding is that teams involved in the work of activity 3 (local activities in Southampton) did not distinguish between Activity 1 and 2. For them it was one way of learning.

4. The TSE project Activity 3 – Southampton's Local Activities

Activity 3: Local intervention and Peer Review – this activity comprises the work of those working on the 'front line' in improving service delivery for those groups who are facing social exclusion in the partner cities.

Activity 3 is the most extensive activity of the TSE project; also this study focuses mainly on Southampton's

The aim of this Activity is to pilot and test innovative local actions and interventions in each city and country that facilitate the social inclusion of those groups who are most disadvantaged in their respective cities.

Southampton City Council delivered test activities in the field of identifying new employment opportunities for disabled residents in previously untried employment sectors, and developing approaches to community engagement in isolated communities to improve their access to services that support their entry to the local labour market.

Under this activity, Southampton City Council developed seven projects:

Project 1: Catering Training Programme

Project 2: CAMPUS - Service for Groups with Higher Support Needs

Project 3: Tackling Worklessness for Young People Leaving Care in Southampton

Project 4: Tackling Worklessness in Areas of Social Housing in Southampton

Project 5: Supporting Young Offenders

Project 6: Client User Group and Promotional Materials

Project 7: Service improvements – City Limits Employment

The projects were executed by the City Limits Employment service, which is an in-house employment support service of Southampton City Council and Southampton City Council's Regeneration and Renewal Team.

4.1. Catering Training Programme

The main objective of this project was to provide training and work experience to individuals with severe and moderate learning disabilities (who are not suited to more traditional routes into employment) in a catering environment and so expand the opportunities open to disabled people in Southampton. The project aimed to join together a number of new and existing services and provide a step-by-step approach to training from the most basic to advanced.

Project Timescale

January 2009 – October 2011

Plan

- Development of a training kitchen at Rosebrook Court, and Freemantle Community Centre
- Development of training packages for Rosebrook and Freemantle and Stella Maris
- Development of a system for measuring achievement/accreditation
- Set a referral system between services
- Making and maintaining links with relevant employers
- Providing individually tailored support between and into services

Intended outcomes

- Implement accredited and bespoke training packages for all catering bases within the project.
- 10 people receiving employment training in a catering environment
- 8 people moving between services
- 10 people making measurable progress
- 2 people moving into open, paid employment or further training

Research design

1. Interview with representatives of the project
2. Interview with kitchen staff – Freemantle Community Centre chef
3. Observation of clients – in the Freemantle Community Centre
4. Documentation analysis – Progress sheet, List of clients and their progression

Findings

Kitchens

Kitchens in Rosebrook Court and Freemantle Community Centre (Calypso Café) were successfully developed.

Rosebrook Court

Rosebrook Court was developed first – before the TSE project started. It is a commercial kitchen which serves 23 flats rented by elderly people, they are provided two course lunch. City Limits runs and manages the catering outlet, and offers this environment to people with learning disabilities, to develop work skills, work ethics, increase of self-confidence, independence etc.

Calypso Café

Calypso Café was developed after Freemantle Community Centre opened in the beginning of 2010. Calypso Café works on similar principles as Rosebrook kitchen, but it is less intensive workplace on a smaller scale – preparing coffees, cakes, snacks and at lunchtime foods as jacket potatoes, sandwiches and one daily special.

The initial idea was to record clients' progression and move them from doing simple tasks to more difficult tasks and possibly from starting in Calypso to proceed to Rosebrook.

In the end the Calypso Café worked very well, but the Rosebrook Court kitchen has not proved overly successful and suitable for clients with severe disabilities. This is mainly because it is a commercial business type kitchen, and the chefs have not got enough time to devote to the trainees, because they have to get the meals out fast. The project had to re-evaluate its intentions and place mainly people with mild learning disabilities at the Rosebrook kitchen. The Rosebrook training environment has also proved expensive.

Chefs - staff

Staff were chosen through public vacancies. It has proved very important to employ the right person for this position, as it requires not only cooking and organisation skills, but also highly developed interpersonal skills and understanding of people with learning disabilities.

Both chefs (for Rosebrook kitchen and Calypso Café) received training and learned how to deal with people with learning disabilities. The training was sufficient, but the final output depended on chefs abilities.

Work progression

Chefs are supposed to supervise the trainees, but if someone new starts, the employment officer would go out for the first two or three weeks to assist and set up the progress goals and targets for that person to achieve. The clients receive

individual training. Their skills are assessed and they get to do a work where they can build on their skills.

Measuring achievement

A progress sheet has been developed. A City Limits staff member meets with the client and sets up all the goals and every two months looks at the progress that people have made in previous two month.

Employment and statistics

Contacts with employers are maintained through the employment office of City Limits. City Limits made contact with commercial employers as well as charitable. At the time of the project, the situation was difficult, because of the economic recession.

Overall there were 23 clients placed in either Rosebrook or Calypso. 6 of them trained in both kitchens, other clients were not ready to move to Rosebrook, 1 wanted to focus on direct customer contact. 7 clients dropped out during the training. 1 client got onto paid employment; 3 clients got a voluntary job. Others are in the process of looking for work or they are still in the training and it is too early to plan the next step.

It is important to bear in mind that some people might never be suitable to go onto paid work, but they still want to be involved in work type activities and have a positive impact upon society.

All clients have improved their interpersonal skills.

From the observation in Calypso Coffee

Clients look happy in their work place and have good relationship with the chef. The atmosphere is generally very positive. They help each other with work tasks. Usually there is someone with mild learning disability who can support the other workers with more severe learning disabilities.

Lessons learned and recommendations

Realistic timing and engaging the support workers

Because of the learning needs of clients, some processes have taken longer than expected – e.g. to get used to the environments and go through both stages of the programme and get used to routines of work.

Sometimes the support workers undervalued the client's abilities – the City Limits staff or the chef / trainers would have to explain how clients will be engaged in the catering environment and how it will work practically.

Training environment

It is easier to place a trainee in Calypso Cafe than in Rosebrook kitchen – in Calypso the tasks are easier, the rhythm of work is not as fast as in Rosebrook.

Therefore in the future it will be better to concentrate on Calypso style catering environment and not on Rosebrook style environment.

The kitchen at Calypso has been assessed for its ability to work on a commercial level. It is likely that the position of chef / trainer can be partially self-sustained by income to allow training activities to continue.

In the future, there could be the possibly to expand Calypso catering model to other places and promote the service to the public. (It is not possible to promote more to the public in its current setting, because Calypso Café is already working at near capacity)

Staff

The choice of staff (chefs) is very important, high attention should be paid to the recruitment processes, it should be more complex – not only interview. Rosebrook style environment would possibly need more chef / trainers in place.

4.2. CAMPUS - Service for Groups with Higher Support Needs

The project was developed in conjunction with local health care services. The project involved 33 clients with higher support needs (profound and multiple learning difficulties) who had recently moved from long term residential care into “supported housing”

The objective of this project was to provide settings for meaningful, work focussed activities primarily for the group of 33 clients, and subsequently for other City Limits clients with higher support needs. The project aimed to involve them in working and contributing to the local community and community based services.

Project Timescale

January 2009 – October 2011

Plan

- Establish areas of common interest (clients)
- Approach relevant employers/services/community organisations
- Develop appropriate meaningful work-related tasks
- Trial group
- Develop group if successful

Intended outcomes

- Set up a minimum of three work-focused activity groups
- Work with a minimum of ten individuals

- Develop action plans and assess the progression of ten individuals

Research design

1. Interview with the project representative
2. Observation – projects activity – the recycling group
3. Documentation analysis

Findings

Mission statement

“We will incorporate the O’Brien laws into the work or vocational activities, we are finding/creating and all work together as a team towards finding meaningful activities with purpose and goals for each individual client” (Campus overview, Jon Brooks)

Structure

Southampton's team worked with 33 clients. The aim was to develop employment and vocational type activities and improve social skills and self-confidence with an overall impact of improving the whole lifestyle of clients with higher support needs.

The team set up tasters and visits for clients and support workers to experience the possible activities. Creative approaches have been applied in order to transfer clients' skills into vocational activities. After the specific activity for individual client was developed, the support worker and the team member introduced the activity to clients and helped them to get used to the activity. After time the team member 'faded out' and the support worker carried on supporting the client to continue with the vocational activity.

Progress of all clients was documented in progress sheets.

Support organisations

The activity of support organisations (organisations which support people with higher support needs), was crucial to project's success. The project team personally approached organisations that take care of the 33 clients. Some of them were open to collaborate, but many of them were very negative. The team had to overcome many barriers before the organisations agreed to take part in the project (e.g. lack of interest, lack of believe that people with higher support needs can do a vocational activity).

Example of vocational activities

A number of vocational activities were developed:

Recycling group – this started with one client whose only activity he really liked to do was ripping labels off bottles and packages. Recycling was the way how to convert this into a vocational activity. The project found out that there are more

people who enjoyed tearing and throwing things and so a recycling group was set up. It recycles paper, plastic bottles and tins from a few places and the activity is very successful.

4 - 7 clients with their support assistant meet once per week and do the work. This provides an opportunity to use clients' skills but also to socialise. The team is thinking about moving the activity to another place (better accessibility for clients) and transforming this activity into a type of social enterprise.

One of the clients from the recycling group got a paid job – litter picking for 1 hour a week.

Golf course – there was a client who was a wheel chair user, but able to walk short distances, who liked to be outside and liked throwing things and playing with the ball. The team has arranged a vocational activity consisting from picking up the golf balls from a local golf course. Thanks to this the client is now engaged in a new activity and also socialises with people from the golf course.

Community Farm – there was a severely autistic client who loves animals and the team took the client to the community farm. First the client wasn't able to stay in the farm, but the team tried again and after a while the client got used to the environment started to like the some animals. The client extended vocabulary by few words and now, a year and half later, the client spends four and a half hours at the farm and actually mucks out, feeds the animals, pushes the wheel barrow and sits and takes coffee with other people from the farm.

Other activities for clients with higher support needs are: Tools For Self Reliance (a charity which refurbishes tools), Calypso café, Allotment (gardening environment).

Statistics

From the 33 people, 25 were engaged at some point of the project in a vocational activity. 24 voluntarily, 1 got a paid job. This exceeded the expectations. Some support staff continued the activity after the City Limits team faded out, others did not continue.

Lessons learned, recommendations

Initiation document

The activities carried out as part of this project were more narrow than the original project initiation document had intended. Project staff chose to focus upon only one stand of activity connected to Services for Groups with higher support needs – developing new activities in line with those leaving long-term residential care

Recycling group

There are about 7 clients involved in this group, usually about 4 clients attend per session, but if there is bad weather or other obstacles they may skip the session, often without explaining the reason (during the observation there was only one

client – probably because of bad weather conditions). This might be prevented by changing the location of the recycling group (closer to clients, better accessibility), or/and reminding clients about the session (for example to send a text message to the support worker one day before the session).

Services

The team reported to the appropriate authorities about problems they experienced with support agencies (lack of interest to do something extra for the client, not open to cooperate etc.). It is difficult to do something about it, but raising awareness is necessary.

If this activity was developed in the future, to make the activities sustainable, it would be preferable to firstly promote this service to support agencies and if they were interested they would refer people to the City Limits team. Arranged like this, it is more likely that support organisations and clients would be motivated to participate before the actual activity starts. Approaching the activities from the other way around, resulted in a number of people with learning disabilities receiving a service which they wouldn't receive if it is only up to their support agencies.

Dissemination event

The team is planning a dissemination event to invite all those who participated in the project. To give them certificate, provide pictures, socialise. Other service agencies and government authorities could be invited to this event so they can see the kind of service City Limits can offer. Like this new funds and clients might be allocated.

Important message

The importance of the project is in recognising that someone may have severe behaviour, autism, or severe mobility needs, but they can still contribute to the society and their own life and grow as individuals.

4.3. Tackling Worklessness for Young People Leaving Care in Southampton

The main objective of this project was to support young people who are about to leave care or have recently left care of the local authority. The support consisted of gaining employment for at least 6 months (original intention of the project was 12 months), supporting their entry to employment through integrated training and support and ensuring sustained employment for the young people at the end of the support programme.

Project Timescale

Set up phase - Autumn 2010

Delivery phase – March - October 2011

Plan

- To work together with Social services to identify relevant young care leavers and link this with Jobcentre Plus and the Future Jobs Fund programme to identify a placement or job
- To support individuals in line with the programme and their needs
- Utilise the expertise of voluntary and community organisations to provide additional advice, support and training as needed

Intended outcomes

- Employment prospects of these targeted young people are improved through the additional support, training and opportunity to take on a 12 month work placement.
- A model of support the local authority can put in place for other care leavers in the future
- To work with local community and voluntary organisations to demonstrate the support they can offer, and enable appropriate tailoring to meet the needs of this client group

Research design

1. Interview with representative of the project
2. Interview with a service provider – Wearsheaf Trust
3. Group interview with participants (3 care leavers) and 2 support workers
4. Documentation analysis

Findings

Structure of the project

Southampton City Council's Pathways Care Leavers team referred care leavers (age 18 – 24) to Wearsheaf Trust (charity working to promote social inclusion); Wearsheaf Trust organised a pre-employment programme and work placement option (Wearsheaf Trust acted as a delivery organisation for Future Job Fund and the implementation body for the care leavers target group). Most of the work placements were arranged with Groundwork Solent – a charity providing work experience and opportunities in parks and open spaces, gardening etc. One internship was administrative; care leavers were paid minimum wage + they got a bursary of £500, actual length of the internship was 6 months, 25 hours per week; the wage was paid by the Future Jobs Fund (governmental initiative). Clients received key worker support throughout the training and once a week they met

with their tutor from Wheatsheaf Trust to assess needs and look at possible future training.

Clients could receive additional support in form of financial help to access other courses – e.g. driving licence, security licence.

Statistics

In total there are around 170 care leavers in Southampton. Approximately 45% of these are not involved in employment, education or training.

30 care leavers were referred on to programme

6 worked on the programme

14 were disengaged – started but did not come back

4 did not start

3 are waiting to be assessed

Disengagement

Disengagement seems to be one of the biggest problems of this project. Clients are disengaging for various reasons – unable to commit, family issues, disinterest, homelessness.

Difficulties with getting care leavers onto the programme

The Pathway team referred 30 care leavers. This means that 46 were not reached.

Employment prospects

At this point, the first group of care leavers are finishing the programme. Together with Wheatsheaf Trust they work on their CVs and they will be applying for jobs and apprenticeships. Wheatsheaf Trust will support them in their job search activities and help to find other work placements.

From the interview with participants

Three care leavers were present, all of them were on a placement with Groundwork Solent, one of them wants to stay in similar work environment, others prefer a different type of work. They do appreciate this programme, because they feel that at the moment it is hard to get something else and because, it is a paid work and they get extra training. For some of them it is the first training they have received.

A model of support

The model of support which a local authority can put in place for other care leavers in the future is a future outcome (not developed yet). The model and approach could be used for wider groups, or by other organisations.

Beneficial connection

Connecting the Pathways team and the Wickets Trust teams is a beneficial step towards improving services for young care leavers.

Specifics

There was one new service added to the project - a counsellor was engaged in order to help clients with issues they were holding them back from the programme.

Lessons learned, recommendations

Longer set up phase, necessity of pre-employment programme, structure of the programme

- It is important to know how long it takes to set up systems, in current conditions there was not enough time. Planning and testing requires more time – for Wickets Trust as well as for the Pathways team.
- Wickets Trust's support workers found that solving individual problems took longer time than expected and that had an impact upon productive time spent with the individual person. Workers said that they would prefer more time to work with the person.
- Wickets Trust expected that the referred care leavers would be ready for work, which was not the case. It would be better to assess the person's work skills and plan a pre-employment programme for every client.

Realistic length of the internship

In the Initiation document the employment is planned for 12 months, in Project specification document is up to 10 months and in the reality the internship was for 6 months.

Being aware of a client's financial circumstances

If clients are in receipt of welfare benefits, the placement should be less than 16 hours per week so it doesn't influence their income.

Contacting and engaging the care leavers, find out why people are not engaging, help them with problems solving

- Approximately 46 care leavers were not reachable (problems with referring care leavers to Wickets Trust) – it would be good to work with Pathways team in order to map the reasons why they are not reachable and to think about possible ways of communication. Also it would be beneficial to strengthen the links with Job centre Plus as this is the only place where care leavers have to go if they don't have a job and are out of care.
- Social workers – Social workers seem to be an important communication tool between the project and care leavers, therefore it is crucial to strengthen

relationship between the project and social workers. They are also a good source of information. It would be good to talk with social workers, find out how they offer the service to their clients, and how clients react, why they are interested, why not.

- Care leavers are not engaging for various reasons, often it is because they have to deal with many issues, therefore it would help to know these issues and help with problem solving, where possible – also it would be useful to be in touch with the care leaver even before he/she leaves social care.
- A suggestion was made to organise a fun event with all care leavers from the target group (an informal event to gather care leavers, socialise and talk about their needs and wants)
- The possibility of getting additional training and certification (as for example a driving licence) works as an incentive for clients to go for the programme and finish it.

Variety of work for the care leavers

In general, the care leavers questioned were satisfied with the programme. They appreciate variety in work – they don't seem to enjoy repetitive tasks (for example weeding).

Improve communication between services

Inform all services with a similar target group about this project, create a poster or leaflet for them and keep reminding them that if someone from the target group comes to visit them, they should refer them to the project.

Terminology

Wheatsheaf Trust raised the question “Who is a care leaver?” it is necessary to specify age range, how long in care the person has to be, how old the person should be etc.

4.4. Tackling Worklessness in Areas of Social Housing in Southampton

The objective of this project was to engage with residents in areas with high levels of worklessness and to identify issues and concerns they may be facing, particularly around fuel poverty, debt and health issues that may be acting as a barrier to re-entering the job market. The project wanted to enable residents to access services that address their current needs and to deliver innovative confidence building or personal development activities that build residents' self-esteem and encourage them to take the first step back to the labour market.

Project Timescale

Millbrook interventions – October 2008 – July 2009

Harefield interventions – October 2009 – July 2010

Plan

- Initial engagement in the community
- Liase with registered social landlords in same area
- Work in partnership with support services to deliver advice and support to target groups
- Develop and deliver interventions and training
- Enable residents to access mainstream training and employment support
- To test and pilot models of Worklessness support in a very small geographic area

Intended outcomes

- To develop and test a new and innovative approach to tackling worklessness and related issues in a very small and focused geographic areas
- To help residents with a variety of poverty related issues, and, where applicable, support them into learning, training and employment
- To increase residents' access to local support services
- To encourage workless residents to begin the journey back to the labour market
- Increase individuals' ability and knowledge to overcome their problems and be able to return to work

Research design

1. Interview with representative of the project
2. Interview with a local service provider – Sure Start in Millbrook and Harefield
3. Documentation analysis
4. Case studies

Findings

Settings

Two areas in Southampton were targeted – Millbrook tower block and Harefield. These two areas were chosen because of their high unemployment numbers and because these areas did not receive many specifically targeted interventions in the past. Millbrook and Harefield are also identified as two of the areas in Southampton with the highest levels of 'worklessness' (Southampton City Council / SITES Workless analysis research carried out by the University of Portsmouth)

Millbrook has good number of services in the area, good links to the city centre and has had a regeneration programme in the past. Harefield is more isolated, has

very few locally based services in the area and did not have a regeneration programme in the past.

Approach

Both areas were approached personally by the project team. In Millbrook the team set up a table by the entrance of the tower block building. In Harefield the area is more geographically spread out and so the team contacted people by knocking on their doors and standing at the school gates and talking to parents.

It was easier to engage with residents from Millbrook than from Harefield. It is because in Millbrook the team was based all the time on one place, therefore people got used being approached; also people in Millbrook are more used to engaging with services. In Harefield it took longer, because residents had fewer interventions in the past. In the end people were responsive in both areas and the team made contact with 83% of residents in Millbrook and 89% of residents in Harefield.

Services

The project was not only trying to improve access to local services for residents, but also to look at how to improve services in the longer term. For example changing the way services interact with people.

The team built partnerships with number of service providers. For example: dental health (dental health services came to talk to people about teeth hygiene); Sure Start (service for children under 5 years, close cooperation with the project, not only child care, but also providing courses for parents); health trainers (talk to people about healthy eating and exercise); and Quitters (helping people to give up smoking).

People needed support to access the services – the team arranged appointments, sometimes went with them, or contacted the service and asked if the clients turned up for the appointment (in case they didn't, the team contacted the client and asked what happened).

The team had to find out which services are helpful and which are rather unhelpful. Charities were generally very helpful, but they often had too strict criteria about who they will deal with – the person has to have the right age, access to the appropriate welfare benefits, their children have to be the right age etc. Many organisations also send letters to the households, but the message stays undelivered, because in general people in the areas are less responsive to letters and there are sometimes problems with literacy.

The team found that text messages are a good way of communication with the residents.

Employment

In terms of employment initiatives, the aims of the project slightly changed. The project never aimed to get a lot of people into the employment, but originally there was the aim to encourage workless residents to begin the journey back to the labour market. In the end the project focused more on the issues holding people back from looking for a job rather than on searching for work. The project for example set up various courses for people to learn new skills which they can use in the future.

The team was not asking the residents directly about their work situation. Those who informed the team about work issues were directed to an employment advisor. With Millbrook it was easier, because there were employment advisors in the area. In Harefield there was no employment advisor nearby - people have to go to the city centre. For many people is difficult to meet criteria of employment agencies. Another problem was that the project was running in the time of economic recession.

Issues which usually stop people from finding work were: health issues (many people with disabilities), no child care (or not able to afford child care), no computer access, difficulties with transport to the city centre or low job search skills.

For some people it wasn't cost effective to work – losing their entitlement to welfare benefits.

The team talked to employment advisors. One problem for advisors is that they often rely on people going to them (they are not able to provide outreach) plus people often had issues around welfare benefits or housing, which the advisors didn't have the knowledge or the capacity to deal with.

Money issues

Money issues were mostly around managing the electricity and gas expenditures, people needed advice relating to debt, welfare benefits, housing and the cost of fuel and food.

Courses, learning, work experience

Courses were based on people's wants and needs. In Millbrook the project arranged confidence building courses, a healthy eating course, an English and maths course and a job and training course. In Harefield the project provided a photography course, confidence building courses, dyslexia assessments and specific courses for people with dyslexia (this course was especially successful, therefore later on a course for people with literacy difficulties and dyslexia was set up).

The team helped some people to get back into learning at school or college.

The team also organised work experience for some residents.

Social landlords

The Harefield area is mainly owner occupier or council owned housing, but the project occasionally worked with Hyde Martlet Housing Association when doing door knocking.

The housing associations Swaythling Housing Society and Western Challenge jointly paid for a full time worker to work in other parts of Southampton (Millbrook and Lordshill) doing similar work as the project team did. They are still doing this work now (1.5 years later), and hope to continue this until at least the end of the financial year and maybe longer. The worker is usually accompanied by other colleagues from one of the two housing associations.

Use of information

Pilot study was developed.

It is difficult to expand this project to all areas with high level of worklessness in Southampton, because it is very resource intensive. But the team promotes the lessons learned (presentations and update to a variety of people and organisations) and tries to mainstream the information (i.e. change the way services do things so that they better cater for 'hard to reach' people).

Lessons learned, recommendations

Communication

Try to promote the idea of writing shorter and better understandable letters to people. Try to promote new approaches of communication, as the text messages.

Sustainability

- It is financially demanding to devote so much time into this kind of work. Therefore it is important to use the project as a valuable source of information which can be used in the future.

- Residents need continuous encouraging to visit the services and to take action. In Harefield, the Sure Start service is still in peoples mind – as a result of the project, Sure Start experienced increased number of clients, but because of the distance from the residents area, they think the numbers will decrease. In Harefield it is important to bring services closer to residents' homes. Sure Start Millbrook experienced more clients during the time when project team was in the area. Then the numbers slowly decreased.

- One way of sustaining the activity is to educate and employ local people to do local work. For example to teach someone from the community and then employ the person as for example a job advisor (this is already planned for a "work club" in Harefield). Other similar jobs could be child-minders or money issues adviser.

- Another way of improving the situation is to distribute a list of good services in the area. It might also be helpful to keep publishing articles with information about money related issues.

Knowing the area before arrival

The team didn't know all the advice organisations before arriving in the area, therefore their advice and information at the beginning was limited. Research should precede the action.

Engaging people

In terms of employment and training courses, or any other course for the future it is important to remember that people don't like going to buildings they don't know. It is important to encourage people to come in, be able to approach people who are walking past, or to possibly organise the event outdoors.

Also if new service is added it helps if it's organised close to an existing service, where people are used to going (for example, an internet cafe in a local school).

4.5. Exodus Project Supporting Young Offenders

The project aims to provide innovative solutions to the increase the employment of short term sentenced young offenders. The project addresses prisoners' social and learning needs and assists them to find employment and training opportunities. It plans to look at a new way of integrated working with the main support organisations involved in a client's support. These may include an Integrated Offender Manager (a non-compulsory support and advice scheme for offenders), prisons, young offenders institutions (YOIs), the Job Centre and associated programmes.

The project provides person centred, individually tailored support with training, work experience, voluntary work and employment. The project believes that re-offending will be reduced through increased employability.

Criteria for clients: aged 18 – 24, served less than a 12 month prison sentence, released within the last 12 months, living in Southampton. There are no similar services offered to this target group. This group is known to struggle with qualifications, training and 70% of that age group released from custody reoffend within 1 year of release. The highest re-offending rates remain those for short term prisoners who receive the least help with resettlement.

Project Timescale

Pilot phase - July 2011 – October 2011

November 2011 – April 2012 funded by Southampton City Council.

Plan

- To build strong links with the Job Centre, IOM and prisons/YOIs
- Advertise the service to Job Centre, prisons/YOIs and Probation (leaflets, posters, personal visits)
- Create a flow diagram to show the different support routes for this client group - to be used by all organisations to make a more seamless service
- Implement an effective referral system
- Hold regular one to one meetings with clients to look at employment and training needs
- Assist with job searching for paid and voluntary work, e.g. updating CVs, completing application forms, working on interview skills, advice on disclosure
- Research training opportunities for clients and assist them in accessing courses
- Thorough signposting to other services who can provide support with welfare benefits, debt, counselling, housing, mental health issues or alcohol and drug misuse problems.

Intended outcomes (by the end of the project – April 2012)

- 150 young offenders supported
- 50 individuals access training courses
- 25 individuals take part in work trials and voluntary placements
- 25 individuals gain paid employment

Research design

1. Interview with the project representative
2. Documentation analysis

Findings

Joining services, referrals

The project has been running since July 2011. During the pilot phase, the project approached number of services in the south of England, and through personal visits and promotional material, established cooperation between these services: Job Centre & associated programmes, Integrated offender managers, prisons, and young offending institutions.

Services working with offenders send a referral form to the project team and then they are allocated a project team member to work with. Most referrals came from visited prisons and Integrated Offender Managers. The project also trialled a new method of referral direct from the Job Centre (no forms) to make referrals easier

but this method did not work, which could have been due to internal communication in the Job Centre, where the manager and some staff are keen to cooperate, but not all workers are well informed about the project.

Personal referrals work the best (a friend recommendation), but the client group is very spread around, therefore it is difficult to achieve this.

Services offered by the project

In house service: The project supports clients to get into employment by: job searching – online, in the news etc., preparing application forms, helping with CVs, the project team also sends letters to prospective employers and tries to boost self-confidence of the clients. It also gives advice about disclosure of criminal convictions provides health and safety training (in case clients want to go to do construction work), and driving test theory courses.

The team signposts clients to other services (for support with welfare benefits, debt, counselling, housing, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse problems), the team not only gives the contact for the service, but actually helps the client to access them.

Other services: The project helps to access training courses – the team look for the course client is interested in, where the course takes place, how to enrol, what qualifications are necessary to enter, what equipment is necessary, how much it costs. The project also tries to find funding for the course – usually through charities, concessions, social care funding, the Job centre or Probation.

The project looks for organisations who can offer work experience, volunteering or apprenticeship (the team uses apprenticeship for first the time and it seems to be a good choice for clients within this age group).

The support for the client is tailor-made. A client can access all of the services offered - work experience + training course if they need to. Some clients only need part of the service. Work with a client is not time constrained.

Clients, statistics

At the time of this report (October 2011) the project has 35 clients enrolled, 5 people are involved in training (English, Maths, Construction, Retail), 2 people are already in paid employment (cleaner and production operative), 6 had interviews this month.

The project also feels the economic crisis – it reports that it is much more difficult to get clients into employment.

A comparison is possible; a similar project without age restrictions ran in 2010. The project had slightly higher number of clients after 2.5 months of existence than current project (probably because of the age of the target group and because

the project could receive referrals from probation officers). The earlier project reduced reoffending to 30% rather than 70%. The team is hoping to achieve similar results with current project.

Records, progress

The project keeps records about the courses outcomes. An enrolment Form is filled in the beginning and the Individual Progress Report, where the action plan is developed, is completed regularly.

Flow diagram

The Flow diagram (where the workflow between single services is described) was developed, but because referrals from the Job centre are not happening as expected, the original plan is not working. The original plan was to put clients onto 13 weeks training programme through this project and then Job centre will put them on a work experience programme or training course. For now this project is doing all these activities alone.

Lessons learned, recommendations

Job Centre Plus cooperation

Revise the work plan with Job Centre Plus and agree on new, more realistic action points. Improve the internal communication in Job Centre – all staff should be informed about the project, people on the front desk are very important, they have to be aware of the project.

Hitting the targets, age limit

The age restriction 18 – 24, proved rather unhelpful for hitting the targets. This is visible mainly in the clients numbers (referral numbers), where the previous project (age 18+) had higher number of clients after 2,5 months of existence. There are two ways to increase the clients' number – to change the age restriction, or change the term served in prison. To change the age restriction seems to be a better solution, because those who are in prison longer than 12 months get another type of government funded support.

Referrals, personal visits

Personal communication is the best for getting services involved in the project and motivating them to send referrals. Constant reminding of the project to the services is necessary – personal communication, leaflets and posters.

4.6. Client User Group and Promotional Materials

This project took place in order to improve the promotional material advertising the City Limits services, which means to produce user friendly leaflet which has been developed by a user group. The main target group of this material are people with severe learning disabilities.

Project Timescale

January 2009 – October 2010

Plan

- set up a user group, meet and develop ideas
- produce and test materials

Intended outcomes

- produce user friendly promotional materials

Research design

1. Interview with project representatives
2. Documentation analysis – documents from user groups meetings

Findings

Importance of material developed specifically for the target group

This target group needs specially designed promotional material, because the conventional design usually contains too much text or abstract pictures and the message is not understandable for people with learning disabilities. The previous leaflet was an example of this, too much text, pictures which did not relate to anything that clients know, for clients it was just a piece of paper with no meaning.

User group

The user group was developed, the group consisted from clients from different backgrounds. The group was asked to comment on the old leaflet, to say what is wrong and what could work better.

A new concept was then developed by the workers and clients again commented on them. This way, a new design was developed.

Clients' preferences

Text – very short sentences or better only statements – connected with pictures

Pictures – familiar places and faces works better than unknown people and environment (general pictures from iStock does not work)

Format – simple A4, twice folded (fold from two sides – opening in the middle) clients liked this format, because it reminds them an “opening door”.

Outcome

Although the background work to produce the leaflet was carried out, it has not been produced within the project timescale. This means that it was not possible to measure the effectiveness of leaflet with its intended target group. There are plans to finish the leaflet outside the scope of the project

Planned distribution

City Limits office, job fairs, colleges, community events

Information for other stakeholders

Additional information for parents, care organisation and service providers will be provided in the form of written sheet.

Lessons learned, recommendations

Timing

It is necessary to plan the timing for each action:

- setting up the user group,
- meetings,
- planning the design,
- photographer and organising photo shooting,
- designing,
- printing.

To organise a photo shoot and to complete the final design took longer than expected.

4.7. Service Improvement – City Limits Employment - Southampton Day Service

This project aimed to improve current services of the City Limits organisation by ensuring the provision of highest quality, sustainable employment and skills related service which offers value for money. This project wanted to generally improve the services; therefore its outcomes are interconnected with other projects described in previous paragraphs.

Project Timescale

January 2009 – October 2011

Plan

- To introduce a tool to measure peoples' progression and match their abilities to realistic opportunities
- To provide socially inclusive activities for harder to place individuals
- Clarify the service's philosophy and mission
- Set realistic criteria for referrals
- Create new and relevant promotional materials
- Set up a client focused group

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- Set up opportunities which develop a person's skills and measure them accordingly
 - Set up mechanism to move people into appropriate services and provision-avoiding stagnation
 - Provide opportunities for those unsuited to open and paid employment which aren't as resource intensive
 - Making and maintaining links with relevant employers and other organisations
 - Providing individually tailored support between and into services

Intended outcomes

- Development of an catering based training scheme
- Development of services for people with higher support needs
- Development of a client user group and publicity materials
- A service mission statement
- A new referral process
- New and relevant promotional material
- Development of methodology(ies) to measure progression

Research design

1. Interview with project representative
2. Documentation analysis

Findings

Structure

This project provided the overall framework for the development and implementation of pilot activities carried out by the City Limits (Supported Employment) Team as a part of the TSE project. For this reason, most of the project team's efforts were on the pilot projects themselves (Services for Groups with higher support needs, Catering Training Programme, User Group and Promotion) rather than the overall framework. This meant that some of the objectives unique to this framework were overlooked: a service mission statement, new referral process, methodology to measure progression, and partially also activities for harder to place clients.

- a) Methodology to measure progression

A progress sheet was developed. A City Limits worker meets regularly with the client to complete the progress sheet. This document follows client's progression and enables better planning of future activities of the client.

b) Mission statement

There was a mission statement developed for Calypso catering training environment and Service for Groups with Higher Support Needs, but the overall mission statement for the City Limits services is not developed yet.

c) New referral process

The team is trying to make the referral process smoother and look at appropriateness of referrals. This is a long term initiative of informing public, social workers, care managers and other possible referrals about the work of City Limits service.

d) Activities for harder to place clients

This is partially connected with TSE project 2: Service for Groups with Higher Support Needs and project 1: Catering Training Programme. It also includes another service run by the City Limits office – A workshop connected with a charity called “Tools for self reliance”. In this workshop clients refurbish tools and ship them to Africa. This workshop has been running for 15 years and it needs redevelopment. The workshop is allocated too far away from the centre or from any service for people with higher support needs. The plan is to move it closer to clients. The progress sheet is not used in this workshop – the team plans to start using the progress sheet and see what progress clients are doing and if they can be moved onto different activity.

Lessons learned and recommendations

Planning, specification

This project is interconnected with other projects. Nevertheless it is important project as it aims to look at City Limits services from above and improve them in general.

It could work better if, from the project description, it is clearly visible which activities are dependent upon other projects and which are original and need to be done separately. Those activities should have clear timing and a person responsible for completing them.

5. Conclusion

This report has analysed the Action 1, 2 and 3 of the TSE project from the perspective of Southampton's local intervention practitioners. For practitioners the Activity 3 was central. They benefited from Activity 1 and 2, but they did not distinguish between them, rather they understood them as one way of learning - visiting other cities and seeing other interventions. In this sense it is important to

raise the awareness of what can be gained from study visits, and to prepare those taking part accordingly. Where this is seen as beneficial, it may be a good idea to organise the visits only according to professional interests of the practitioners, so they can see how other cities deal with similar problems.

Most of Southampton's local interventions were affected by current economic situation. In spite of this; all of them tried to achieve their goals and examine, test or improve social inclusion in Southampton. Each project has unique lessons to learn. Some interventions experienced similar problems. One of them was timing of the project (whether from the organisation or the project structure point of view). More realistic and detailed planning could help to overcome number of problems. Another similar issue was the communication (whether in between the services, clients, line management or project management). Regular meetings, personal communication and constant reminding is often necessary.

In general the aims the TSE project were achieved. Many people contributed to the activities, new opportunities for socially excluded people were created, new contacts were established and new ways of work were tested.

It is crucial to learn from this experience and use the knowledge for current and future social inclusion projects.