

Worklessness Theme Storyboards

Health Works

What was the issue to address?

Health Works is a unique partnership approach led by Working Links providing support and practical help for unemployed people, receiving health related benefits. When the programme started in December 2006 Plymouth had over 31,000 residents who were considered economically inactive, higher than the average for the rest of the South West, with around 14,000 claiming incapacity benefit across the city.

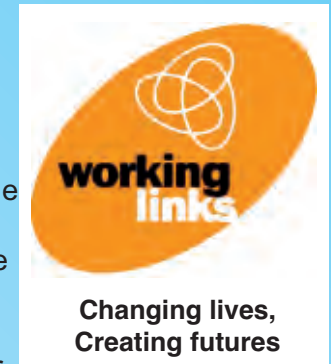
Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) which supported Health Works, targeted those neighbourhoods where “worklessness”, combined with health issues, had created social exclusion and poverty for many individuals and their families. Working Links, responsible for delivery, believes that by helping, and empowering, the most vulnerable people in society to improve their skills and help them move into jobs with a future, we can create a greater sense of social inclusion. This leads to better health, education, reduced crime and brighter futures.

What did we do?

One of the biggest challenges for Health Works was to identify and engage with people who would benefit the most from the programme. An innovative approach led to activities which included a presence at car boot sales, the Pannier Market, Drake Circus Shopping Centre, links with GP surgeries, community centres and ground-breaking activities such as “Guerilla Gardening”.

Jobseekers on health related benefits put on their wellies and joined our Health Works Team, clearing and tidying parks, planting new bulbs, plants and trees and making up window boxes to help improve the public area which surrounds the children’s playground in Stonehouse. The Guerilla Gardening

project was organised and supported by a number of organisations including, Groundwork, Plymouth Works, Jobcentre Plus and Plymouth 2020 Local Strategic Partnership as well as Working Links. Frances Brennan Working Links Director for the South West commented, “We see engaging with the people we are trying to help “on their own turf” as essential. Not only from a geographical perspective but also so we can understand and appreciate the issues residing in the different communities we help. We have improved flexibility by equipping our advisors with 3G mobile technology, and have created a non-threatening environment where clients can seek help.”



What difference did we make?

Heather Hill and Trefor Davies are a couple whose lives have changed dramatically through contacting the Health Works programme. Both had been in receipt of incapacity benefit for many years. Despite having little or no work experience, and with their confidence extremely low, their consultant, Catherine, started to look at what they could do, not what they couldn't.

“We were able to create CVs to highlight their transferable skills, using motivational interviewing techniques such as MAPS (Measuring Attitudes and Personal Styles) and also did an in work benefit calculation to show how much better off they would be in work. This proved to be a huge motivator in realising the benefits of work.”

After help with jobsearch, calling local employers, practicing applications and interviews Heather was successful, and was offered a job working as a

Health Works

cleaner at the local shopping centre. When her employer asked if she knew of any other suitable candidates she recommended Trefor and with help from Health Works he was also successful.

Heather and Trefor are still in work today and their lives have changed in such a powerful and positive way. Heather has lost 3 stone in weight since starting regular employment and a weight loss programme. Trefor also feels the benefits and has been able to make some home improvements now he has a regular wage, "It has been great to earn my own money, I have even treated us recently to a new plasma screen TV." The couple have never been late or missed a days work, and are currently looking forward to a holiday in Florida in September!

What were the keys to success?

Not everyone was quite ready for the "world of work", and so it was vital that effective partnerships were established to provide the best possible solution to those with specific barriers. For many it was a case of developing their basic skills of literacy and numeracy as well as vocational training. Health Works worked with a network of providers who could fulfil these needs such as – City College Plymouth, Plymouth Works, Brake Farm, Plymouth Guild of Volunteers, Groundwork Trust and BTCV. Catherine Thomas said, "We have always taken an individual approach in helping people reach their employment goals, and do not provide a "one size fits all" solution. We have learned that treating issues in isolation does not work."

What are we doing next?

Although the Health Works programme ended in March 2008, Working Links continue to deliver welfare to work initiatives across the South West tackling social exclusion and poverty by helping disadvantaged individuals and their families. In Plymouth the Team have now helped 9,000 unemployed people return to work, and nationally they will soon have reached the milestone of 100,000. The Health Works programme engaged with over 130 local people who were eligible for support with 51 people entering employment over 16 hours a week, 18 of these were still in their jobs 3 months later, and 31 people gained new and relevant qualifications.



Community guerilla gardening

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For more information contact:

Martin Huggins on 07984 651278 or EMAIL martin.huggins@workinglinks.co.uk
www.workinglinks.co.uk

Plymouth Works Project

Working in the community for the community

What was the issue to address?

The project was set up to tackle worklessness in Plymouth especially in the most deprived areas of; North Prospect, Barne Barton, Stonehouse and Devonport.

The Project was originally a concept devised by the Wealthy Theme Group who felt that the city would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach to provision across the city, together with establishing a system of monitoring an individual's progression through existing provision.

What did we do?

We initiated the development of the Plymouth Works Database (UNITE) which captures all current workless provision and enables an individual's training needs to be assessed and mapped through the various stages leading to employment. Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) workers were appointed in the 3 areas to provide support and help to reduce the numbers of workless.

What difference did we make?

The beneficiaries of the project have been diverse and include: Community Groups, Clients, Training Providers and Employers.

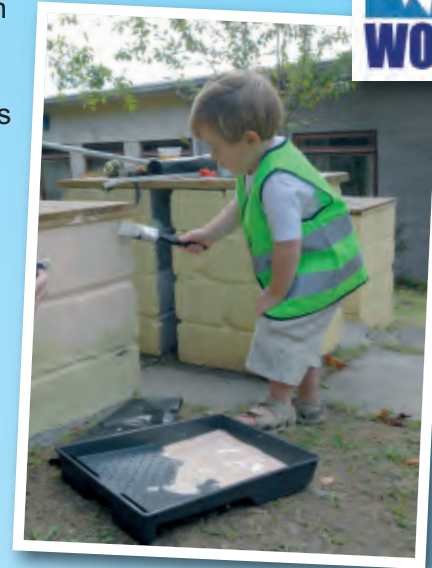
For example: we have provided additional resources for events held within the community e.g. children's Christmas parties at Children's Centre's, Coffee Morning's and the UK on-line event. Clients have benefited from the independent, unbiased advice

given to them by the IAG worker, plus they have attended a pilot 'Life Coaching Course' which was facilitated by Dreamcatchers. This course enabled the furthest away from the job market to move that little bit closer by providing them with the confidence and motivation to change.

Training Providers have been given the opportunity to send staff on a number of courses, together with benefiting from having their courses promoted to a wider target audience via the database and the IAG support across the city.

Employers and prospective employers have also attended a wide range of courses including: 'Mental Health Awareness', 'Thinking About Employing Staff' and 'Managing Effective Staff and Performance' etc.

One of the most positive impacts that the project has had is that community organisations who employ an IAG worker have the potential to utilise the UNITE database. This can be used as a management tool and also allows the IAG worker access to the course details and support information which are held on the system. This ensures that an unbiased approach to meeting the needs of the client can be provided.



Plymouth Works Project

As a result of this clients have benefited as shown below:

- 1749 Clients engaged
- 1350 Clients in training
- 388 Clients accessing employment
- 1182 Clients progressing to job training or work
- 714 Clients completing job readiness training
- 109 Clients receiving a qualification as a result of training

What were the keys to our success?

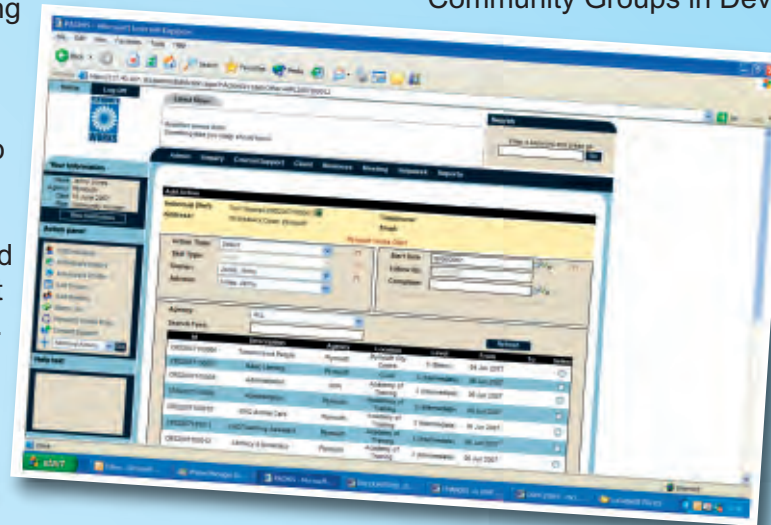
The main factors that have emerged as being key to the success of the project is the fact that we have promoted inclusivity together with building up resources and bringing people together. For example we joined up with ROK to promote the 'Community Challenge'. Three challenges were undertaken by volunteers over a weekend including building a sensory garden at St Peters CE Primary School, Stonehouse.

The database which was a major undertaking developed to a very tight timescale has emerged as a key element in the success of the project. The database is continually being updated and improved and will serve the city as the key to monitoring provision take-up across the city by both today's and the city's future Workless population.

What are we doing next?

The immediate future of the database is secure as the maintenance costs are currently being met by Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, as they wish to promote its use to all IAG providers and Community Groups in Devonport.

The database will be promoted in some areas of the city so that clients will continue to have access to the course information held on the system. It will also provide funders with access to client activity statistics etc. We are also looking to provide access to other Community Groups who currently have IAG provision to enable their clients through them to access the system.



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For more information contact:

Andrew Ashley (Managing Director) Enterprise Plymouth Ltd. Telephone: 01752 211211
or EMAIL: AndrewA@epl.org.uk

Lyn Yeatman (Plymouth Works Co-ordinator) Enterprise Plymouth Ltd. Telephone: 01752 211211
or EMAIL: LynnY@epl.org.uk

CHEW - Confidence Through Happy Education Leading To Work

What was the issue to address?

This project was set up to tackle worklessness in Plymouth especially in the priority areas of North Prospect, Barne Barton and Stonehouse. The main focus was to improve the confidence, skill levels and employability of hard to reach clients.

We provided a neighbourhood delivery plan with two recognised and accredited courses that help people back to work or upskill existing workers where the client's needs are identified as such. We knew that North Prospect Community Learning and Development (CLAD) organisation was exploring registration for qualifications and the longer term funding for another project aimed at getting people back to work. This was the perfect chance to pilot such a scheme.

What did we do?

Another neighbourhood renewal funded project called Plymouth Works, appointed Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) workers to provide support and help to reduce the numbers of workless. IAG helped identify suitable candidates for our courses.

The first course – Career Planning, helps the client focus on what their skills are, what they might want to do and aims to build their confidence.

The second – Preparation for Employment, actually helps the clients find volunteer or job placements with a greater emphasis on working towards attaining the job of the clients' choice.

CLAD worked in partnership with Plymouth Works who provided the time of one of its workers and Sure Start who helped provide child care options and Nextsteps.

What difference did we make?

We engaged with 8 clients and motivated all of them to improve their self-confidence. 6 clients completed the course successfully.

We have made an immense difference in addressing the lack of self-confidence and self-worth in the lives of those that completed the course. We have helped them see how important they are, what skills they already have and how they can contribute to society as a whole.

The beneficiaries are from the three priority neighbourhoods. These clients had skills for life issues, low qualifications and lacked in self-confidence.

Helping people back into work is not a quick fix especially if they still need some support after they have gained employment in order to help keep it.

“I’m living in supported accommodation and was being pushed into things I didn’t really want to do. I met with Sue, my Nextstep advisor and she told me about the new Nextstep Skills for Jobs programme. I decided to enrol on the programme and Sue negotiated this with my accommodation officer. As part of the programme I am doing a L2 Preparation for Employment course and linking in with the Jobcentre to go onto their Work trial programme so that I can get some work experience. I have also found accommodation with the council so this will mean that when I get a job I can afford to live independently. Without Nextstep advice and the Skills for Jobs programme I would still be stuck in a rut, and now I’m looking forward to starting my life over again.”

MV, Plymouth



Making a difference

CHEW - Confidence Through Happy Education Leading To Work

What were the keys to our success?

The partnership work with CLAD, Nextstep, Sure Start and Plymouth Works was key.

Also, having clients work together as a team as well as individually – clients helped each other as well as learning from the course tutors.

Neighbourhood renewal funding has helped us to kick start the programme, understand the courses we are facilitating and focus on the individual clients needs. For our community it means we can offer clients more help in getting back to paid employment.

What are we doing next?

We aim to continue the work through Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities funding and in the longer term the Department of Work and Pensions and Learning Skills Council funding.

Although we focus on priority groups all are welcome as the service is aimed at helping the unemployed back into work.

We will continue to use a group approach and peer support as well as individual learning in the work that we provide.



April 2008 For more information contact:

Paul Keller
North Prospect Community Centre
Foliot Road, North Prospect, Plymouth PL2 2JS
Tel: 01752 551862
EMAIL: paulkeller36@yahoo.co.uk



Making a difference