



# **How can local initiatives help workless people find and keep paid work? Lessons from the UK**

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# What is the issue?

- Disadvantaged areas have concentrations of people who have disadvantageous characteristics leading to high rates of worklessness
- People in Britain work very close to their homes. Those in professional occupations work an average of 7km from home; those in elementary occupations an average of <3km (less in inner cities)

But

- Areas differ in their populations and in their labour market structures

So

- Solutions need to be based on local knowledge and circumstances

# What works?

- Good assessment of individual needs, including those of long-term sick and disabled people, is essential
- Holistic interventions, which address housing, health, childcare and substance use issues as well as labour market needs, are more effective than those which address work in isolation.
- Many people who could benefit from help need active encouragement to engage with the help and support available

# What works?

- Those closest to the labour market benefit most from immediate placement into work (“work first”).
- Those who might find it difficult to cope in the workplace immediately benefit from some initial training, but this is much more expensive and delays the start of employment.
- Partnership working is key to delivering a sufficiently wide range of support.
- The most successful provision is based on and engaged with the needs of local employers.
- Transport issues are often ignored, but are important in people’s ability to get and keep jobs.

# Local delivery capacity and institutions

- Areas differ in the capacity of the community to engage with initiatives. This may need to be developed.
- Successful delivery involves:
  - staff, particularly personal advisers, with empathy and good communication skills
  - a clear sense of purpose
  - active outreach to engage those who are hardest to reach
  - avoiding fragmentation of provision, which can cause confusion among clients
  - an environment where clients feel comfortable
  - good networking and relationships between different agencies
  - good links with local employers and a willingness to provide them with services and support

# Partnership issues

- Successful partnership working needs:
  - a balanced team involving all relevant bodies, and both leadership and innovation skills
  - trust in each other
  - motivation and a common vision
  - conflict resolution mechanisms
  - collaboration
  - clarity of objectives and responsibilities
  - appropriate funding
  - continued sponsorship
  - flexibility

# Partnership issues

- It helps if partnerships build on existing relationships and networks
- Partnerships need to ensure that organisations that have trust of community (eg tenants' associations) are represented
- Important to have employer involvement



# Engagement and outreach

- Outreach helps to engage:
  - those who are reluctant to engage with mainstream provision
  - those who are unable to travel
  - those with language difficulties
  - recent migrants
  - members of minority ethnic communities
  - those reluctant to move outside a familiar environment
- Outreach helps to generate word of mouth confidence in provision
- Outreach should be imaginative in choice of premises



# Meeting individual needs

- Individual needs differ
- Most workless people have a combination of two or more disadvantages:
  - Health
  - Language
  - Childcare
  - Skills
  - Offending history
  - Substance use
  - Discrimination
- Minority ethnic communities are increasingly diverging in their labour market experience and outcomes

# Meeting individual needs

- Provision should be based on initial assessment of individual capabilities and needs
- All clients benefit from flexible and supportive personal advisers
- Those closest to labour market benefit most from information and support in finding immediate work
- Those with more complex problems need a holistic approach (eg to drug use or housing problems)

# Engagement with employers

- Ensuring workless people move into work means ensuring that they are equipped for and have access to the jobs that are available locally
- Employers likely to be resistant to any involvement that is time consuming or without clear outcomes
- It can be useful to make use of existing employer networks and build on existing corporate responsibility activity
- SMEs find recruitment expensive. They are more likely to be engaged if their lives are made easier.
- Those working with clients need to build good relationships with a network of employers, and to follow through as clients move into work
- Employers in London harder to engage: less sense of commitment to place

# What aids retention and progression?

- Give providers the right incentive structure
- Start with the right job
- Have enough money
- Have access to support for dealing with problems inside and outside the workplace. Common problems are:
  - Transport
  - Childcare
  - Managing relationships within the workplace
  - Shift patterns

But

- Recognise that not everyone will want to use it
- Have a mentor inside the workplace
- Have access to information, advice and training for future progression

# Issues in London

- Proportion of working age population who are workless is higher in London than in the rest of the country
- Government policies aimed at tackling worklessness seem to be less effective in London
- London's workless population is much more diverse than in the rest of the country, and tends to have more than one characteristic associated with labour market disadvantage including:
  - Dependent children
  - Born outside the UK
  - Black or minority ethnic origin

# Lessons from London

## ■ Challenges:

- Skill deficits are high among workless population
- Wage rates in entry-level jobs are low relative to the cost of living
- Childcare availability is low and costs high
- English language provision not always suitable for those who need to use it in their work
- It can be difficult to engage employers who have less connection with their immediate area
- The quality of personal adviser support seems to make a difference, and it may be more difficult to recruit good personal advisers in London

## ■ Advantages:

- Transport generally good
- Demand for labour high





# London: The Olympic Games 2012

## ■ Targets

### ■ Legacy

- up to 12,000 new jobs in the Olympic Park;
- up to 50,000 in the Lower Lea Valley as a whole; and
- a reduction of 70,000 in the number of workless people in London, of which 55,000 will be as a result of increased job opportunities and 15,000 will result from changes in recruitment practices.

### ■ Run up:

- 60,000 person years in construction, with a peak of 9,300 person years

### ■ in 2012

- 30,000 jobs in staging the games
- 6,700 jobs in showcasing London, for example in retail, hotels, restaurants, transport and entertainment

# London: The Olympic Games 2012

## ■ The reality

- Currently 492 people from the five Host Boroughs working on the construction phase of the Olympic Park
- This represents 18% of the entire workforce
- 20% of this group were previously unemployed
- “Site readiness” of local population who have had skills training has been identified as an issue

# Why is London so challenging?

- Transport generally good and demand for labour high
- Skill deficits are high among workless population
- Wage rates in entry-level jobs are low relative to the cost of living
- Childcare availability is low and costs high
- English language provision not always suitable for those who need to use it in their work
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# There is no magic recipe

- One size does not fit all
- Different client mix
- Different employment base
- Differences in geography, both physical access and boundaries based on culture
- Joined-up working is messy, time consuming and requires compromise, but it is what clients need
- There is no substitute for local knowledge and local networks
- A fresh start is an advantage