



**BURNLEY PARTNERS WORKLESSNESS GROUP
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2010
AT ST PETER'S LEISURE CENTRE**

Present:

Ann Marie Wrigley	Burnley Community Network
Joseph Smith	LCC
Mike Cook	BBC
Kate Ingram	BBC - ERBS
Ian Plested	BBC - ERBS
Andy Brennand	Jobcentre Plus
Lorraine Newlove	Calico
Liz Jacobs	DWP
Tony Harrison	Burnley Community Network
Lesley Burrows	Vedas
Pat Bridge	BBC – ERBS

Apologies:

Gordon Howley	Burnley Community Network
Sue Littlefair	Princes Trust
Karen Hopwood	Skills Funding Agency
Jenny Fern	BBC – N/hood M/ment
Janet Tonge	East Lancs PCT
Steve Rowland	Lancs YP Service

Welcome and introductions

Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone then introduced themselves and the organisation they represented.

Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st December 2009 were passed as a true record.

Mike reported that the Pennine Lancashire Employment and Skills Board hasn't met

Latest Worklessness Statistics

Ian P circulated report relating to the latest NI 152 statistics by ward breakdown. These statistics relate to the proportion of working age people claiming out of work benefits. The report illustrated that Trinity Ward had the highest rate of claimants and Worsthorne with Cliviger having the lowest. It should also be noted that the figures for both Queensgate and Brunshaw wards had decreased.

The latest NI 153 statistical report was circulated and Bank Hall Ward was the highest as based on population estimates. It was evident that there had been a rapid increase in JSA claimants.

Ian stated that the Jobsfair held on 9th February at Burnley Football Club had attracted in excess of 630 people. In the main most of these people were in receipt of JSA. Although the results have not been formally analysed it appeared that the main barrier into work from feedback on the day was a lack of available jobs.

Lesley remarked on the high attendance at the Jobsfair. The level of attendance could not have been forecast and the high turnout did slightly knock the co-ordination of the event on the day.

At the last group meeting Jon Walton suggested that we should try to identify the number of children living in households where no adults are working. This information is still outstanding.

Financial Inclusion (FI) and Tackling Worklessness

Liz Jacobs, the DWP Financial Inclusion Champion for East Lancs and Greater Manchester gave a presentation about Financial Inclusion and Worklessness to the Group. In order to promote financial inclusion Liz has commissioned a piece of research resulting in the provision of a prospective programme. The definition of Financial Inclusion is access to a bank account, free face to face money advice, affordable credit, savings, assets and insurance. Liz highlighted the barriers to getting work which included:-

- Lack of basic skills
- Disability and poor health
- Caring responsibilities
- Debt and money problems were quoted as another barrier to getting work; furthermore, the stress and worry of debt causes health problems and in addition the lack of a bank account means salary payments cannot be received.

A programme linking FI to worklessness would, for example, ensure that all participants have access to a bank account. The programme could also deliver financial capability/literacy programmes to include budgeting skills and information on the new options that employment brings.

A discussion ensued following the presentation.

Mike asked what the DWP would expect after a 12 month period. Liz said that ideally, there should be a programme of sustainable activity which addresses identified gaps in provision.

Joey asked what would be classed as an outcome e.g. the baseline figure could be the number of loans taken out using the Credit Union.

Lesley works with a lot of people who said that the minute that they get back into work they need help in terms of setting up bank accounts and associated financial activities.

Ann Marie stated that an IAG worker can undertake a lot of useful work as an intermediary and could be particularly effective in speaking to organisations such as the Utilities etc.

Mike asked how the scheme would link in with BDCAS (Citizens Advice Service); Liz responded by saying that she sees it as a key role.

Ann Marie said that members of the Credit Union (CU) have to have a savings account and actually save before they can borrow money. The loans are usually of a small amount and credit checks are undertaken. The Credit Union also accept state payments such as Child Benefit as loan repayments. In addition the CU has introduced a payment card onto which savings can be pre-loaded.

Mike asked if the Financial Inclusion Scheme slotted in with the group and the answer was a unanimous “definitely”. In addition Liz thought that the objectives of the group also met with her agenda. Ian P added that more detailed discussions would need to take place.

AP1: Liz to show how Financial Inclusion fits (geographically) into the NI152 and NI153 reports in table format.

AP2: The deadline for producing this information 2 months from now – April 2010.

Recent Partnership and project activity

Ian circulated an update on partnership activity to reduce worklessness.

Future Jobs Fund

The targets across Pennine Lancashire have not yet been achieved. 153 vacancies have been posted so far across Pennine Lancs 43 of which have been filled. The projected target is 210 vacancies up to the end of March 2010.

In Burnley 52 jobs will be available before the end of March 2010, 29 of which have been filled to date. Local providers involved in the scheme include Accent, Bootstrap, BDCAS, Community Alliance, Groundwork, Jinnah, Lancs Fire and Rescue, Lancs Wildlife Trust, New era, Pennine Lancs Community Farm.

Burnley BC expect to fill 5 more vacancies and New Era 6. Andy said that he had some figures with vacancies filled, although he is fully aware that there are still unfilled vacancies.

Age-NC (No Concern)

Ian Hoskin has been working with Vedas on the Age NC Project – Lesley expressed her appreciation of the excellent work Ian had undertaken. Lesley added that there were 40 beneficiaries taking part in the Altered Images project which is proving to be quite successful. An evaluation of the project will begin in April 2010 and this will be fed back to a future meeting of the worklessness group.

Training Grant

Ian said that the £6,000 funding earmarked for training grants was a good use of WNF money. The maximum grant available is £300 per person which is used for training activities such as Fork Life Truck training, gas safety register courses, construction training, SIA (Security Industry Authority) licences etc. The scheme has worked very well so far by filling the gap that Jobcentre Plus and other government provision cannot meet.

Jobsfair

The Jobsfair was held at Burnley Football Club on Tuesday 9th February. In terms of attendance the event was an enormous success with 630 people registering on the day. In addition 25 organisations were present to promote job vacancies, training and to help anyone currently unemployed to get back into work. The event attracted residents from Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Hyndurn, Blackburn with Darwen, Ribble Valley and Chorley. From the results of a survey undertaken it was interesting to note that just over 70% of attendees thought that they had no particular barrier to finding employment with just 15% stating that the main problem for them is a lack of suitable vacancies.

Due to the event being so well supported people had to queue to speak to advisors and this did cause concerns. Issues arising from the Jobsfair have been taken on board and will be resolved before the next event is organised.

Workstart and Future Horizons

These schemes are currently operated by Burnley Borough Council and could possibly be extended to include the private sector. Six placements have been created and filled since 1st April 2009.

Housing and Worklessness

Joey gave an update on work being undertaken which is looking at initiatives such as Housing and Employment Connections which is a new route into opportunities using information and technology. People can for instance exchange from one council house to another and supporting this is a network of organisations. Clients could possibly access the service through their personal TV set or computer. Joey said that he had recently attended a meeting with a consultant and the outcome was that a one to one approach was better than people completing a form. This could also assist in reaching people who are presently not engaging and importantly potentially identify the barriers into work.

Kate thought that there was a place for this scheme and suggested that perhaps we already had a network that this could be plugged into.

Mike added that social housing isn't a major part of housing stock and there are areas of worklessness where there are many unemployed people living in private-rented housing.

Health and Worklessness

This item was not discussed, however this item will be carried forward to a future meeting.

AP3: Health Inequalities Strategy – this topic to be included in a future meeting agenda of the group when a PCT representative is available.

Review of Burnley's Employment Strategy

There is a requirement for a working group to be established to review the current strategy and in addition decide how to address Adult Skills. Mike said that he would not want a complete re-write of the current strategy. Lesley added that a lot of the existing strategy would still be relevant and Kate thought that there would be other important additional aspects.

Ian asked for volunteers for the working group and Lesley and Ann Marie put their names forward.

Ian asked the group whether they wanted to make Adult Skills a stronger part of the strategy and Mike thought that we should engage in a local framework.

Date and time of next meeting – to be arranged.