



SHARED INTELLIGENCE

East of England Development Agency Work Limiting Illness Learning Network

CASE STUDIES: LESSONS FROM THE EAST OF ENGLAND AND ELSEWHERE

APPROACHES TO CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

There are a variety of approaches that have been taken across the East of England and elsewhere by many different groups which have sought to improve engagement of the work limiting illness client group, many of which have had considerable success. The selected case studies outlined in this section highlight some current examples of practice in engaging this client group.

Working in an effective way with other partners and organisations is an effective way to target and engage the work limiting illness target group. Many of the IIC projects have established working protocols with other agencies, services and groups to effectively engage the client group. Examples of these include activity by the Papworth Trust and the Work 4 You Programme in Cambridgeshire.

Successful examples from elsewhere of engaging with hard to reach target groups

Health and work – Making the Connection in Birmingham and Solihull

By creating individually-tailored programmes to help build individuals' confidence and self-esteem the Papworth Trust Vocational Rehabilitation Programme has been successful at improving the independence and employability of individuals and enabling them to return to employment, their community and family life.

Engagement of clients can be via referrals from insurance companies with whom the Papworth Trust have built up a contractor/supplier relationship. However, they also receive self referrals and health service referrals. The Papworth Trust charge commercial fees to the insurance companies and any surplus generated, or additional fundraised income, goes towards funding a bursary scheme to help people who are uninsured.

Work4You Project

Work 4You is a supported employment programme for people with learning disabilities in Cambridgeshire. It is tailored to individuals and delivered through a partnership between Papworth Trust and Phoenix Employ. Work4You improves training and employment prospects for disabled people falling into the gap between Local Authority and Jobcentre Plus services. Many in this group want to work but have no experience of work and lack self-confidence and skills. The project helps participants develop the skills they need for the workplace, offers ongoing support, guidance and valuable work experience through an eight-week work Job Club, followed by support into employment.

The project runs Job Clubs around the county delivering training in workplace skills - including being interviewed, writing a CV, completing applications, confidence building, team working, personal presentation and social skills. Employment Advisers help employers recruit appropriate people by carefully matching skills to jobs and provide on-going support for both employer and employee to help overcome issues that may arise.

Job Club participants also receive support in Basic Skills and information, advice and guidance. After the Job Club programme a suitable work placement is sought to match the interests and skills of the participant. At the end of the programme participants will go into paid work, further work experience or progress to further training and a qualification. Referrals to other services and Benefits Advice are also important.

Experience from year 1 has identified a group of clients with mental health issues needing a lighter touch of support to access the labour market. A complementary new service has been developed for these clients who will be able to access selected components of the project, known as GOALS workshops, dependent on their needs e.g. attending confidence building courses.

Successful examples of engaging with hard to reach target groups from elsewhere include the targeting of Incapacity Benefit claimants in Knowsley and the Full Employment Areas Initiative in Glasgow.

Targeting Incapacity Benefit Claimants in Knowsley

In Knowsley where they have particularly dense clusters of IB claimants local knowledge proved to be a good solution to the engagement of clients in targeted localities. Most effective methods included:

- holding 'surgeries' in venues such as supermarkets, libraries, bus stations, GP surgeries and shopping areas;
- visiting a range of organisations in the community where it was felt that potential clients would be present;
- attending community events and establishing a presence at local 'Jobsfairs'; and/or

Targeting individuals via specific community venues has proved most effective, especially when part of a wider, varied and concerted engagement programme. Clients felt that the use of more high profile and longstanding outreach and community based venues acted as an encouragement to engagement, particularly amongst those more wary of going to the Jobcentre and other mainstream services.

Engaging Clients through Relationships with the Health Sector - Easington

The Easington Aim Higher Route Back project has taken the approach of employing a specific health professional engagement officer via a PCT led initiative. This role involves visiting GPs, dentists, rehabilitation centres and groups, district nurses, health visitors and other health professionals and organisations. The engagement officer produces a newsletter for health professionals, highlighting positive case studies of people referred from the health sector who have currently entered employment and the difference it has made to their lives and health.

The ability to engage health professionals using language they understand is seen as a key advantage of employing an officer with a health background in this role, given that they ‘...can push the right buttons...’ A further success factor was the provision for the health engagement officer to undertake regular visits to those professionals and organisations that were considered as essential to increase the referrals and linkages between health and employability. Informal feedback has demonstrated that the approach has been successful; evidence also demonstrates a higher number of referrals for employability supports have come from this health engagement route.

Where GPs are brought on board this can be highly effective in generating client referrals through, for example, the GPs involved giving their clients leaflets about the Easington pilot. The project has also managed to take this a stage further in terms of persuading GPs to send out letters to people on their register who are claiming Incapacity Benefit. This is very effective way of engaging people, though it is important to ensure that GPs have the final say over who is suitable to send letters to, how it is done and so on.

Finally, having the project run by the PCT, as opposed to an employment agency or organisation, is also seen as beneficial in terms of persuading health professionals to become involved.

Bridging Services – Employability Referral Teams - Glasgow

New types of engagement services have been developed in Glasgow that are generally described as ‘Bridging Services’ or ‘Employability Referral Teams’. There are currently 4 such services based locally within Community Health and Care Partnership Areas in the North, South, East and West of the City.

The service has been developed in response to local needs and local opportunities. However overall they share the general aim of bridging the referral gap between Health and Social Work Services and Employability Services.

Part of the reason they have been developed is because evidence gathered through the Equal Access Survey of Frontline Staff in Health/Social Care/and Housing informed that health and social care workers often did not have the time to research and keep up to date with the world of employment services; were unsure what support was provided by employment services; and thus who best to refer their clients to.

The Bridging Services/ Employability Referral Teams generally aim to address these issues by providing health and social work services with one point of referral for the clients they have identified as being interested in finding out more about their options around employment, training, education and volunteering. They do not duplicate existing employment services but add additionality by opening the door to the full range of these services for clients of Health and Social Care Services.





These bridging/ employability referral team will then support individual clients to access the full range of employability support based on their aspirations and circumstances. They do so by working closely with the referring health and social care workers and thereby over time support these workers to develop their knowledge base and referral expertise.

Health and Social Care Workers have a key role to play in making the best use of these services. Their role is to engage their clients in a discussion about their employment aspirations and to support clients who are interested by making a referral to the Team in their area. This process can also work the other way, as the employability workers can refer people back into health and social care services for additional support if this is identified by the client. The teams will ensure that they provide health and social care workers with information on progress made by individuals and work jointly with workers to get the best possible service and outcome for their clients.

Client Engagement , Assessment and Action Planning – A Caseworker Approach in Gloucester

In Gloucestershire mainstream partners have come together to develop an Employment and Skills Plan which seeks to improve the engagement and support to workless individuals and to those in work to sustain and progress in employment. Those with a work limiting illness are among the priority client groups for the Plan. The Plan is being piloted in Gloucester City with the aim of eventual roll out across the whole Gloucestershire County.

A case management approach underpins the engagement and support given to client groups. A range of caseworkers will be available on an outreach and call on basis to support the engagement of individuals. Each individual with whom contact has been made will be allocated a caseworker to support them through their “journey”; many of these caseworkers will be existing providers and support agents. Where gaps have been identified additional caseworkers will be provided to improve the interface with clients and better link them to various services on offer.

Individuals will also be logged and tracked by an Executive Team and their progress through various stages of their “journey” will be monitored. This will be on the basis of informed consent between the individual and the relevant provider/support agent that is acting as the caseworker and will be underpinned by a data sharing protocol between the Team and the relevant caseworker organisation.

Via caseworker the individual will also have a continued source of support and advice. The caseworker will ensure that all individuals engaged are guaranteed a detailed assessment and action plan to support them in their employment aspirations. An employment and skills Action Plan will be developed which will detail all necessary steps required in order to assist the client to gain sustained employment, support required will be brokered by the caseworker.

The guarantee of this dedicated and ongoing support has been determined as a key factor in supporting initial engagement.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Given the shifting Government policy towards engagement of employers as a key stakeholder in tackling worklessness, employer engagement with regard to recruiting, supporting and progressing in the workforce those with a work limiting illness has become a priority for employability partners across the UK. For example, Employer Engagement is a key workstream of all the 15 DWP City Strategy Pathfinder.

The focus groups highlighted the importance of engaging with employers to educate them and enable them to see the benefits of employing/retaining someone with a working limiting illness. The examples below highlight lessons from across the UK where successful approaches to employer engagement are being developed/implemented.

Dining with a Difference

In late 2006, the Regional Skills and Competitive Partnership (RSCP), Jobcentre Plus, East of England Development Agency, Learning Skills Council and Government Office in the East of England hosted a “Dining with a Difference” evening, bringing together an audience of employers from across the region. The evening was choreographed by three leading authorities on “disability as it affects business”. It provided a unique opportunity for businesses to explore how disability affects their people, their customers and clients and the communities in which they do business. The carefully choreographed evening was intended to leave senior players with a new perspective, energy and insight to lead their organisations into action, and to add disability to their list of business priorities.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire was also in attendance. She addressed the audience of 30 diners at the start of the evening, emphasising the value people with disabilities bring to businesses.

The key message was to promote the business gains for employing a diverse workforce to influence diners to actively promote and champion the merits of being a “disability confident” organisation. To do this, employers were guided course by course on a journey through disability as it affects people in society and the organisations in which they work.

The evening was a huge success and received very positive feedback.

Pre-employment training at Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow

In recognising the importance of employers needing a skilled and flexible workforce, Jobcentre Plus in the East of England is working with employers to identify the particular skills needed. They then link up with partner organisations, who deliver the required pre-employment training.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow is one example of where pre-employment training has worked well. The close working relationship started about a year ago, when the hospital was recruiting for the care sector. Jobcentre plus brought together unemployed people who wanted to work in this sector, the training provider and the hospital. The hospital helped design a 6 week pre-employment training programme and guaranteed a job for those who satisfactorily completed the programme. This was an enormous success and the hospital took on 14 staff. This success was publicly recognised when the project team were runners up for an HR excellence award in the health and social care sector. More recently it has been announced that the trainers who delivered the pre-employment training will also deliver in-work support using Train to Gain provision.

Close working has continued and developed. In fact, the hospital was so pleased with the results of the pre-employment training that they signed a Local Employment Partnership agreement on 18 January 2008. Pre-employment training will be an integral part of the partnership agreement.

Equal Access Glasgow

Equal Access Glasgow is dedicated to providing support to disadvantaged individuals, particularly those with a work limiting illness, to support them to enter and sustain employment. Equal Access is currently working with partners to provide support for employers on recruitment diversity and retention. They are working direct with the Employer Coalition and Healthy Working Lives to encourage recruitment diversity and retention.

Equal Access Glasgow has supported the development and delivery of a number of projects to support the work limiting illness working group where success has been dependent on engagement with employers. Two such projects are:

Embracing Diversity - this is an employer focused project aimed at supporting employers to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce. The project works with SMEs to try and establish systems and procedures which will support them to recruit people currently at a disadvantage in relation to employment. The model is essentially 'in-work' support for the employers to assist them with any concerns or issues they may have during recruitment.

Dispelling the Myths - in partnership with Health, Social Care and the Employers' Coalition Equal Access developed a series of seminars and master classes targeting disengaged employers about the benefits of employing diverse client groups. This involved:

- Health/ Social Care/ Voluntary Sector specialists developing information materials to dispel the myths associated with employing people with mental health, learning disability, addictions problems, Aids/HIV etc and their ability to sustain meaningful employment.
- Working with the Employers' Coalition to organise a series of master class workshops for staff working within the care sectors to promote the business case for engaging with employers
- Delivering a series of seminars/road-shows that target the private/public business sector, in particular SMEs and promoting the business case of employing from the potential workforce already resident in Glasgow.

Employer Offer for the West Midlands

As the heavy industries which have represented the backbone of the West Midlands economy for generations have declined, a legacy of low skills has remained. However, at the same time, opportunities have increased in the service and professional sectors, where employers need higher level skills.

To address these issues, the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus have produced the Employer Offer, and in conjunction with a range of partner organisations will work together to help those people who face barriers to skills and employment, including those with a work limiting illness. The Employer Offer for the West Midlands ensures that employers have immediate access to the right service at the right time. The Offer maximises the support available to employers and provides them with a co-ordinated, structured response to their needs. It is open to all employers - both large and SMEs.

Services include:

- Recruitment services tailored to an employers requirements delivered by Jobcentre Plus. This could range from a core vacancy notification service, to support through the recently introduced Local Employment Partnership initiative, depending on the needs of the employer;
- Job scoping and individual skills assessment, to ensure a match between prospective recruits and the skills requirements of the job;
- Bespoke pre and post recruitment training programmes designed by employers to equip prospective recruits with essential skills to be job ready;
- Work Trials - enabling employers and their prospective employees to assess suitability for a particular role;
- Youth and Adult Apprenticeships for all new entrants to provide a structured career development programme to a recognised and accredited standard;
- Independent advice and support in undertaking an Organisational and Individual Training Needs Analysis reviewing the skills of the employee(s);
- Free training in order to address basic literacy, communications and numeracy needs. Training employees to their first level 2 qualification;
- Access to wider Train to Gain services across the spectrum of organisational development and training needs, with a choice of preferred training providers.
- Referral to the most appropriate organisation to deal with their needs; and
- An on-going relationship which aims to support the customers' recruitment and skills agendas.

The programme is already a success with a number of local companies. Testimonials include: 'We are delighted to be working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus to change people's lives by helping them into meaningful jobs. Our ability to recruit, develop and retain excellent people by being an employer of choice is vital to the success of our business.'

John McDonough, Chief Executive, Carillion PLC

'A diverse workforce is critical to B&Q and I am certain that being part of the Local Employment Partnerships gives us the best chance of securing the people we need now and in the future. Working with Jobcentre Plus is proving to be a very practical step towards this aim.'

Ian Cheshire, Chief Executive, B&Q

Examples where Local Employment Partnerships (LEPS) are working for the work limiting illness client group

Marks and Spencer have already implemented Local Employment Partnerships via their Marks and Start programme which is aimed at lone parents, homeless people, people with disabilities and young unemployed people. Over 250 people who successfully completed the programme were recruited either by Marks and Spencer themselves, or by other retail companies. Jobcentre Plus is now discussing extending the programme to support the company's further recruitment plans.

HBOS: Jobcentre Plus has been working closely with the finance sector to break down some of the barriers that job seekers face in finding employment. HBOS (Halifax Bank of Scotland) are keen to work proactively to recruit from the most disadvantaged individuals, including those with work limiting illness. Specifically, a pre-recruitment course entitled 'Job Fit' run by Action for Employment has been introduced. It is a voluntary programme offering 13 weeks of support tailored to ensure customers are confident and able to communicate their skills at interview. First Direct as well as HBOS will use the course and also offer flexibilities and adjustments in their recruitment process.

JOINED UP WORKING AND COMMISSIONING

Currently employers are faced with a very complex organisational landscape and employers are often approached by multiple agencies and organisations who offer different services. This is thought to be a significant barrier to engagement. Discussion at the workshops highlighted the need for joined up working to minimise this fragmentation and duplication of provision. Solutions identified included making use of Local Employment Partnerships, linking in with JCP, and refraining from targeting only those that are easiest (i.e. will result in a positive, measurable outcome). However, it was agreed that there needs to be a clear role for working together which incorporates a wider range of agencies, in particular Business Link given the Business Support Simplification agenda.

The case studies below presents an example of an initiative that has attempted to address this problem with some success.

Engage to work – Meridian East

Engage To Work is a collaborative project being delivered between The Papworth Trust, Business In The Community, Action For Blind People, Mencap and Meridian East. The European Social Fund (ESF) and the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) are the funders.

The project provides disabled people with a professional and free service which will assess a person's employment needs and then produce an individual development plan detailing the support required to bridge the gap between agreed employment needs and professional aspirations.

All partners work with local employers to provide information, advice and best practice guidance on issues such as disability-friendly recruitment, access and workplace adjustments.

Engage to Work can also offer employers support to retain staff who are at risk of losing their job as a result of their disability, by working closely with both the employee and the employer to identify areas where job adjustments may be necessary and to give advice on specific disability issues.

People are eligible for help under this project if they are economically inactive which means that they are not working and/or are in receipt of benefits including Jobseekers Allowance.

Health and work – Making the Connection in Birmingham and Solihull

Over 60,000 people in Birmingham and Solihull – or roughly 1 in 12 of the working age population – are out of work because of ill-health and claiming incapacity benefits. Many would like to work, but find it difficult to get back into the labour market, especially if they have been out of work for some time because of their health. Their health may continue to be a problem – but they can also find their skills are out of date and they have lost touch with today's jobs.

In response to this the Improving Health, Increasing Employment partnership initiative - involving a wide range of agencies in Birmingham and Solihull – has been established.

These agencies have come together to form a Project Board to prepare a programme of activities to tackle the inter-linked problems of ill-health and worklessness. This programme will build on a number of initiatives that have already been tried out locally. The partnership is essentially about tackling the barriers that stop people with health problems being in a job. But it is also about securing the improvements to health that employment can bring. In this regard specific actions are

Manchester City Strategy – Health Sub-Group

In recognising the importance of liaising with the Health Sector and in response to high concentrations of worklessness among those with work limiting illness the Manchester City Strategy has developed a health-focused sub-group involving colleagues from PCTs, Mental Health Trusts and Public Health. This sub-group brings together key agencies and stakeholders to jointly determine how best healthcare provision can be co-ordinated more effectively with existing employment / training provision.

The group has focused initially on increasing referrals to employability support from healthcare practitioners, including GPs, Health Trainers, Community Nurses and mental health workers, to IB programmes such as Pathways. Activity has generally focused on encouraging these practitioners to prescribe employability support as part of an individual's treatment plan, thus actively promoting 'employment on prescription'.

Over the longer term this group will work on analysing local clinical provision to determine whether it is appropriate in meeting the needs of the IB client group and will look to incorporating employability into health assessments.

Dundee Partnership Employability Programme (DPEP) – Discover Opportunities

In response to concentrations of worklessness in Dundee and high levels of incapacity benefit which were demonstrating little evidence of reducing, partners in Dundee came together to develop the Dundee Partnership Employability Programme. Central to this programme was the need to better integrate the existing employability infrastructure and also to engage a wider range of partners, particularly health partners, in the delivery of employability support. Individuals were confused by the range of supports on offer and this was preventing them engaging in support.

Evidence gathered to support this approach together with anecdotal experiences identified the need for a common brand which individuals could recognise as offering them the range of supports they required to move towards and sustain employment. It was clear that this branding needed to be recognisable but also different from the range of existing service brands that were in place.

Drawing on other successful campaigns in Dundee around marketing and tourism and engaging with businesses, the brand Discover Opportunities was developed. This brand was also supported by the development of a Discover Opportunities Centre where a range of support services, including health and employability, are co-located.

Not only has this branding increased the engagement of individuals it has also facilitated increased engagement via referrals from other services agencies to employability support.

Engage: Employer Engagement in Brighton & Hove

There are over 40 different organisations in the Brighton and Hove area directly engaging with businesses, identifying work placements and job opportunities for priority groups.

Engage was set up by Equal Brighton & Hove - a city-wide initiative to support adults into training and employment - for all organisations involved in employer engagement. It offers organisations the chance to network and gain a clear picture of what else is available locally as well as being kept up-to-date with new developments, legislation and opportunities. Referrals between organisations become simplified and the group is able to share best practice and create universal standards.

Engage membership has risen steadily from 23 organisations in March 2006 to a current level of 48. Engage has successfully:

- Identified and disseminated best-practice
- Created standards and introduced a system of monitoring adherence
- Improved placement sourcing and maintenance
- Improved networking and partnership working
- Sourced/circulated over 80 placements

This single point of contact for Employer Engagement in the area for the public, community & voluntary sector and local businesses, has resulted in the provision of a more professional and coordinated service to businesses. Customer service quality has also been improved, both in the provision of work placements and through members' increased awareness of available services for their clients. Activities directed towards area businesses include promotion of Engage member organisations' work, raising awareness of employer engagement activities, education around work placements and support for businesses wishing to provide work placements.

Co-ordination will be extended to include higher and further education and the project will be extended into West Sussex - on a consultancy basis - to develop a similar initiative.