

Evaluation Report

Project Title: Advice and Guidance Pays

Project Reference Number :ESF/0203/133

1. Background

The Evaluation Report was compiled by Mark Willett Adult Services Manager from Connexions Lancashire. The following evidence was used,

1. Each Delivery Partner completed an evaluation report and provided evidence.
2. The now! Team provided an evaluation report.
3. Schedule 2 -Appendix 3
4. Original Proposal
5. Management Information from IAG Partner.

The final MI was produced on Friday 23 January. The report was written 24-31 January 2004.

2. Overview of the project activity and partner involvement and an outline the roles the service partners undertook.

The lead organisation for the project is the now! Network, which is an autonomous partnership. Connexions Lancashire acted as the Accountable Body as funding for core services delivered by the Network are channelled through Connexions Lancashire.

The overall aim of the project was “ ***to increase participation by stimulating demand for learning and breaking down the social, functional and emotional barriers to learning, targeting those on the wrong side of the “Learning Divide”. The project was to provide a comprehensive package of specialist vocational guidance to adults residing in Lancashire targeting the most deprived parts of the County suffering with high levels of unemployment.***

...The work will focus on providing a range of services including help improving CVs, searching for new job and using computer aided guidance packages, completing application forms, preparing for an interview, using the internet and other packages for research to increase participation in learning and the local labour market.” Extract from Project proposal

The key strategic objectives were to

- Provide advice and guidance and support to enable people to develop active and continuous job search strategies
- Actively promote the benefits of participating in lifelong learning
- Increase sustainable job outcomes

Also the project was aimed at contributing towards achievement of LSC priorities

- Improve the availability of initial information, advice and guidance and maintain support to keep people in learning and increase opportunities to progress into further learning and employment
- Improve the coherence of ICT based information, advice and guidance systems.

Delivery was undertaken by the following members of the now! Network

- Accrington and Rossendale College
- Advance Adult Services @Connexions Lancashire.
- Best Centres
- Blackburn College
- Blackburn with Darwen Access Point Network
- MBW Training

A steering group including the delivery partners, now! Team and External Funding and Contracts Team was established to review the delivery of the project on a quarterly basis. The now! Team held the Marketing Budget and co-ordinating the marketing and promotions centrally.

Connexions External Funding and Contracts Team provided the initial ICT/MI/claim support. Then from August 2004 now! Network through the IAG Partner System provided the MI support and took over responsibility for contract monitoring and compliance.

Each provider also had its own individual focus, which contributed to the project aims

Accrington and Rossendale College expanded its services to beneficiaries previously outside the remit of the guidance team. This included working with beneficiaries in the community venues (e.g. Job Centre Plus and local Youth and Community Centres). The College introduced a job search skills service to beneficiaries who were not enrolled students of the college.

Best delivered its services through the four BEST centres with a focus on beneficiaries requiring in-depth support in examining or accessing self-employment as their career choice.

MBW provided services through its centres across Blackpool Wyre and Fylde. Targeting lone parents, labour market returners, disadvantaged beneficiaries with convictions, drug or alcohol misuse, literacy and numeracy support. Staff at the centres, signposted beneficiaries for further specialist support.

Blackburn with Darwen Access Points offered additional support over and above their normal service delivery.

Blackburn College focused on outreach activities with referral to specialist in house guidance support.

Advance @ Connexions Lancashire provided a Lancashire-wide service through its 18 centres and a range of community locations. The project ran alongside its “Advance Your Career with Confidence Project” in 2003. Beneficiaries were signposted by the Connexions Advisers, local Job Centres, other now! IAG Network members and through arrange of community based networks. Services were delivered in either the Connexions centres or community based locations. All activities were additional to the core Connexions 13-19 service.

3. Achievements of the project, including achievement against outputs, outcomes and key milestones.

3.1 LSC Appendix 3

A final copy of the batch upload in Appendix 3 format is included as Appendix 1 in the report attachments.

3.2. Outputs

A total of 2033 (OP1/OP5) adults registered for the project and all beneficiaries received an action plan. This was 5% less than the target but exceeded the original proposal of 1739.

The project attracted 1040 females (OP2) to the project 51% of the total. This was achieved by successful targeting and referrals from a range of organisation working with females. A number of providers delivered on site guidance work in women’s centres and Sure Start projects.

The project was within targets for 18-25s (OP5) accessing the project. (-0.09%)

The total number of 25+ (OP6) was also on target (-2.30%)

The two disappointing outputs were number of 18-24 who had been out of work for less than 6 months OP9 and number of 25+ who unemployed up to 12 months OP10

The key referrer during the year was Job Centre Plus and it is clear that they are providing basic advice services through their own NVQ3 Advisers but are using the project to support harder to help and long term unemployed. In particular labour market returners who are often been out of work for more than 12 months again are often referred to the project for specialist guidance.

Recommendation

Future project targets i.e. Advice and Guidance Pays 2 will need to take in account these observations and additional networking/partnership working would be required to increase referral of 25+ under 12 months and 18-24 less than 6 months.

3.3. Outcomes

The following outcomes were not benchmarked with previous projects. The Appendix 1 compared the contract targets with the original proposals. It is clear that the outcomes for the project were clearly over ambitious and future project will need to take into account the results of project

The outcomes did not have “Referrals to Work”. This has been passed back to LSC for inclusion in future projects so a comparison can be made on referrals to placing into work.

The most popular referral was FE providers followed by voluntary and community providers, Job Centre Plus (for beneficiaries who had not registered for work and benefits) and HE providers. Interesting observation that the project delivered better against the original proposals.

One disappointing output was the “no referral made” which was significantly higher than planned. However, the key reason was that the data field on CORE plus (see section on ICT) could not be transferred over electronically when the project moved over to IAG Partner this led to a significant loss of data. Also the system was only recording one referral the later IAG partner was able to record multiple referrals. In the early stages of the project the partners were under recording referrals and it was not until the contract was confirmed/contracted in February that referrals were accurately recorded. This has also impacted on OC1- OC18. Data entry improved in the later part of the project and the Project Team are confident that further projects will accurately capture referrals.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the “into “ categories as it became clear during the project that because the project had limited lifetime –12 months many beneficiaries would be entering after the close of the project e.g. a beneficiary seen in October who has been referred to HE may not have a place confirmed until the following year, similar with full time education.

Also “into” destinations are linked to response from the follow up undertaken by the partners. It is clear that if the project had had a longer life span higher ratios of “into” would be recorded.

Recommendation

The next Advice and Guidance Pays Project is for 3 years and this will enable the Project Team to undertake and implement more robust tracking and follow with its delivery partners. It will be important to clearly communicate to the delivery partners the importance of tracking and follow up and to review existing partner arrangement to provide robust systems for the project.

Another critical factor that impacted on the data was the inability of some providers to update data and to finally close down within the timescale set by the Project Team. For example 27% records were not closed down with a further 12% having the wrong closure code entered. The Project Management Team are aware of the tight timescale that Partners were working to and future projects will have at least 3 months to comply closure data instead of 15 days. The Project Team are confident that this action would improve performance.

However despite some of the recording issues the Project Achieved good results in terms of into employment > 30hours (-21% variance) with 304 beneficiaries successfully moving into work as a direct result of the project and a further 135 moving into part-time employment.

3.4. Short Record/Initial registration Data from IAG partner

The following charts and data have been taken from the Short Event record and initial registration data taken from batch upload and matches the Schedule 2 Appendix 3 in **3.1.1** see Appendix 1.

3.4.1. Gender

Appendix 2 - 51% female 49% male

3.4.2. Ethnicity

Appendix 3 -the project attracted 11% of beneficiaries from Black and Ethnic Minorities, which reflects Lancashire-Area Wide cultures, and communities that were targeted by the project.

3.4.3. Destination/Employment Status

Appendix 7 provides a graphical analysis of closure destination data. And if compared with Appendix 4 Employment Status Unemployed was 1442 by December it had fallen to 643. This is 55% fall, which is quite an achievement with a short-term project. Further demonstration that guidance not only has a

social impact on adults but also makes a significant impact in terms of the local economy. This also matches the “into employment” in **3.3**.

3.4.4. Qualifications

Appendix 3 – qualification levels of beneficiaries at the outset of project. Interesting that the project did attract significant numbers of below level 2, which is an encouraging indicator for the next project that has focus on below level 2. Also reasonable number of NVQ 4 many of who will be unemployed graduates.

3.4.5 Delivery Partners

This chart highlights the contribution made by each delivery partner. Advance saw 47.5% of all beneficiaries.

3.4.5. Location

Appendix 8 provides chart of the main postal locations that beneficiaries came from. The project attracted beneficiaries Lancashire wide with work centred on Blackburn, Blackpool (non-SRB), Burnley, Chorley, Darwen, Nelson, Preston and Rawtenstall. Also the project attracted beneficiaries’ rural communities through its Clitheroe Centre.

3.4.6 Summary from Short Record analysis

The analysis highlights a major achievement, the move in beneficiaries from the unemployment into an outcome. Altogether 1442 (70% of project numbers) had unemployed as initial status by the closure the number of unemployed beneficiaries had fallen to 643 (even if take into account that 557 were not known –some who would be unemployed). This clearly demonstrates that the project has made a significant contribution to not only the lives of the beneficiaries in terms of employability but also reducing the level of benefit dependency.

Recommendation

That impact measures be used to highlight some of the benefits of guidance e.g. that guidance can improve your employability, work and learning opportunities and you life choices.

3.4.6. General

General achievements for each delivery partner.

Accrington and Rossendale College – Expanded services into Accrington Job Centre for one morning a week and increased networking with Rossendale Jobcentre. Developed links with Youth and Community Centre to

provide IAG services to New Routes beneficiaries. Developed services to beneficiaries at Sure Start Centre in Bacup.

Blackburn College – Wider access to beneficiaries in community, enhanced provision including psychometric testing. Improved links with 24 external organisations.

Blackburn with Darwen Access Points- were able to assist beneficiaries from large scale redundancy in the town, as result of the additional support and guidance many of the beneficiaries secured alternative employment, made a change in career or upgraded skills by accessing local learning.

MBW - over achieved on their targets and offered services through their new St Annes Centre.

Best Centres - achieved project targets and received positive feedback from beneficiaries.

Advance - expanded its service delivery into a wider range of community locations including Surestart, Family Centres, Women Centres, sessions at Job Centres – Skelmersdale, Burnley, Blackburn, Preston, Blackpool and Fleetwood. Attended range of high profile exhibitions/networking events to promote project e.g. Preston Mela - Avenham Park, PLTP Outdoor Market, Shopping Centres Lancaster, Morecambe, Rawtenstall, Blackpool. Improved access to adult guidance facilities at Burnley, Skelmersdale and Blackpool. Links with Clitheroe Job Centre Plus led to referrals from residents of the Ribble Valley. Finally the Team received high levels beneficiary satisfaction from Matrix Evaluation Survey and Follow up questionnaires. The company achieved the Guidance Standards Matrix Accreditation the first Connexions Company in the North-West and the second one in the UK. Alongside the accreditation the unit established a quality improvement team (First to be set up in Connexions) ensure that the company is at the forefront in terms of quality standards. The unit developed a new interview assessment tool, support and supervision and peer support system for its guidance workers. A further 4 team members achieved British Psychological Society Level A, one team member Morrisby Test Administration Certificate and 3 team members are trained to use GENED.

4. Areas of innovation

MBW opened up an additional site to increase access to provision in St Annes including the provision of information on services, opportunities and vacancies more specific and local to customer need.

Blackburn College increased in usage of email both for enquiries and communication with external agencies. Developed a referral service for Psychometric testing.

Accrington and Rossendale College team attended local carnival in fancy dress to promote IAG services and also promoted services at adult learning exhibition in Burnley hosted by Radio Lancashire. Appendix 9

Ad>vance developed range of eye catching marketing and promotional material including, posters, leaflets, handouts/flyers and a portable stand for small events. The team extended opening hours and arranged open events at Connexions Centres eg Burnley and Lancaster. See Appendix 12. CV workshop for new staff at Fleetwood, St Annes and Lancaster tailored to helping Connexions Advisers identify help they can give to adults on CV's and know when to refer to Advance Team for specialist CV guidance. All the teams have made use of interest-based careers software and then access to live vacancies and learning information on line. Team trialed two new interest guidance tools – Careers Interest Inventory and Quicksan Pathfinder with beneficiaries in community locations where ICT was not available. Conducted Morrisby Assessment in wider range of locations and field trialed GENED Assessment in Burnley/East Lancashire Area.

5. Identification of areas of good practice and areas for improvement

The delivery partners identified the following areas of good practice and areas for improvement

Accrington and Rossendale College

The break through of working with Job Centre Plus was cited as an area of good practice with networking and close working one day per week strengthening links that were previously very tenuous. Referrals and links with Rawtenstall were less successful, and a review of situation showed that the arrangements were not working as well as Accrington. A decision was made to withdraw staff from the Centre.

MBW

During the project MBW successfully achieved Matrix Accreditation. The assessor was overwhelmed at the commitment of the whole organisation to support clients and offering a service not just relying on the Guidance Team. The organisation worked as whole to offer seamless support for beneficiaries in obtaining goal and offered commitment and help to the guidance department in its aims and objectives. The organisation identified the following areas for improvement: modernisation it's marketing tools and improve follow up evaluation process and capacity to identify outcomes for future projects.

Best Centres

The organisation developed a one-stop-shop for learning, careers and business guidance. Areas for improvement included reducing the number of clients who attend for one off sessions.

Blackburn with Darwen Access Points

No issues were highlighted.

Blackburn College

The College identified the following areas of good practice. This was highlighted through the outreach activities, which allowed face-to-face contact, external networking and signposting to the main College Centre, linking in a range of partnerships. The college outreach services was extended with the establishment of weekly “drop in” (Open doors at Roman Road Access Point) advice and guidance interviews appointments were also arranged at Blackburn with Darwen Foyer. The college identified the following areas for improvement. The first was how the registration paperwork could be improved, as the project registration document was a barrier to their client groups from outreach setting. The second was how to minimise the impact of change of manager, which occurred part way through project.

Advance

The Team administered Morrisby Profile Assessments in a wide range of community setting in particular in East Lancashire. The venues used were from the community/voluntary and close to where beneficiaries lived. Feedback has been very good and the organisation has undertaken an analysis from the beneficiary feedback/follow up to see impact in terms of added value. Early indicators show a marked improvement in non-destinations in beneficiaries taking an assessment in comparison with beneficiaries using just interest inventories.

The Project Manager and Team Leader introduced new interview observation document and team members were assessed against the internal standards developed from NVQ Framework. Internal links with Connexions 19-25 transition for clients with special needs were established to develop referrals from beneficiaries requiring adult services. Follow up and referral from National Helpline enquirers from young adults interested in Modern Apprenticeships was developed through the project. Enquirers were referred for guidance appointments. Review of appointment system to overcome issues of non-attendance. Improvement to beneficiary information packs, updating of guidance resource materials that beneficiaries take home. Increased usage of vacancy (paid and voluntary) and course search via Internet. Weekly News Sheet of local and national labour market information and new developments in education and training. Team group email to highlight good practice and exchange information. Use of email to check and give feedback on beneficiary CV and letters of application. Increased and extensive networking with outside agencies including Job Centre

Intensive initial follow up to beneficiaries not attending initial interview to enquire about non-attendance and book further appointment if required. Centres where non-attendance had been an issue with customers were contacted the day before to remind them of appointment time.

Improvement that were highlighted included the impact on group work sessions due to being unable to access suitable venues. The Advance Project Team will be review the guidance given on the quality of action plans. Maintain high profile and links with Job Centre Network in particular communication changes in eligibility and target groups. Formalise communication/marketing plan with District /local Job Centre Managers. Further research is required to review non-attendance at guidance interview appointment times. Stronger links with LSC are required for future projects to provide improved referral and opportunities for 20-24s interested in Modern Apprenticeships. Team members commented on lack of opportunities in some skill sectors and unwillingness of WBTP to take older trainees. This caused some issues in guidance interviews where beneficiaries had responded to National Advertising and then found opportunities were limited in some locations.

6. Lessons learnt, which will shape future provision, or would run a better project in future

The following observations from the evaluation of the ICT/MI with clear recommendation for the next round-Advice and Guidance Pays 2 is

1. Confirm with LSC in detail all batch load/MI requirements at the beginning of the project.
2. Conduct walk-through of MI process with LSC ESF audit team
3. Communicate any changes to delivery partners at the onset of the project start.
4. Conduct walk-through with delivery partners to minimise data error.
5. Implement data monitoring system at the end of each month to highlight errors.
6. Conduct paperwork audit on a quarterly basis to ensure contract compliance.
7. MI/Batch upload –standard item at quarterly Steering Group meetings with delivery partner/now! feedback on process.
8. Improve reporting processes from delivery partners to central project team,
9. Profile delivery outputs to ensure that sufficient time is given to evaluation, follow up and final closure.

Recommendation

That the above issues are discussed in detail before the Advice and Pays 2 Contract is completed

7. Dissemination of good practice including details of dissemination materials produced

Only Advance provided any examples or evidence of dissemination. Most providers (exception Advance) have small teams of advisers and dissemination is done less formally. However this has highlighted that there is need for cross dissemination across the provider network. One reason is that some providers are partners but also competitors in terms of contracting and delivery and there can be an unwillingness to disseminate materials that could give competitors a trading advantage.

The following statement was provided by Advance -

The whole Advance Team meets together once month for Team Meeting. As part of the meeting opportunity to disseminate good practice are encouraged. The teams have group email and shared drive. Materials are placed on drive for all team to have access. Also Team updates through group email. Eventually there will be an Advance Intranet site. Main examples have been dissemination of handouts for individual and group work. Team members have designed and implemented new information for customers handout see Appendix 11A this was distributed alongside new procedures to all staff involved in adult work. The team, also had a rolling programme of training and visiting speakers to update on developments e.g. LCVC Social Services Volunteer Service and JobCentre Plus. Reports are disseminated to team members who are unable to attend.

Recommendation

Review ways of improving cross dissemination of good practice between delivery partners.

8. Details of publicity undertaken, including copies of IAG Advertising

Each provider produced their own marketing plan.

Accrington and Rossendale College used project funding a range of marketing resources including Mugs, for community advisers to promote the guidance team and increase referrals. Bookmarks given to adults and children at exhibitions ensuring the message of access to free IAG goes home. Tax Disc holders –sent to taxi companies to promote service to users of service. Leaflets- produced in house to keep printing costs to a minimum. Inspirational cards (presented in fish bowl) produced in house these little cards with sayings and affirmations were used at exhibitions and in office to open up conversation and same time reader has copy of address and contact details. See attached Photograph appendix 10

MBW marketed services at Job Centres, included floor walking and a range of community locations. They produced leaflets and posters see appendix 10

Blackburn College marketed the services across a range of partner organisations and produced a range of marketing materials see attached Appendix 12

Blackburn with Darwen Access Points and the **Best Centres** didn't undertake any specific publicity and marketing.

Advance developed a marketing plan alongside the "Advance your Career with Confidence Project" see appendix 13 with a style guide and a range of materials including leaflets, web site, posters, display stand. One resource that was purchased was a portable and table for outdoor events. Attended many events including Preston Mela, (Avenham Park, Preston Learning Together Partnership (Preston Outdoor Market), Open Evening at Lancaster Connexions Centre, Saturday Open Day at Burnley Connexions Centre. The Team also produced regular press releases to advertise IAG Services one e.g. in Skelmersdale/Ormskirk Appendix 13

All Connexions Centres received new signage to promote the Advance Branding. The company also conducted a full review of its marketing and promotional materials consulting adult user groups and team members. All feedback has been incorporated into future strategies.

now! Team supported the project delivery through its own Marketing Adviser. A marketing plan was drawn up when the project started but staff changes and insufficient hand over meant the plan wasn't put into action.

Even so, a project meeting in September 2003 identified the project was hitting total guidance session targets. However, it was not reaching some of the priority groups, primarily people between 20 –25, people out of work for 6 months or less and people with basic skills needs.

A newspaper campaign was undertaken in October 2003 with full-page colour advert going in the Blackpool, Blackburn and Lancaster and Morecambe Citizen newspapers on Thursday 9th October. It also went in the Accrington Observer on Friday 10th October. These publications hit the areas covered by the project and have a combined readership of 258 940.

The adverts included an invitation that could be cut out by the client and taken into the participating centres. The rationale behind this was to break down any barriers that a client may have about walking into a centre. The client may feel more confident if they have an invitation to hand over to validate them being there.

The adverts also stated the service and invitation to guidance was valid until 31st December 2003, until the end of the project. Many centres would not be providing guidance after this date.

Illustrations were also used to compliment the text and describe the services on offer e.g. a computer. These images have been used on the now! Network leaflets displayed in all centres.

During the last quarter of the project 8 people were referred into basic skills provision, this was the highest figure compared to previous quarters. 2 people entered into basic skills provision as compared with 0 all the previous quarters. 88 people aged between 18 and 25 accessed the service in the last quarter meaning the project was only 0.9% below profile. 42 clients in that age group were out of work for 6 months or less showing this quarter as one of the highest performing against profile of the whole project.

Recommendation

Implement a marketing plan for Advice and Guidance Pays 2 and engage delivery partners in the process. Review plan on 6 monthly basis.

9. Case Studies

See attached selection of case studies

10. Views of customer and / or partners

The Delivery Partners ensured all beneficiaries received a follow up questionnaire between 8 –12 weeks accessing the service. Some questionnaires have been received after the project had finished and so destination data has not been recorded on the system. See Appendix X for example of questionnaire/letter. If no questionnaire was returned then the Delivery Partner arranged for Advisers to contact beneficiaries by phone. A number of beneficiaries do not have phones and so no contact was made. All questionnaires and customer data analysis are held at provider's centres. All destinations were recorded on IAG partner. Delivery Partners have fed back through to the Project Team that customer satisfaction levels were high, but the Project Team has not seen direct evidence.

Recommendation

That the Project Team and Delivery Partners establish a benchmark against external evaluation for future projects.

Note the Project Manager has already recommended that for Advice and Guidance Pays 2 that an independent customer survey be under taken of a 10% sample of the total number of beneficiaries accessing the project. Also Delivery Partners will be asked to send in annual customer evaluation reports.

11.Sustainability of project activities (Exit strategy) mainstreaming

The Project Manager has received a clear message from Delivery partners that guidance activities would not be sustainable without commitment of mainstream funding or from external funding sources i.e. Co-Financing. During the latter half the now! Operational Management Group looked at alternative streams of funding to continue service delivery.

This involved an application for round 2 LSC and Job Centre Plus Co-Financing. The now! Network was successful in applying for funding from LSC to continue activities across Lancashire but Job Centre Plus only contracted for activities in the West. At the time of writing there is a short fall in the budget for a number of providers for 2004/5 as the total annual ESF is now lower than 2000-2003 per year. The Government may release further funding for core advice services but guidance services are at risk.

Details will be communicated to LSC and JobCentre Plus highlighting impact on service delivery and future deployment of qualified NVQ Level 4 guidance staff.

Recommendation

That the now! Operational Management Group with the LSC reviews the impact on partners and customers of the reduction in funding for 2004/5

12. A comparison of how the project dealt with information communication technologies, equal opportunities and sustainability compared to project proposal

12.1 ICT

The now! Project manager contracted with Connexions EFACT Team to complete the management returns to LSC as outlined in the proposal. The EFACT Team had provided the MI returns for the previous two GONW ESF Objective 3 IAG Projects 1999- 2002 and had had a dedicated MI system CORE Plus which had provided the Quarterly MI returns. Each provider sent in their MI to the team who entered on the system.

Unfortunately, the LSC did not conclude the contract arrangements until January 2003 (the project started August 2002). The system was quickly adapted to provide the LSC Co-financing returns and initial returns were completed. In April the LSC asked the Project to provide a batch upload to Coventry and to collect revised MI in form of Short Event Record (this was replaced in August by a new Short Record). The EFACT team worked with software house Career Vision to produce amended system but it became clear that this was going to be difficult to achieve. Meanwhile the now! Team had discussions with Reidmark the software house that had designed

Information and Advice MI system to see if the system could provide the LSC return. During July Reid mark produced a system and Career Vision were asked to cease development work. Connexions as the Accountable Body agree to adopt the IAG partner as the Co-Financing Database. During July/Aug the EFACT Team and Reid Mark transferred data from CORE Plus to IAG Partner.

With effect from 22nd October 2003 a decision was made by Connexions that the now! Team to take over the total management of the Advice & Guidance Pays project including all the MI claim/closure

A 100% audit of the electronic and paper records was undertaken to ensure that all paperwork matched the MI system and appendix 3 reports that were sent to the LSC. This process helped to record actual clients seen since the beginning of the project and to take out any paperwork that was not completed i.e. no signature.

The reason for the variations within the appendix 3 reports that were sent to the LSC were due to a variety of reasons;

- A cleansing of the system which reflects the attention to detail given to the now! Teams audit of the records.
- Rectification's of incorrectly inputted data (this as a consequence of amongst other things, changes to ICT data system, training/familiarity issues, changes by LSC in terms of their requirements, methodologies etc
- Entry error in terms of confusion between similar co-financing projects.

The realignment process did highlight discrepancies between electronic data (batch uploads) and the hard copy appendix 3s etc. However as a consequence of the thoroughness of processes this was rectified and the LSC were confident that the new appendix 2/3 reflected an accurate record of client delivery.

There was an intensive training plan created to support delivers of the contract that is still taking place to incorporate changes within the system.

The introduction of the new MI system enabled the now! Team to monitor effectively the clients seen and proved to be invaluable in the remaining months of the project.

12.2 Equal Opportunities.

All delivery partners and the now Project management Team have very effective Equal Opportunity polices and practices. All partners have the Matrix Standards or have the old standards and are waiting for an assessment date for the new standards. All delivery partners have appropriately qualified staff (NVQ 4 or equivalent in guidance) who abide by the Guidance Council Code of Principles that underpin all aspects of their delivery. The code of principals

has 6 key factors –impartiality, confidentiality, individual ownership, equality of opportunity, transparency and accessibility. All partners have signed up to the code. During the year the Project Management Network had no instances of any complaints against partners involved in delivery.

12.3 Sustainability see section 11

13. Details of any tools which have been used to evaluate the impact the project has made and a note of innovative practice

Questionnaires

All partners followed each beneficiary with evaluation/follow questionnaire with prepaid envelope 12 weeks after initial contact. Delivery team contacted beneficiaries not responding. Partners saw an initial rate of about 30%, however beneficiary evaluation and comments showed that the support provided had been welcomed and that beneficiaries were achieving goals and moving forward. See Appendix X for examples used

Case Study

Each Provider provided case studies. See Appendix 14

Contract

Appendix 2/3 and Short Event / IAG partners data was analysed see Appendix 1 by now! Team and Providers

Mystery Shopper

One provider arranged Mystery Shopper phone call to measure effectiveness of signposting and referrals to their guidance services. (see Appendix 16)

Implementation/Marketing Plan/Original Proposal

Quarterly review against milestones.

Monthly check of Short Record / Advance data inputting

Undertaken by now! Administrator plus check against IAG partner data.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Sample undertaken by providers see appendix 15

Matrix Assessment

Number of providers were assessed during project timescale.

16. Conclusion

The project was successful in meeting its key objectives as set out in the project proposals. The supporting evidence outlined in the report shows a clear link between specialist guidance and a significant movement into work and learning even over a relative short time span. It would be interesting to measure the impact of a fully funded Adult IAG. Disappointingly, overall funding (if you include Job Centre Plus Co-Financing) has fallen and IAG delivery providers will reduce levels of service delivery over the next 12 months. This will see a reduction in the number beneficiaries accessing services across Lancashire and a potential loss of skills if specialist guidance is redeployed into other activities. The Project Management Team are confident that some of the key recommendations in the Evaluation Report will be applied to Advice and Guidance Pays 2. Also it is recognised that some issues were beyond the control of the Project Team and that future projects will benefit from the learning experience that all partners have faced over the past 18 months as ESF Object 3 Funding moved from GONW to the Lancashire LSC.

Mark Willett
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28 January 2004

Appendices

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