

Celebrating Success in the North West

Examples of just a few of the many success stories that have come from the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) 2007-2010 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan.

November 2009





ESF INVESTING IN THE NORTH WEST

Between 2000 and 2007, the European Social Fund (ESF) helped over four million people in England and had a major impact on employment prospects in the North West.



Leading learning and skills



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills



2007-2010 European Social Fund (ESF) Co-finance Plan

Following on from this success, the European Union launched a new ESF programme which will run until 2013. This new programme is investing £4.6 billion across the country, with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the North West securing £185 million of ESF funding for 2007-2010, which is matched with an equivalent amount of LSC funding.

This overall package of £370 million is being used to:

- Up-skill unemployed people so they can secure sustainable employment
- Support young people who are not currently in education, employment or training
- Support employers to up-skill their workforce.

In the North West, the LSC has contracted with over 130 colleges and training providers to deliver projects to achieve these objectives. These providers are making the most of the opportunities that this ESF programme is providing, as they continue to develop new and innovative ways of tackling employment and skills issues.

BUCKING THE TREND

Higher Education Enterprise Skills Routeway

Delivered by Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), in partnership with Young Enterprise North West and Creativebias

Higher Education Enterprise Skills Routeway (HEESR) provides students with a customised programme of training and support to raise awareness of entrepreneurship.

The initiative aims to harness the creativity of Merseyside students who wish to set up their own business and supports them in the development of their concept. As part of the project, participants can benefit from a fast track enterprise development scheme that provides an intensive business course and staged bursary payments over a nine month period.



Impact and Success

Twenty-two year old Talia Baccino and her sister Kayleigh, 23, enrolled on the programme in 2008. They have since launched their own successful company, Trendy Vend, which, via a number of vending machines in bars across the city, supplies high quality cosmetic products to girls enjoying a night out on the town.

Talia, who has since graduated in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour from LJMU, found inspiration for her business concept while enjoying an evening out with friends in Liverpool city centre. The HEESR programme has helped Talia develop her idea and now Trendy Vend has nine vending machines in venues across Liverpool, with ambitions to roll out the service further.

Talia says: "We've worked hard on marketing our product and researching what the most popular products would be. We now have nine machines in bars across Liverpool city centre and ultimately hope to franchise Trendy Vend in other cities across the country. The ESF funding has made it possible for us to get our business venture off the ground."



ROUTE TO SUCCESS

Skills for Jobs – Sector Routeways

Delivered by Cumbria Colleges Ltd

The Skills for Jobs – Sector Routeways programme works with participants across Cumbria to develop their skills within key employability areas for the county. The sectors identified are; construction, health and social care, leisure, logistics, manufacturing / engineering, retail and tourism / hospitality.

Unemployed individuals that are over 18 years old can access the programme and when the most appropriate sector is identified they will commence employability training and short accredited courses – giving them a head start when it comes to securing sustainable employment.

The project exists to provide a route from unemployment to training, with the journey ultimately leading to skilled work.

With the labour market particularly competitive in the current economic climate, the project is continuously liaising with local employers to ensure that the skills and knowledge participants are gaining are relevant to the employment opportunities available.

Impact and Success

With one key objective – to get unemployed people back into work – the project really is delivering. With a target of 85 starts on the course, the project is actually working with 146 individuals, assessing their needs and moving them on to learn new skills. Sixty of these individuals have now moved into employment or are working in the voluntary sector.

Karen Ingram delivers the programme in the health and social care sector and is confident in the programme and the difference it can make to people's lives. Karen comments: "There is no other way to say it... this does work. I have supported participants from the very beginning, when they have had no confidence, low self esteem and limited experience of work, and have then seen them move on into employment and flourish, even securing supervisory positions."

LEARNING TO CARE

Passport to Health and Social Care Employment

Managed by Stockport College and delivered by Salford City College

Delivered in the Greater Manchester area, Passport to Health and Social Care Employment is a five week course that has been set up to enable people who are long-term unemployed to gain new skills and secure employment in the health and social care sector.

The contract is held by Stockport College with the project based at Salford City College operating in partnership with Salford Royal Hospital, Jobcentre Plus and care homes throughout Salford.

Individuals undertake confidence building and skills sessions, plus on-going individual advice and guidance and careers advice sessions.



Impact and Success

One successful candidate is 37 year old Lynn McNicol from Eccles. Lynn is a single parent who left school at 16 after years of bullying. For the past 20 years, Lynn has spent most of her life indoors, suffering from depression and agoraphobia.

In September 2008, Lynn joined the project and hasn't looked back since. She says attending the course has changed her life and she has secured a job as a Clinical Support Worker, helping patients at Salford Royal Hospital.

Lynn said: "When I heard about the course I didn't think I'd be able to do it as my confidence was so low. But once I'd got over my nerves, I realised it was the best thing I've ever done; it's given me a new lease of life. I'm doing a job I love, I've found confidence I didn't know I had and have made lots of friends.

"I wouldn't have done this on my own. It's not just improved my life, but also my son's life. I'm no longer afraid to leave the house so I can take him places after school and we have a great time together. I thought it was a little too late in life to change but I'm so glad I made myself do it. Another bonus is because I'm earning my own money now, I don't have to rely on anyone else."



A SPORTING CHANCE

Ambassadors for the Future

Delivered by the University of Central Lancashire

The Ambassadors for the Future programme aims to engage and inspire 16-19 year olds from across Lancashire who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), or those at risk of becoming NEET, through a range of interesting and stimulating 'energiser' courses, designed to progress young people into volunteering, education or training.

The two year programme is run through the International School for Communities, Rights and Inclusion at the University of Central Lancashire, working with Lancaster University Volunteering Unit, Lancashire Sports Partnership, CSV Training and Enterprise, Burnley Telematics and Teleworking Centre and Prescap.

Impact and Success

Seventeen year old participant, Richard Walmsley, was referred to the Ambassadors for the Future programme through Lancashire County Council's Young People's Service. Living in supported accommodation, Richard had no family or friends to support him and was beginning to get into trouble with the police for anti-social behaviour.



Richard said: "The Ambassadors for the Future programme was the turning point in my life, I was going down the wrong route but the course provided me with the opportunity to turn my life around."

Richard took part in the Lancashire Sport energiser course as a way to gain qualifications and progress onto a career in sport, and achieved a Sports Leader qualification.

Richard concludes: "The course has changed my life, gone are the days of getting in trouble with the police, now I spend my time being active and working towards further qualifications. I am set on a career in the sports industry and the programme has provided me with the opportunity to discover this ambition and make it a reality."



MAKING SKILLS WORK

SkillWorks

Delivered by Blue Orchid

SkillWorks was established in Merseyside to use ESF for stimulating and addressing demand for workforce development in small and medium sized enterprises. The programme enables organisations to work more effectively through the development of staff. Liverpool domestic violence charity, HEAT Kensington, has been working with a SkillWorks broker from Blue Orchid to look at the skills of its advisers.

Impact and Success

The SkillWorks broker has been working with the team at HEAT Kensington to identify where increased skills are necessary, enabling staff to attend courses and increase their proficiency in areas specific to their work.

HEAT employee Natalie Wilkie wanted to increase her existing knowledge, which would in turn bring greater benefits to HEAT clients. Natalie enrolled on a postgraduate diploma in psychotherapy and counselling at Liverpool John Moores University, which focuses on developing skills in areas such as family mediation and dealing with domestic violence cases.

Natalie comments: "I have worked with people affected by domestic violence for two years. With a background in clinical psychology, I already had a good understanding of the long term issues and problems associated with being a victim, however this course has aided my development considerably, enabling me to work much closer with clients and build a trusting relationship.

"Almost a year into the course I can already see the difference it has made. With my increased skills and deeper understanding into an individual's background and behaviour patterns, I am able to help them understand the effects and consequences of their personal situation."

Relationship Manager for Blue Orchid, Paul Ward, says: "The ESF funding enables organisations like HEAT to be able to focus on their people and continue to help them develop. I believe that employees are a business' greatest asset and by offering them training opportunities, they can help achieve the objectives for the benefit of the whole business."



STEPPING UP

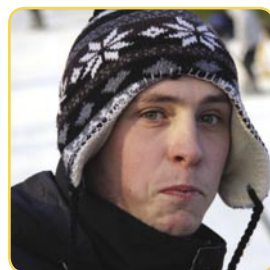
The Right Step

Delivered by Salford City Council

The Right Step is a structured 13 week programme for 16-19 year olds that are not in education employment or training (NEET). The project aims to engage learners through a range of interesting structured activities and develop the literacy, numeracy, ICT and overall employability skills of beneficiaries to support them into employment or learning opportunities.

Impact and Success

James Parish was referred to The Right Step course through SMART (Substance Misuse Advice and Referral Team). Having left mainstream education at 16 with few qualifications and limited work experience, James found himself NEET and with no income which was affecting his health, appearance and self-esteem.



After being in trouble with the police and experiencing a breakdown with family relations resulting in him moving out of home, James was struggling to find accommodation and needed guidance, support and motivation to get his life back on track.

James said: "After being referred to The Right Step programme, I was able to speak to someone about what I wanted to achieve and where I wanted to be."

During the course James achieved first aid, food hygiene and welding skills certificates and completed a fire awareness course at Eccles Fire Station, going on to complete a two week work placement there. Still engaged with YMCA Training on an Entry to Employment (e2e) course, James is now working towards a Level 2 in numeracy and literacy.

James concludes: "Following my e2e course I am going to start looking for a job. With my training and qualifications behind me it has given me extra confidence to tackle application forms and I have a more positive approach to interviews."



GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Skills for Jobs

Managed by Warrington Borough Council and delivered by Warrington Disability Partnership and Warrington Collegiate

The Skills for Jobs programme works with people over the age of 18, who are unemployed and have a skills gap which may be preventing them from gaining employment. It offers flexible, customised support to help individuals develop their skills and improve their chances of gaining sustainable employment.

As part of the project, Warrington Disability Partnership's team of employment advisers offer a package of support. Key to this support is the Skills for Jobs Action Plan which helps to identify participants' skills gaps, barriers and employment interests. The advisers then work with participants to address the issues raised on the action plan by providing a range of help, advice and support, including signposting to appropriate training.

The Skills for Jobs training is delivered through Warrington Collegiate and includes an introduction to a number of courses, such as IT, customer service, first aid, food hygiene and general employability skills, such as interview techniques.

Impact and Success

One of the notable successes to date has been a pre-recruitment project working in partnership with Golden Gates Housing, which had identified four permanent positions for skilled labourers.

Working closely with Golden Gates Housing, Warrington Disability Partnership managed the application process, assessing the candidates suitability prior to referral to the pre-recruitment training. Warrington Collegiate was then able to develop a course for the successful applicants, addressing the skills required for the positions. Angela Perry, Director of Property Services at Golden Gates Housing said: "Through the recruitment programme we met some really high calibre and enthusiastic applicants. It's a tribute to the staff running the Skills for Jobs programme that the whole process ran so smoothly and Golden Gates Housing has some excellent new members of staff as a result."



FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Solid Foundations

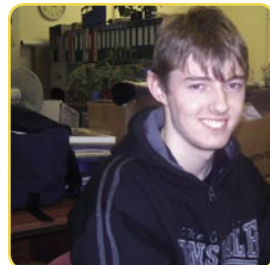
Delivered by Building Young People's Potential (BYPP), part of the Blacon Community Trust

BYPP was established to encourage young people who are not engaged in employment, education or training to work towards gaining the skills that will set them up for the future.

Head Teacher of BYPP, Louise Davey, explains: "Sometimes a young person may have been excluded from school in Year 10 or 11 and missed out on gaining GCSEs. We can help them achieve the results they need to follow the career they choose, in a non-traditional environment that they often respond to much more positively."

Impact and Success

Eighteen year old Adam Poole is just one of the many young people who have benefited from the programme. Adam was involved with BYPP for around 18 months after being referred by Connexions for the post-16 vocational training course to help him gain the skills and confidence necessary to move into further education.



When he first became involved with the programme, Adam was very shy and found it difficult to interact with other people. He was recognised as a conscientious young man with the potential to succeed both academically and socially, but he needed support to achieve this, to enhance his self image and social skills.

With an excellent attendance record and attitude, Adam has achieved qualifications in communication, literacy and numeracy and ICT.

Adam says: "I'm very glad I came to BYPP as I'm really enjoying the work and have made lots of friends. I was very shy when I first came here but the staff are really nice and they've really helped me; I don't feel shy any more."



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