

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



T R A N S F O R M ■ C O M P E T E ■ T H R I V E

Sustaining people into work

Research Report 2009/10

About this document

Commissioned by the Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy Partnership, this document is based on detailed independent research by Consult CIH and outlines the contribution of registered housing providers (formerly known as Registered Social Landlords) to tackling worklessness across the Liverpool City Region. It considers activity across the six local authority districts of Halton, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Knowsley and Wirral.

Based upon primary evidence, it offers a snap shot of activity in the financial year 2009/10. It does not cover other housing association core activities such as housing management, housing with care and support, tackling anti-social behaviour and wider community investment which also contribute to tackling worklessness and poverty.

This report forms part of a larger project. An exceptional partnership between the City Employment Strategy partners, including six local authorities, JobCentre Plus and no less than 14 housing associations across the Liverpool City Region has also been developed separately. They have signed a compact to tackle worklessness together to achieve more through collaboration.

Further information can be found at www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk

Contents

Key messages	2
Headlines	3
Sustaining people into work: A Compact for housing providers	4
1. Context	5
2. Scale of activity	6
3. Employment and enterprise	8
4. Employability and skills	11
5. Front-line services	14
6. Strategic approaches	19



“...millions of people are simply parked on benefits with little hope of ever progressing into work; Our core goal will be to improve the quality of life for the worst off - for pensioners, children and working-age adults...”

Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions¹

¹ State of the nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK HMG (June 2010)

Key messages

1. We are investing in employment, skills and enterprise

Through procurement, partnerships and significant specific activity we are investing in jobs, skills and encouraging enterprise: just 100 jobs created by housing associations can save government £800,000 per year. If lost productivity is taken into account then the savings amount to £2.3 million. Projecting these savings over two or three years produces an even more significant outcome for the economy.

2. We reach local residents

We own and manage over 140,000 social homes across the Liverpool City Region accounting for 91% of the social housing stock. We are working with local agencies to help them access those furthest from the labour market and have significant experience of engaging with these communities and individuals helping them to overcome barriers to work, including those associated with the Welfare Benefit System.

3. We work at a local level empowering local people

We are making a vital contribution to neighbourhoods working at a local level with our communities and partners to tackle poverty, inclusion and to empower local people. We are in a unique position: we have both the capacity to influence contractors in order to encourage them to employ and train local people; and the ability to maximize any engagement opportunities both with tenants and the wider community (including schools, youth groups and individuals) to raise awareness of training and employment opportunities.

4. We have the potential to do even more through collaboration

With appropriate support and by collaborating together with our local authorities, civic society organisations including community groups we have the potential to do even more to tackle poverty and worklessness.

How we tackle worklessness

Housing providers contribute to tackling worklessness across the Liverpool City Region through collaborative working with each other, local authority partners, JobCentre Plus, residents and other agencies through:

- advertising vacancies within their own organisations to local residents and in partnership with JobCentre Plus;
- their role as employers of over 6,400 people in the Liverpool City Region and by offering work placements, trials, training, mentoring, volunteering or apprenticeship opportunities, including support through their own organisation or through contractors and suppliers;
- supporting tenants and others to gain skills through tenant involvement;
- encouraging enterprise and Social Enterprises;
- providing welfare benefits and other advice including better off in work calculations and encouraging financial inclusion;
- working with a range of partners;
- engaging the hardest to reach communities through outreach, signposting and referral to Information Advice and Guidance agencies.

Headlines

In 2009/10, housing associations in the Liverpool City Region natural economic area:

- Invested £3.82 million in 2009/10 in activities to tackle worklessness;
- Were engaged in 268 projects which achieved a specific outcome for over 14,000 residents of the Liverpool City Region;
- Created or supported people into an estimated 500 permanent jobs;
- Delivered 464 apprenticeships and almost 300 temporary places through the Future Jobs Fund;
- Assisted 1,600 people through activity that encourages employment and enterprise;
- Supported social enterprise which accounted for 15% of activity;
- Supported 99 projects for adults and a further 41 for young people aged 16 to 25 years, which assisted 7,700 adults and a further 2,100 young people with employability and skills activity;
- Signposted over 2,000 residents to advice and assistance which resulted in specific outcomes.

The cost of unemployment

The social cost of unemployment on individuals and society is well recognised. In addition to loss of self confidence, individuals may experience damage to both psychological and physical well being. These damaging effects are likely to result in an increased burden on the National Health Service. Where unemployment is concentrated the sustainability of an area is threatened. Professor Paul Gregg of Bristol University estimates the cost to the Treasury of unemployment to average around £8,000 per unemployed person per year, a figure that includes lost tax revenues to government (around £3,000 per person-year) as well as the direct costs of unemployment and other benefits. Professor Gregg also stresses the 'scarring' effects of long-term unemployment. He estimated that long periods of unemployment reduce life-time earnings by around 10-12% as many unemployed individuals resume employment in low-paid jobs with less secure tenure. In addition there is the loss to the economy of the output that an unemployed person would be able to contribute; based on the assumption that the average output per person is £15,000, then a total unemployment level of two million means a loss to the economy of £30 billion worth of goods and services.²

The value of job creation

The message is clear - even 100 jobs created by housing associations could save government £800,000 per year. If lost productivity is taken into account then the savings amount to £2.3 million. Research has estimated that worklessness projects have led to a minimum of 500 permanent jobs each year **without** taking into account the mainstream employment through construction programmes. This activity amounts to savings to government of £4 million per year and when lost productivity is accounted for savings of £11.5 million. If these savings are projected over two or three years, then obviously the savings that accrue to the economy are even more significant.

² Interview with the BBC February 2009 see also Centre for Economic Performance at LSE

Sustaining people into work: A compact for housing providers

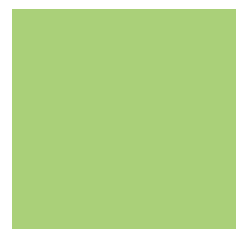
The research into worklessness in the Liverpool City Region has resulted in a groundbreaking agreement by 16 local housing associations and their partners including the six local authorities and JobCentre Plus to tackle worklessness. The Compact sets out the intentions and a framework to support local people into work by cooperating together and with partners to build on the track record to date.

Job creation is at the core of the Compact

The Compact contains seven commitments on job creation. The Compact is a starting point that will take time to embed and an Action Plan is in place to take this work forward and to monitor outcomes from it. The Compact will create added benefits by:

- creating more jobs and training opportunities;
- achieving demonstrable efficiencies through collaboration and harnessing the potential to achieve more;
- enabling the partners to secure additional resources through collaborative relationships and demonstrable efficiencies;
- bringing greater benefits to customers;
- creating a better platform for stimulating policy discussion about how the numbers of jobs available can be increased.

The City Employment Strategy Partnership is hosting a Steering Group to develop, progress and monitor the action plan, with the local authorities helping housing providers to contribute to meeting employment targets in the Liverpool City Region by being involved at a strategic level. JobCentre Plus is committed to developing a framework for more and improved working with housing providers.



1. Context

Unemployment remains a national priority, with nearly 2.5 million people unemployed, including 757,000 who have been out of work for over a year. The number of long-term unemployed has nearly doubled in just two years to the highest level for 13 years. The jobless total jumped by 53,000 in the three months to March.³ 1.4 million people in the UK have been on an out-of-work benefit for nine or more of the last 10 years. More children grow up in workless households in the UK than in almost any other EU country. A higher proportion of young people in the UK are not in work, education or training than in almost any other EU country.⁴

In the Liverpool City Region, the cycle of worklessness, benefits, poor educational attainment and poor health remains a reality for many people. Over 240,000 people in the Liverpool City Region are economically inactive and 24.5% of super output areas in the city region appear in the top 5 percent of the Index of Multiple Deprivation's most deprived areas⁵.

Working with the local authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency through its Single Conversation and other partners, housing associations in the Liverpool City region have a long track record in meeting the employment and skills needs of residents and are well placed to support local and central government in taking forward the new agenda. The research shows that they offer considerable experience in tackling the barriers that people face and associations across the Liverpool City Region can demonstrate both flexibility and bespoke support in the way they approach the task.

³ Employment, Office for National Statistics (12 May 2010)

⁴ State of the Nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK HMG (June 2010)

⁵ LCR Multi-Area Agreement (2009) Employment and skills Platform

2. Scale of activity

In 2009/10 housing associations in Liverpool City Region:

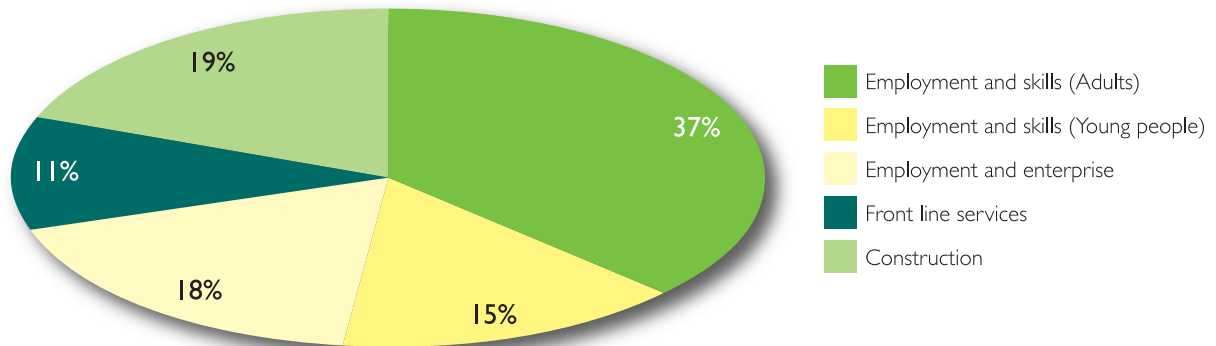
- invested £3.82 million in 2009/10 in activities to tackle worklessness, delivering almost 270 projects which achieved a specific outcome for over 14,000 residents;
- involved 230 staff in direct way in these programmes by leading, managing or providing support and advice across the housing associations;
- assisted 7,700 adults and a further 2,100 young people through employability and skills activity;
- supported 460 people through apprenticeships;
- construction training accounted for almost a fifth of activity and employment and enterprise projects some 18%. Employability and skills initiatives for both adults and young people that are non-construction related accounted for over half the activity.

Tackling worklessness through construction and related procurement is the most recognised route for housing associations to tackle employment and skills needs. Activities in this field, accounted for 51 projects or 19% of activity across the Liverpool City Region. These projects included, for example, apprenticeships, work placements and some jobs provided through revenue based projects. Mainstream construction employment on projects arising from capital expenditure and larger local labour schemes are not included in this data.

The housing associations recorded having assisted some 760 people in 2009/10, which includes 464 reported apprenticeships. Procurement provides a critical means of addressing worklessness by embedding worklessness outcomes into construction, maintenance and estate management procurement contracts and procurement processes thereby including developer and contractor partners and the supply chain.

Housing providers also link into existing initiatives for example, the Wirral Construction Employment Integrator/Local Labour Protocol. Some housing providers are working with contractors and suppliers and agencies such as Fusion 21 to achieve these outcomes. The Liverpool City Region intends to create a City Region branded Apprenticeship Strategy, supported by Apprenticeship Ambassadors to further embed apprenticeships within the labour market. The Liverpool City Region housing associations are well placed to respond to this aspect of the Single Conversation and Liverpool City Region strategy.

Overall activity %



Number of people assisted 2009/10 (rounded)

Project type	Number
Construction related training	760
Employment and Enterprise	1,600
Employability and skills (Adults)	7,700
Employability and skills (Young People)	2,100
Front line services	1,980
Total	14,140

Practice example

Assisting displaced apprentices

Vicinity Group has launched the Group Training Association scheme for displaced apprentices on Merseyside. A company, Constructing the Future Merseyside, has been established. It is a subsidiary of LHT and has confirmed funding from LHT, NewHeartlands and The Riverside Partnership (comprising three RSLs). This venture may have potential to be replicated across the Liverpool City Region once the pilot completes. The contract will initially run for 19 months and help at least 78 Apprentices complete their qualifications, with a target of 27 moving in to full time employment.

The aim of the programme is to offer employers and individuals the chance to access a wider range of apprentice opportunities by pooling part time employment opportunities with different employers to create a full time apprentice opportunity. This eliminates many of the barriers that contractors encounter when taking on apprentices, through a shared apprentice scheme.

The Group Training Association will employ the apprentice and have the normal associated responsibilities for employment. Construction Skills will appoint a co-ordinator who will organise travel logistics, co-ordinate work placements, other learning opportunities and support to the Group Training Association and apprentice in order to achieve the successful completion of each apprenticeship.

3. Employment and enterprise

In 2009/10 housing associations in Liverpool City Region:

- delivered 47 projects assisting over 1,600 people through activity that encourages employment and enterprise;
- encouraged a minimum of 500 people into permanent jobs;
- employed over 6,400 people in their own organisations;
- worked with local employers to deliver jobs.

Of the 1,600 people assisted in 2009/10, 310 people were assisted through Local Employment Partnerships and local targeted recruitment programmes. 60 were assisted through business start up and 149 through social enterprises. Although more work needs to be done in future to monitor specific job outcomes extrapolation from the returns for this research and supported by earlier research⁶ suggests that it is reasonable to estimate that a minimum of 500 permanent jobs were created in 2009/10 in addition to those arising from the sector's mainstream role as employers in the construction sector and within their own organisations. A further 300 people are engaged through the Future Jobs Fund a proportion of which will lead to permanent jobs.

The sector also has long standing experience of developing transitional employment projects (TEPs) and intermediate labour market initiatives (ILMs) that offer temporary employment and a chance for those that are furthest from the labour market to develop marketable skills, overcome barriers to work and gain experience which help in obtaining permanent positions in the longer term. The associations are also using business enterprise advice and start up grants to help individuals to pursue enterprises leading to self employment and in the longer term establishing small companies at a local level. 10 enterprise support projects were recorded, including four for young people.

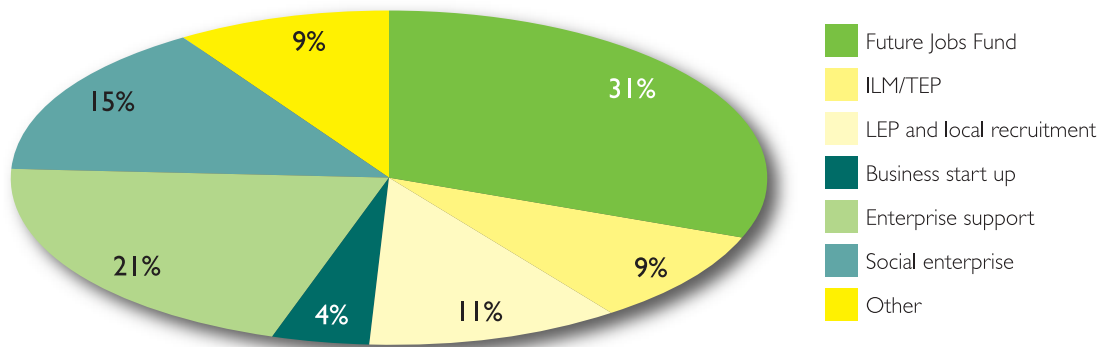
Social enterprise accounted for 15% of activity. Social enterprise not only offers opportunities for work and training but can lead to permanent employment. It is not dependent on grants in the long term and can be funded through main stream sector activity such as estate and environmental works. It offers a model for long term sustainability in tackling worklessness.

Housing associations are of course significant local employers in their own right. In the Liverpool City Region they directly employ some 6,400 staff (including Direct Labour Organisations and care subsidiaries). They are addressing worklessness as employers through advertising vacancies within their own organisations to local residents and in partnership with JobCentre Plus. They are offering work placements work trials, training, mentoring, volunteering or apprenticeship opportunities, including support through their own organisation or through contractors and suppliers.

Neighbourhood management approaches consider not only housing and the wider place making functions but also tackle enterprise and employment priorities. All the respondents are actively tackling worklessness and are building on their existing commitments to delivering apprenticeships, job creation and are recruiting locally and linking in with JobCentre Plus and other recruitment agencies. Some are working with major employers such as Tesco and Debenhams to seek local opportunities for local people.

In West Everton, Ways2Work is a JobCentre Plus /DWP pilot delivering community based outreach work in close association with Plus Dane and Liverpool Mutual Homes, Vicinity and other partners. Ways into Work has engaged widely with residents and placed 81 people into jobs.

Employment and enterprise project type %



Practice examples

A strategic approach to tackling worklessness

LMH has an employment action plan and strategy which flows from its Corporate Plan. Almost 1,000 people are employed through its framework contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers via a local labour requirement on its £400 million Investment Programme. 77% of those employed live locally in Liverpool. 60 apprenticeships are delivered via its framework contractors who also give careers advice talks in local schools. It is currently in the process of setting up a shared apprenticeship scheme with framework contractors to deliver at least 10 fully qualified trained people to NVQ Level 3 by the end of the Investment Programme.

It is also involved in a range of other activities:

- work with Fusion 21 has provided 50 placements for the Future Jobs Fund;
- it leads on two worklessness pilots being undertaken as part of the Liverpool First (Liverpool strategic housing partnership) worklessness strategy in Clubmoor and Granby Toxteth and has a full time JET officer in its offices referring residents to services available;
- it hosts a Ways2Work officer from JobCentre Plus as part of the DWP pilot in North Everton;
- it has trained front line staff to signpost residents to services that help people with work and training.

Permanent jobs through social enterprise

IN Environmental Services is a social enterprise and is part of Plus Dane Group. It provides bespoke services to create healthier living and working environments for residents, businesses and customers. Its team of operatives delivers grounds maintenance contracts, gardening services and provides solutions to a variety of environmental problems. With a core of 14 fully trained and qualified permanent staff, INES also recruits and trains local unemployed people at risk of permanent exclusion from the employment market through a Transitional Employment Programme

INES works for a range of public and private sector clients across Merseyside including the NHS, Liverpool Mutual Homes, The Liverpool Women's Hospital, North West Housing and the Mersey Basin Campaign (Peel Holdings). INES also works in partnership with LCC to deliver enhanced environmental services to residents across Liverpool. It continues the original aims of the environmental service - to use local people, doing a local job to provide local services.

Formal training of staff is provided to NVQ level 2, and in all health and safety requirements relevant to environmental management. Additional opportunities are offered in specialist skills such as horticulture to enable trainees to access more specialised opportunities as they arise and enhance the services provided to clients.

This Transitional Employment project offers trainees an opportunity to gain a stable period of employment, obtaining recognised qualifications and creating a CV that will comply with the skills and attributes required in the wider employment market.

In any twelve months period INES has a staffing compliment that ranges between 40 -90 apprentice/ trainee operatives. The business is supported by the efficiencies delivered from management and support services provided by the Plus Dane group. The group has contributed circa £500,000 of development and investment support for INES.

Iain Taylor, Project Manager, Mersey Basin Campaign (Peel Holdings) says:

“Working with INES is a breath of fresh air. The go ahead, can do attitude of the team is what will make the difference at the Speke and Garston Coastal Reserve. Only by involving and engaging local people in a meaningful way can we ever hope to achieve our goal of sustainable communities. Working with INES is helping us to achieve this goal”

Stephen a former INES trainee says:

“One of my mates got on the INES scheme - I didn't think I would have a chance because I had been in trouble but I went to see them and I got the job. I learnt loads while I was there, made some great mates and best of all I got a permanent job with one of the companies that we did work for. I would say to anybody if you get the chance to get on the INES scheme go for it!”

Delivering through social enterprise across Merseyside

Forum HA is working with Arena Housing Group in Wirral. Futures is a social enterprise that was created in June 2009 after 'Green Apprentices' became part of the Arena Housing Group and joined forces with its existing social enterprise.

Futures delivers a range of activities across Merseyside including environmental services, painting and decorating, landscaping, void management, construction and furniture retail. Futures provides many opportunities for unemployed people to gain valuable work experience, training on site and in a training room environment to include vocational, site specific skills such as working at heights, health & safety, first aid and employment skills and accreditation.

Futures also works with residents to deliver a range of bespoke short training courses and volunteer events to support environmental improvements in their local area. For example, in Tranmere and Rock Ferry on the Wirral, a project funded by the Lottery is being delivered in partnership with Riverside Housing and Lairdside Together Communities Trust.

Apart from providing access to jobs and training in the fields outlined above, Futures also works in partnership with the Arena Housing Group to deliver a wide range of services in other sectors such as health and social care and retail.

4. Employability and skills

In 2009/10 housing associations in Liverpool City Region:

- delivered 99 projects for adults and a further 41 for young people aged 16 to 25 years;
- assisted 7,700 adults and a further 2,100 young people through these projects.

Building tenants' capacity through a wide range of programmes is helping people to gain experience for work. Schemes include training for resident involvement in the governance of the organisation such as committee skills, chairing meetings, scrutiny and inspection roles including training as mystery shoppers. Some respondents are working with others including the Chartered Institute of Housing to recognise voluntary activities through a nationally accredited scheme - Active Learning for Residents. This recognises the transferable nature of many of these skills and the experience gained. Activity also includes adult education, developing IT skills and to providing Basic Skills qualifications and NVQs.

One example, Everybody On Line is also a social enterprise which aims to get tenants and residents on line to overcome digital exclusion. Developed as a community project, it has now completed a social enterprise Business Plan and as a new social enterprise is already exceeding its social and financial targets. Riverside Housing has now matched Plus Dane's £25,000 investment and co-commissioned a number of Liverpool projects. Each Liverpool Neighbourhood will receive a taster or pilot project this year. Over 2,000 residents have already benefitted from this programme.

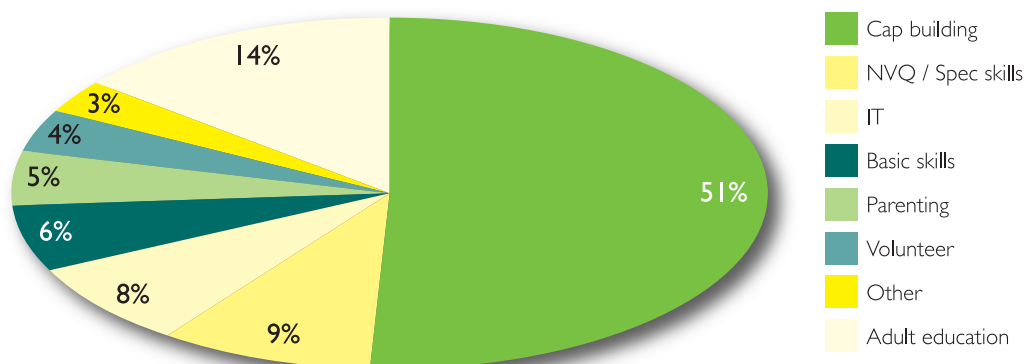
Building clear and effective career pathways for 14-24 year olds is a Liverpool City Region priority. Housing associations are responding to these needs. The housing associations are supporting after school activities and breakfast clubs as well as a programmes ranging from health, first aid, and young citizenship programmes to sports and cultural activities. Language and literacy and other employability initiatives are also being delivered.

The cost of youth unemployment

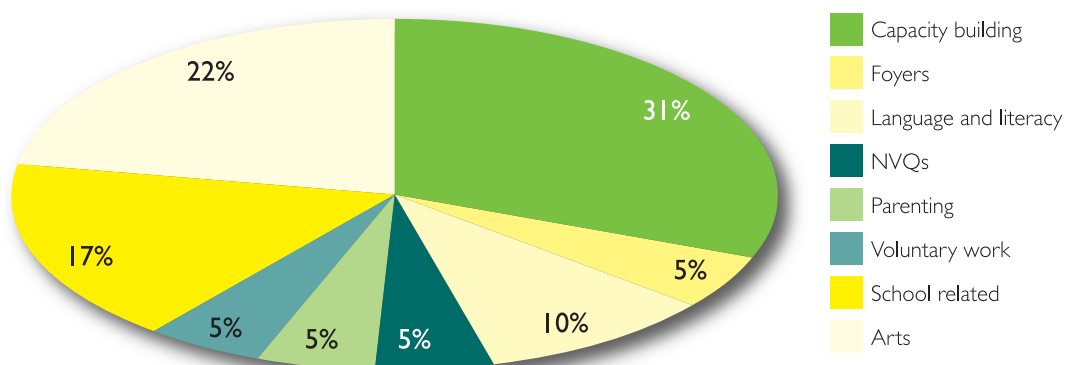
We know that in the past year, youth unemployment has leapt from 714,000 to almost 1 million. At over 19% of 16 to 24-year-olds, the rate is much higher than for the general population. The economic cost of youth unemployment has been put at £4.7 billion per year, or £90 million every week, according to a study published by the Prince's Trust⁷. Each young person not in employment, education or training (NEET) is thought to cost the public £97,000 on average over their lifetime in resource and public finance costs. In one year the associations have assisted 2,100 young people the savings to the public purse are significant.

⁷ The cost of exclusion, Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK Princes Trust, with the Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics (2007)

Employability (adults) project type %



Employability (young persons) project type %



Practice examples

Assisting young people through social enterprise in Knowsley

Knowsley Housing Trust manages some of the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) allocation on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership. The LSP recognises the important role social enterprise can play not only in helping to create jobs and provide training opportunities for local people but also in boosting the local economy and creating new businesses. £600,000 was identified to boost social enterprise in Knowsley over two years. Working in partnership with local existing and national social enterprises KHT is creating new and extending existing social enterprises in the borough.

One such enterprise, Oasis Gardening Services, has been able to extend its gardening service to vulnerable and older people and create four horticultural apprenticeships. Another, Knowsley Development Agency has developed NEET TV a project that will engage with over 100 young NEET people in Knowsley and provide them with the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification.

Liam was recruited as an Apprentice with Oasis. As part of his apprenticeship Liam is studying for an NVQ Level 2 in Gardening. Liam says: "what I am learning is really useful and worthwhile one day I hope to run my own gardening business."

Assisting homeless young people in Wirral into work and training

Forum HA has been delivering a programme called Acceler8 which targets residents who are not engaged and assists them to discover and realise their aspirations. The Team offer an end to end service supporting individuals with very diverse needs and issues. Acceler8 provides support to unemployed people throughout Wirral to enable them to gain specific training that meets their needs and those of employers in order to access meaningful employment. The project specifically targets people from the Super Output Areas across the Wirral. Activities available through Acceler8 include:

- Computer maintenance
- Computer skills for the work place
- Catering and food hygiene
- Hairdressing
- Basic and Key skills, English Maths and IT
- Bespoke training according to employer needs, including employability skills, personal hygiene, health and safety, first aid etc.
- Personal and social development skills, life skills, and job search

Forum HA's Acceler8 programme which runs from 2009 to March 2011 has worked with 233 homeless young people of which 32 have secured employment and a further 18 are undertaking education and training. The Acceler8 Team support individuals in many ways. One young client was assisted to achieve a care post, for example, through accompanied interviews which built up her confidence and help with the cost and processing of her CRB check.

Helping St Helens young people get back into education, employment and training

Helena Partnerships 'Pathways for young people' initiative offers a pathway of intervention that can lead a young person into education, training and work.

This approach offers a pathway of intervention projects for disenfranchised young people. The aim of the pathway is to help young people get their lives back on track, to sow the seeds of change for the better and to guide them into education, training or work. To make this happen Helena has created a "Hub" of key partners who run projects. It meets regularly to discuss projects and individuals progress with them.

Helena also employs a co-ordinator to manage referrals and run some projects.

The partners include:

- St Helens Council
- Prince's Trust
- St Helens RLFC (Saints)
- St Helens Chamber
- HM Prison Service
- St Helens College

Well over 100 youngsters have been helped along a pathway - each of which is unique to their personal needs and circumstances.

The route out of difficulty for just one individual delivered by the project is shown below.

One Pathway example: Richard

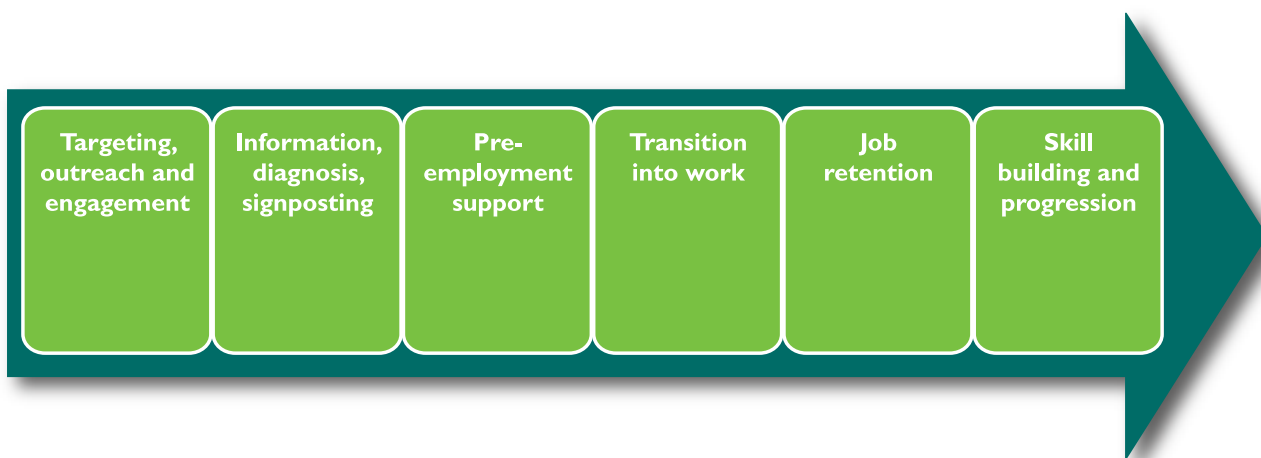


5. Front line services

In 2009/10 housing associations in Liverpool City Region:

1. delivered 30 projects which assisted almost 2,000 people with specific outcomes;
2. were actively engaging the hardest to reach residents;
3. trained over 300 staff to be able to competently signpost residents to services that can assist them.

The Liverpool City Region Employment and Skills Strategy is committed to services for individuals offering more integrated information and advice based on the 'progression' model of the journey into work as highlighted in the diagram below⁸:



Housing providers across the Liverpool City Region are active in engaging residents, undertaking outreach work and then signposting residents to agencies that can assist with Information Advice and Guidance. All have relationships with their local agencies including JobCentre Plus, the Liverpool JET service, Halton People into Jobs, Starting Point in St Helens, Sefton@Work, Knowsley Works and Reach Out Wirral as well as third sector and other voluntary and community agencies.

Some housing providers are also offering enhanced housing options services which include advice on employment and training, and several are advising customers on benefits and undertaking 'Better Off in Work' calculations. Signposting residents to IAG services accounts for almost two-thirds of reported activity.

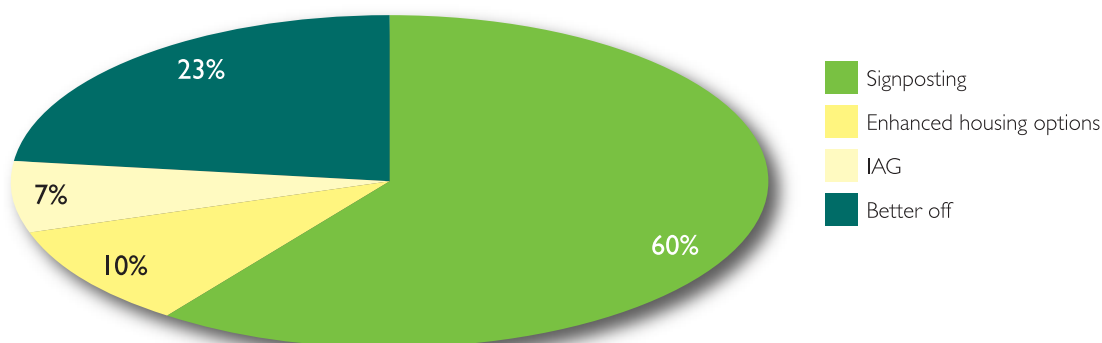
The housing associations are continually developing their front-line response to tackling worklessness. Approaches include further training for staff where this is not yet complete in order to ensure that all front-line staff are able to signpost customers to assistance competently. In some cases the housing associations are enabling specialist advisors from either JCP or local IAG agencies to provide services from local housing offices. A number of housing associations are also linking their employment and training advice to their financial inclusion work and advice services. Neighbourhood management is also being used as opportunity to deliver local advice and signposting services.

Riverside and others are also part of a pilot set up following a report⁹ which highlighted the prevalence of worklessness amongst social housing tenants in Liverpool. Ideas were generated and the City agreed to develop a series of pilot projects. A number of neighbourhoods were identified by the City in conjunction with the landlords with six neighbourhood areas earmarked to pilot closer partnerships between the housing associations and the city council's JET Service (Jobs, Education and Training). This is in response to higher rates of economic inactivity amongst social housing households. The approach was also informed by a mini-pilot conducted with Riverside earlier in 2009, during which JET personnel shadowed frontline housing staff.

The CoNet project run by Plus Dane is one of 12 European Best Practice Pilots to develop front line support and referral mechanism for workless tenants and residents delivered by and through housing associations. It will be used to inform and /or roll out a Liverpool city-wide approach.

Once in work individuals may need assistance to keep their jobs, drop out rates being the highest in the first three months. The Liverpool JET for example, offers employment sustainment services to help people to hold onto their job once in work. Housing providers signpost to these services too and work in partnership to ensure that residents have access to them.

Front line advice project type %



Joint Working between Sefton @ Work and One Vision Housing

One Vision (OVH) has developed a joint action plan with Sefton@Work to deliver further information and guidance to all OVH residents. The plan includes:

- developing awareness of Sefton at Work for OVH staff and OVH residents including training being provided to OVH staff by the Sefton@Work team.
- developing a programme of outreach work through arranging access to High Rise Properties for Sefton@Work staff to enable canvassing. OVH is also in the process of developing a joint canvassing campaign which will include a targeted joint door knocking exercise.
- implementing provision of Sefton at Work and OVH information at various venues including information about Sefton@Work or OVH being available at each organisation's offices and sites.
- developing information from both organisations provided to residents available through magazines or the website. This will include having links on websites to each other sites.

Establishing joint referral and monitoring process so OVH tenants can obtain access to Sefton@Work employment advice or alternatively welfare benefits advice from OVH.

⁹ Developing a strategy for tackling worklessness amongst social housing tenants in Liverpool (first of a series of papers) Nevin Leather (2008)

Practice examples

Springboard Project

From April 2010, the Springboard team with Riverside will provide needs-based support to workless residents, encouraging them to overcome barriers they face in their journey towards the labour market. The project is funded by Liverpool First and will continue until at least March 2011. The team will engage with those who have been outside the labour market for some time, and those who may recently have been affected by the recession. It will also assist those who may already be in work but are frequently in and out of employment and therefore at higher risk of losing their home.

Building on the trust between tenants and their social landlord, project officers will be in a good position to establish a rapport with tenants to break down initial barriers to engagement especially via joint visits with housing officers and following up on new lettings. This model was tested with Liverpool JET during 2009 and has proven successful. Dedicated project officers will provide a consistent point of contact for residents in need of support. They will provide a 'hand-holding' approach as people move towards the labour market, during and beyond their transition to work.

The intention is to bridge the gap between existing agencies, embedding the project firmly within the target wards to ensure a comprehensive level of support and resident awareness. The project staff will act as a signposting gateway to further support and specialist programmes. Those in post will strengthen links and pro-actively liaise with financial inclusion services, housing management, health and employment and training related partners.

Neighbourhood Employment Engagement Officers in Halton

Halton Housing Trust has been working with Halton People into Jobs, Halton Borough Council and other landlords including Riverside, LHT and Plus Dane to assist customers to gain skills, training and improved opportunities to gain employment. Staff are able to refer customers who are unemployed to the Neighbourhood Employment Engagement Officer for onward referral to one or more agencies to access advice on training and employment initiatives. The purpose of the project is to ensure Halton's workless residents are offered the maximum help available to increase employability, enterprise creation, skills development and access to jobs.

Individuals can be offered assistance with:

- appointments with qualified advice and guidance workers available in the Halton People into Jobs office and in neighbourhood outreach locations;
- help to identify barriers to employment and /or learning, providing information, advice and guidance to develop an action plan to achieve work related goals;
- matching clients skills and experience to local job opportunities;
- access to waged and unwaged work experience placements to improve practical work skills offering on the job training;
- work tasters and other personal development and employability skills training courses;
- enterprise and Business Start up advice, guidance and support including access to small grants.

The Employment Officers will be responsible for engaging with hard to reach customers in the designated neighbourhoods to encourage them to participate in employment, learning, skills or enterprise related activity.

Streets Ahead: A JET pilot

With Riverside

A Guidance Officer from the city's Streets Ahead team is now based at the Riverside Berrybridge office

5 days a week and works closely with the housing and neighbourhood warden teams to promote jobs and training and targeting those most in need of employment support.

The Guidance Officer is dedicated to engaging with local residents offering information, advice and guidance on jobs and the opportunity to register with the JET Service for further support such as training. Job surgeries and engagement events are also held in community venues, children's centres and other locations.

Outcomes to date:

- Number of residents securing employment: 10
- Number of residents accessing training: 4
- Number of residents accessing advice and guidance: 236
- Number of residents referred for financial support, partners & other organisations: 41
- Number attending outreach / job cafes: 52

With South Liverpool Housing (SLH)

SLH also hosts an advisor working to deliver jobs, education and training to the hardest to reach groups who are not currently accessing services, in particular lone parents. The partnership base has now extended to include Jobcentre Plus and Seetec (a service designed to deliver new deal for the disabled). The project offers 'drop-in' surgeries which run every Tuesday and Thursday from a local office.

Outcomes to date:

- Number of residents accessing training: 4
- Number of residents securing employment: 3
- Number of residents receiving on going support: 21

Case study

Mary is a lone parent who had recently undertaken a care course.

SLH through Streets Ahead helped her to improve her employment prospects by assisting her with job searches, CV creation, interview technique support and securing grants for required documentation like her birth certificate.

Mary has succeeded in her job search and awaits her start date. She was previously unemployed for fifteen years.

ReachOut Wirral

ReachOut Wirral is a service delivered to residents across Wirral. Partners include Beechwood and Ballantyne HA and Wirral Partnership Homes. ReachOut offers support and advice on: community issues; jobs; CV support; employment advice; education and training; debt advice; housing issues and welfare benefits. Its objective is to engage and support individuals and families back into the labour market with direct referral routes to both local and mainstream services. The ReachOut Employment Support Workers are solely tasked to tackle generational worklessness, working towards a dedicated family approach; their role is impacting positively on child poverty and removing the barriers of 3rd generation unemployment. The project currently has a strong retention rate of sustaining individuals in work for over a 13 week period.

Project Achievements (Sept 06 - March 09)

- Clients engaged 15,124
- Clients supported 5,387
- Employment outcomes 1,423
- Community related intervention 1,077

Targets 2009-2011

- 920 participants who get a sustainable job as a result of training, advice or other targeted assistance
- 4,455 participants recruited onto the project
- 880 participants progressing into education / training or voluntary work on completion of activity
- Provision of aftercare support to 685 participants placed into employment to ensure that employment is maintained
- Information, advice and guidance services provided to 825 participants
- Support for 462 participants to overcome barriers to participation/employment such as transport, costs of interviews, assistance for childcare costs and support for the purchase of essential equipment

6. Strategic approaches

The housing associations ensure that their approaches to tackling worklessness flow from the local authority priorities set out in the Local Area Agreement and the LCR Multi-Area Agreement. They are members of local authority led partnerships such as the Local Strategic Partnership which tackle worklessness as a priority and employment and skills partnerships. They also contribute to the work of strategic housing and worklessness partnerships including those run by the National Housing Federation.

The housing associations are assessing the needs of residents in relation to tackling worklessness to enable more sophisticated, tailored responses to be planned. This includes working with partners such as Streets Ahead in Liverpool to target hotspot areas based upon local authority data. Wirral Partnership Homes has mapped estate boundaries against the national super output area (SOAs) within Wirral that have a worklessness rate of 25% or more. This has highlighted the areas in which it will target activities to address worklessness. As an example, LMH has also broken down the national super output area statistics into LMH neighbourhood boundaries of which there are 29 and used this as a measurement indicator for its sustainability index. This leads to corresponding interventions dependent upon the challenges faced in each neighbourhood in relation to worklessness.

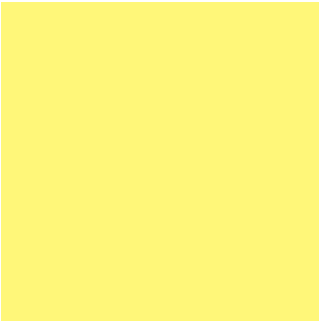
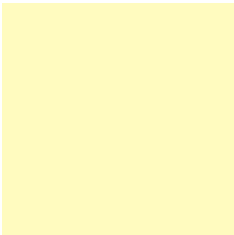
The housing associations are also mindful of the barriers faced by residents and in many cases have directly researched these or commissioned others to undertake this in order to plan services.

At Vicinity, for example, improved use of profile information enables better use of information to deliver bespoke services. It is working on a tenant insight project that will complement its work on tailoring services. This will be closely linked to neighbourhood tracking reports that are used to inform neighbourhood investment decisions by identifying issues and challenges in individual neighbourhoods.

All Plus Dane's neighbourhood areas are supported by a Neighbourhood Plan which details both resident and tenant worklessness levels. Riverside has or is carrying out profiling of its customer base to determine the extent of worklessness in some neighbourhoods where projects are being developed or delivered in relation to worklessness.

Whilst housing staff are not expected to become experts in employment matters, there is growing awareness that front-line officers have access to customers and opportunities to encourage residents to consider how to improve their employment and skills chances. Housing providers are undertaking much work in overcoming the barriers to work faced by residents. CES has provided training through 22 sessions for some 300 staff across 14 housing associations and including staff from some local authority and provider agencies too. This was delivered in 2009/10 by Consult CIH on behalf of CES. In addition the housing associations reported a range of other training on signposting that has been made available to staff.

The housing associations are collaborating with their local authorities and each other as well as other third sector agencies to tackle worklessness. This track record in collaboration has laid a good foundation for the Compact to tackle worklessness across the Liverpool City Region.



Housing Associations who took part in this research:



This report and the accompanying research were prepared for Liverpool City Region City Strategy Employment and Skills Partnership by Consult CIH.

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