



More than just a job:

The difference we make for people
who are out of work

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Authors: Anne-Mari Hall,
Jo Woodall, Emma Wakeling,
Zoë Anderson

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Executive summary

- We've supported over **5,300 employment projects** over the past five years, awarding over £717 million of National Lottery funding and £101 million from government and European sources.
- Our funding enables **charities and community groups across the UK** to support people on their journey to employment, building on the trust that local communities have in them. We also work on the supply side, helping **employers see the untapped potential in people** who may not have worked before, while also **creating and sustaining employment** by helping communities to diversify their local economies.
- Our funding has supported over **181,000 people** through **eight programmes** alone. Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is our largest investment in this area, improving the employment chances of over 127,000 people since 2014.
- We focus on supporting people who face challenges in finding work, helping them overcome the barriers that stop them from achieving what they want to. Getting a foot in the labour market is an important goal for many, but others have more urgent issues to resolve first, like poor mental health or homelessness.
- Our grantholders support people at all stages, and in all aspects, of their employment journey, in ways that will have **a long-lasting impact on their lives**. Many of our smaller investments work with **specific groups** of people, like lone parents, veterans, or carers.
- The **employment outcomes** of our programmes **compare well** against comparator initiatives **with similar target groups**. Where data is available, evaluations show that **the costs are within the range** of other public and voluntary sector led programmes.
- Participation brings **positive benefits for individuals**, with many leaving better equipped to get a job, even if they haven't secured one yet. Many leave with new vocational skills as well as life skills that help them to succeed once they are in work. And the positive impacts on people's confidence and wellbeing help them to make the most of available training, volunteering and employment opportunities, as well as increasing their life satisfaction.
- There are **wider societal benefits** too. We find that many people get more involved in the local community, through volunteering and neighbourhood initiatives. The **economic value** of the employment outcomes for participants in the Making it Work programme in Scotland has been calculated at £11.5 million, with wellbeing outcomes providing an additional £3 million in social value. Our largest employment programme for young people, Talent Match, has created **at least £3.08 of public benefit for every £1 spent on the programme**.
- The impact of our funding goes beyond individuals. Our projects have improved the way other services, like Jobcentres and mental health services, support people. We've helped to give charities and community groups access to larger and longer funding programmes, as well as new funding models. We also contribute to new research in the employment sector, which helps to inform future policies and practice.

Introduction

For many people, having a job is an important part of our lives. It's not just about earning an income. Working also gives many of us a sense of accomplishment and pride; a chance to meet and interact with others; and a welcome routine and structure to our lives.

Losing a job can be the trigger or the starting point to a difficult time and can lead to a crisis. On the other hand, a fulfilling job can improve wellbeing. But if you've never worked before or you've experienced traumatic events, it can be difficult to find your way (back) into employment.

That's where we come in. We distribute grants to employment projects led by charities and community groups from National Lottery, government and European funding. We focus on supporting people who face challenges in finding work, helping them to stabilise their lives, working to (re)build their confidence, and supporting them throughout the job search process. We believe voluntary sector organisations are well placed to help people with their employment ambitions because of their expertise, knowledge and people-centred approaches, and the trust that local communities have in them.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on our economy and labour market. Unemployment increased to 5.1% in the three months to November 2020.¹ This means that many of the people we support will find it harder to secure jobs in an increasingly competitive labour market.

This is why we've decided to take stock of what we've funded in the area of employment and to look back at the difference our funding has made. We've also put together another paper with key messages from the voluntary and community sector for those who are planning, funding or delivering employment programmes; it explores the most effective, people-led techniques that organisations in the sector are using to help people who are out of work.

Saving lives

Support from charities can be life-changing, with effects going far beyond employment. A participant in one of our **Building Better Opportunities** projects had been planning to take his own life. He was persuaded to join the three-month programme – a level of commitment he was able to manage.

Project workers got to know him, found out his strengths and interests, and helped him to think how these could be part of his future plans. Together, they identified a hobby that he felt confident in training others to do, and eventually he was able to set up his own business to achieve this. Life became worth living again. This is a business success story, but it's also the story of a life transformed.

The role of The National Lottery

We've funded over 5,300 projects in the field of employment over the past five years,² awarding over £717 million of National Lottery money and £101 million from other sources. These range from small grants, like £5,000 to **Articulate Cultural Trust** to support the employment ambitions of care-experienced young people in Renfrewshire, to multi-annual million pound investments, like £11.5 million over the past seven years to **tackle youth unemployment** in the Black Country.

Our funding relating to employment isn't only about numbers and targets – it's about improving people's lives and supporting communities to thrive. The money supports people at all stages, and in all aspects, of their employment journey.

Many grantholders help people to succeed in their job search, from writing CVs and job applications to preparing for interviews, and even making sure they have smart clothes to make the right impression or an alarm clock to make sure they get to work on time. They also address the less obvious, less visible, and more complex barriers people face.

These range from overcoming complex mental health needs to identifying and filling gaps in skills. They may provide counselling, training, or peer support. And mentors and coaches help people to make the best of a new job, navigate new routines and relationships, and overcome any problems that may arise.

We also work on the supply side, helping employers see the untapped potential in people who may not have worked before and understand how they can support their employees. Other funding helps to create and sustain employment, like the Coastal Communities Fund which creates and safeguards existing jobs by helping coastal communities to diversify their local economies. Some grantholders help people to enter self-employment or to set up their own business or social enterprise. **Inspiring Enterprise** does this in and around Hampshire and Surrey, so far helping nearly 900 people with their business and employment ambitions.

Some of our larger grants enable providers to support the employment journey from beginning to end, by working together with a range of local partners and providing wrap-around support. Smaller ones help organisations that play a defined, often specialist, role. They may address certain issues or barriers, or support specific communities such as ex-offenders, veterans or disabled workers. And there are also projects which focus on other issues, including loneliness or the environment, but have an impact on the employability of the people involved.

Because of this diversity of funding, we are focussing here on outcomes from some of our largest investments, which have consistent reach and outcome data.

Reach of our employment funding

Our grantholders have supported over 181,000 people with their employment ambitions through eight major programmes alone. Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is our largest investment in this area, improving the employment chances of over 127,000 people since 2014.

Talent Match is our largest investment for young people, with over 27,000 participants since 2013. Many of our smaller investments work with specific groups of people. In Scotland, 3,115 parents took part in our Making it Work programme, which addressed single parents' barriers to employment, including lack of affordable childcare and social networks to support their participation in work and training.

We support many disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, with BBO alone having helped over 60,000. Our funding also helps people who aren't known to the services who could help them; a fifth of young Talent Match participants, for example, are neither receiving benefits nor engaged in employment, education or training.



Learning conference - Birmingham

Participants on selected employment programmes³

Building Better Opportunities

Has supported **127,067** people in England since 2016. This includes people who are looking for employment, but also many who weren't in a place to find work at the time (47%), due to ill health for example. Disabled people make up 49% of participants, and people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds 23%.

Commissioning Better Outcomes (CBO) and Life Chances Fund (LCF)

Bringing together government and National Lottery funding to facilitate social investment since 2013 (CBO) and 2016 (LCF) in England. **4,739** people have taken part to date in programmes which support the employment outcomes of participants who have mental health or substance misuse issues, or have learning disabilities.

Engage to Change

Has supported over **780** young people in Wales since 2016. This is aimed at young people aged 16-25 who have a learning difficulty, learning disability, and/or autism.

Getting Ahead

Supported **933** young people in Wales from 2010-2015. Participants were 16 to 18 years old, and not in employment, education or training (NEET). Many had been in care or were known to youth offending services.

Life Skills

Two Life Skills programmes supported a total of **5,287** people in 2010-2015 in Wales. They were primarily aimed at care leavers, carers, economically inactive families, and people aged 50+.

Making it Work

Supported **3,115** lone parents in five local authority areas in Scotland from 2013-2017. Most were unemployed or inactive, and living in rented accommodation. A quarter indicated that they had an illness or disability that affected their ability to work.

Our Bright Future

Since 2016, this programme has supported **121,400** young people across the UK to lead future environmental change. As well as learning about environmental leadership, they benefit from an opportunity to improve their employability. Although most are still in full-time education, around 10-15% aren't, and so an estimate of 12,000 has been included in our total figure above.

Talent Match

Programme to support young people in England who need help to find work, with **27,190** supported since 2013. Evaluators concluded that participants "tended to be more disadvantaged and further from the labour market than the wider population of NEETs in England". Low wellbeing and mental health issues also emerged as key barriers.

Employment outcomes

The ultimate goal of our employment programmes is to improve people's lives, helping them gain new skills and overcome the barriers that stop them from achieving what they want to.

Getting a foot in the labour market is an important goal for many, but others have more urgent issues to resolve first, like learning to manage anxiety or finding somewhere safe to live. Our funding meets people where they are at, looking to support them in ways that will have a long lasting impact on their lives.

The outcomes of our employment programmes compare well against comparator initiatives with similar target groups. At 30%, the employment rate achieved by Making it Work was comparable to the outcomes of similar employment initiatives in Scotland (15-40%). Talent Match research suggests that 58% of their respondents had entered employment in the previous 12-month period, compared to 42% of matched Labour Force Survey respondents.⁴

BBO

By the end of October 2020, over a third (38%) of the 46,385 participants had found a job, started study, or were actively looking for work. Evaluators describe the programme's performance as 'strong', given the structural and personal barriers many participants face.⁵ For example, nearly half (47%) were classed as economically inactive⁶, i.e. people who aren't looking for a job or available to start work, due to ill health for example.

Nearly one in five (17%) exit the programme to enter employment and another 14% to start studies or a new training course, often marking a major milestone in their life. Another 7% are actively looking for work.

The figures are even higher for people from BAME backgrounds, with 42% finding a positive outcome: 19% found a job, 15% started to study, and another 8% are actively looking for work.

Talent Match

Nearly half (46%) of the 25,885 young people secured some form of job/self-employment.⁷ Although some faced issues around job security (due to zero-hours contracts for instance), on the whole they saw their jobs as part of a progression to employment more aligned to their aspirations.

These employment outcomes were good when analysed against the outcomes of a comparator group drawn from the Labour Force Survey Five Quarter Longitudinal Panel, an employment survey run by the Office of National Statistics.⁸ This assessment suggests that 58% of Talent Match respondents had entered employment in the 12-month period compared to 42% of matched Labour Force Survey respondents. This difference (16 percentage points) is statistically significant at a level greater than 0.005.

This implies that 28% of participants who gained an employment outcome would not have done so had it not been for their participation in Talent Match. The remaining 72% who secured a job might have done so without participating, for example due to improvements in personal circumstances or new jobs in the area.

We're starting to hear good news stories from our Talent Match sustainability programme. Talent Match Black Country has reported 80 job outcomes since March 2020, with many of these jobs going to young people who have recently been released from prison and want to change their lives for good.

Making it Work

Nearly a third of the 3,115 lone parents (935 people, 30%) moved into work after their participation in the programme; 83% found full-time work (more than 16 hours) and 17% part-time work (less than 16 hours).⁹ This employment rate was equivalent to other similar programmes in Scotland (15-40%). Besides support for parents, the programme team did a lot to challenge employer attitudes about part-time work, encouraging employers to offer enough hours and a degree of flexibility so that lone parents can balance the demands of work and family life. Building parents' confidence in childcare was equally important.

Commissioning Better Outcomes and Life Chances Fund

So far, around 20% of participants (1,055 people) have gained employment, according to the latest set of data available (project is ongoing).

An evaluation of one of the social investment models used - Mental Health and Employment Partnerships (MHEP) – found that between March 2016 and September 2019,¹⁰ almost a third (30.6%) of participants obtained a job, and 70% of these sustained their job for at least six weeks.¹¹

Engage to Change

By early 2021, approximately 780 young people had gone through a range of employability interventions, including 29% undertaking paid work placements and/or nearly three-quarters (73%) taking part in unpaid placements or volunteering. Over a quarter (28%) of the 780 participants have found a job.

Life Skills

Both Life Skills programmes found positive outcomes for over half of their participants: 18% moved into employment (more than doubling the original goal), 6% went onto study or train, and an additional 38% achieved other personal development goals. In addition, 42% gained new qualifications.

They were particularly successful with over-50s, but struggled to support care leavers and carers to the same extent – partially because carers were looking for shorter hours that they could fit around caring responsibilities. They were also hesitant to use childcare and respite care offers provided by the programme, and preferred to leave their dependants with their own family – and therefore preferred part-time hours that they could fit around their caring responsibilities. Life Skills were among the first larger programmes of this kind to take a proactive approach, not just running drop-in centres but actively marketing and promoting the service in the community.

These outcomes bring many positive benefits for individuals, but wider societal benefits too. The economic value of the employment outcomes for the 3,115 participants in Making it Work has been calculated at £11.5 million, with wellbeing outcomes providing an additional £3 million in social value.¹² At £7,424 per employment outcome, the cost is within the range achieved by other public and other voluntary sector led programmes.

Talent Match created at least £3.08 of public benefit for every £1 spent on the programme, through additional income, economic outputs and improved life satisfaction.¹³ The evaluators refer to this as an “impressive outcome” and “testament to the emphasis placed on holistic support models which addressed multiple aspects of disadvantage experienced by young people”.¹⁴

But the nature of jobs open to young people meant that the the immediate fiscal benefits - direct monetary effect on the public purse - were small: up to £0.08 of additional fiscal benefit per £1 of Talent Match expenditure. This is because many who found a job paid relatively low tax and National Insurance contribution, and remained eligible for welfare benefits. It reflects the substantial investment that is required to support young people who are most disadvantaged in the labour market.

One in ten (12%) BBO participants get more involved in the community, thanks to taking part.¹⁵ This has potential benefits to society, from reducing isolation to better connected communities where people help and support their neighbours and beyond.

Nathanael's story

Often, people who've taken part in our programmes want to help others who are going through similar experiences. One Talent Match participant, Nathanael, who was supported to find training and work after leaving prison, now has a role as a tutor, helping to inspire other young people to gain employment skills. He recognises the impact it had to join the project and find support from people who had faith in his potential. **He says**, “it’s hard to believe that just last summer I was still in prison but that today I’m in a job and helping other young people achieve their potential [...] I’m really enjoying explaining to them how you can learn from your mistakes and turn your life around for the better.”¹⁶



Learning conference - Birmingham

A social value for young people and their communities

Talent Match Plus Liverpool has measured the social value of individual case studies using a social return on investment (SROI) framework. This framework takes into account a wide variety of outcomes such as employability, housing, contact with the criminal justice system, and mental health and wellbeing. Based on 31 case studies, Talent Match Plus Liverpool has created nearly £1.7 million worth of social value, providing an average individual value of £54,624.¹⁷

One case study tells the story of a young woman who had experienced a lot of traumatic events; her parents were heroin addicts and she had been groomed. She spent time in prison and experienced poor mental health. Since joining Talent Match, she's received help from a mentor, taken part in training and career support, and engaged with mental health services.

She has also completed qualifications in mental health and counselling, and now has a life plan in place. Her confidence has improved, she hasn't reoffended, and feels her anxiety is now more manageable. She wants to continue with her studies and become a qualified counsellor. Thanks to her hard work and the support of Talent Match, the estimated individual SROI is £95,847.¹⁸



Drink Wise Age Well

Improving lives, helping people to reach their potential

Steps in the right direction

People get more than a job taking part in our programmes; there are wider benefits for participants, their families and wider communities. That's why many of our grantholders measure the 'distance travelled' by participants towards getting a job, to show the progress they've made, even if they aren't yet in employment, education or training.

Making it Work in Scotland measured the distance lone parents travelled during their time on the programme. The majority moved closer to employment by improving confidence (73%), managing feelings better (49%), and improving communication (44%).¹⁹ Around half achieved these improvements within the first six months, while others needed a year to make progress due to the complexity of the challenges they faced.

“[My goals have] been made a lot clearer cos if this was me a couple of years back I wouldn't have known what I was doing, what I wanted to do, but since these placements and everything else I've got a more defined goal as to where I want to end up [...] it's helped tremendously [...]”

Talent Match participant²⁰

From the beginning, the focus of Talent Match has been on the journey to employment, and this has enabled us to learn how pieces of the journey fit together for participants and how they progress. The final evaluation shows that a significant group of participants who didn't find a job still felt more 'work ready' after taking part. The percentage of young people in the two 'furthest from the labour market' categories decreased from 56% to 43% by three months after starting on the programme and then to 34% by the end. Conversely the percentage in the two categories nearest to the labour market increased from 29% of participants at the beginning to 41% at three months and to 52% at their last response.²¹

Young people who did find a job were satisfied with their post, highlighting how it made them feel 'worthwhile'. But nearly half felt they were underemployed and most of those in zero-hour contracts (11%) wanted more security in terms of hours. On the whole, they saw their jobs as part of progression to employment more aligned to their aspirations. And they felt the Talent Match jobs helped to clarify their career aspirations and build pathways to better employment.

The mid-term evaluation of Our Bright Future showed that confidence and skills gained by young people through their involvement in environmental activities has many spin-off effects on their employability.²² The participants on the [UpRising Environmental Leadership](#) programme have said that “UpRisers feel more accomplished and more able to challenge their own barriers towards gaining new employment or training”.

Just under three-quarters of BBO participants (74%) reported improved confidence, which in turn has led to increased motivation, improved self-esteem and reduced social isolation.²³ For example, [Connecting Opportunities](#), a project supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Kirklees and Calderdale, has seen the impact of improved confidence first hand. People feel more confident to access services without interpreters, and are more likely to pursue training and work placements.

New life and work skills

Learning new skills can be an important part of any pathway to employment. For many, these are more than vocational skills. They include important life skills to help people to integrate into the workplace and maintain a job.

The add-on support that the participants on Getting Ahead in Wales received went from help in planning travel for work, to telling the time, understanding money, and getting to work on time. These skills can also be gained through work placements and short-term employment. [Northside Family Support Programme \(Artillery Youth Centre\)](#) in Northern Ireland employed 10 local young people to help deliver youth work, make environmental improvements and run a cafe.²⁴

A third (58%) of single parents on the Making it Work programme felt they were able to write better CVs and job applications as a result of taking part, and 62% felt more prepared for interviews. At the end of the programme, 94% of participants (compared to 77% at the start) felt they were able to articulate their strengths and skills, including skills they'd gained through parenting.²⁵

BBO evaluators assess changes in life and work skills, recognising that both are needed. Nearly a third (31%) of all BBO participants have learned new life skills and 27% have developed practical (job-specific) and transferable work skills, such as communication skills.²⁶

Small things matter

Gaps in life skills aren't always obvious or easy to acknowledge, but can have a huge impact on a person's ability and confidence in the workplace. One young man on Talent Match became distressed when given work boots with steel toecaps when doing work experience on a construction site, because he didn't know how to tie his shoelaces. He was too embarrassed to ask someone at work to help and without support from the programme, he might just have walked away from the placement.

Improved wellbeing

We see people improving their mental health, resilience and life satisfaction thanks to our funding. For some, these outcomes are a higher priority than finding a job. For others, improved wellbeing is an unanticipated but welcome outcome of taking part in an employment programme.

Just under half (46%) of the 123,000 BBO participants feel better after taking part.²⁷ [Positive Progressions](#), a BBO project in Yorkshire, has seen improvements in people's resilience in coping with difficult situations and increased confidence to support themselves, their families and ask for help from other services. This has reduced their reliance on crisis support.

The wellbeing of Talent Match participants was generally worse than that of the general population when they joined the programme, but this gap closed for most participants. Most reported improved life satisfaction: 70% of those who found a job and 60% of those who didn't. The percentage of participants with a high life satisfaction more than doubled from 9% to 24%, just below the national average. And over three-quarters (78%) who initially recorded a low wellbeing score went on to record a higher score at a later stage.²⁸

Some young people from Talent Match saw improving their wellbeing as their main priority. This highlights the importance of integrated programmes that provide non-work support like personal development, social/peer activities and counselling, alongside employment-related support.

Greater security

When people improve their financial situation, either because they've found a job or because they've been given help to manage their finances, it gives them greater security. For this reason, many charities also support people to access the benefits they are entitled to, so that they are able to focus on their job search without worrying about being able to pay bills or buy food.

Three-quarters (75%) of lone parents who participated in Making it Work improved their household income during the programme.²⁹ In many cases this was because they had found a job they could balance with their caring responsibilities. But finding affordable, high-quality childcare through the crèches the programme had set up was equally important. While the purpose-built crèches aren't necessarily a sustainable solution on their own, using them built many lone parents' confidence in childcare providers, which again increased their chances of pursuing studies or employment.

BBO monitors a range of practical changes in people's lives, from finances to community involvement, finding that one in five participants (21%) have improved their financial situation.³⁰ This is a result of finding a job, getting hands-on support in accessing benefits they were entitled to, receiving debt advice, and improving money management skills.

Likewise, when improved housing – or actually finding some housing – forms part of the journey to employment, it gives people a solid base for moving into work. It wasn't originally envisaged that BBO would support people to improve their accommodation. Then a request for support was received from one participant, who was living in a shed with a leak that let the rain in. It showed the importance of decent housing in the pathway to employment, and in response we work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to adapt the programme so that these costs could be covered. Since then BBO has supported a small number of its participants (up to 3%) who were homeless or living in unsafe housing to improve their accommodation as part of the wider employment support package.



Intercultural Youth Scotland

A home, better health, and a job

The evaluators of Tackling Multiple Disadvantage (TMD), a BBO project in 17 London Boroughs, found a positive correlation between gaining secure housing and sustaining employment – 48% of people were in the same job six months later, which rose to 68% among participants who had secured housing.³¹ The reduced uncertainty due to safe and secure housing led to improvements in physical health and wellbeing, and management of health conditions. The project achieved a 27% employment outcome rate - substantially higher than recent comparable projects supporting people with multiple and complex needs

“I’ve got a roof over my head through the help of Crisis. I’ve got a potential a job opportunity with Crisis, well I’ve been able to pass my theory test through Crisis, and also get my driving lessons through Crisis as well. So, yes, they’ve literally covered a lot of key areas, like, life skill areas that is needed for career, a roof over your head and being able to drive.”

TMD participant.

New businesses, new futures

While most of our employment projects support people to move into employment, the Coastal Communities Fund creates and safeguards existing jobs – a total of 7,000 by April 2016, with a further 11,000 anticipated by 2021.³² This funding has helped coastal communities to diversify their local economies – from organic kelp production to manufacturing surf boards. It has supported new business start ups (485) and social enterprises (181). For example in Hull, Watergate Developments has been building the Centre for Digital Innovation, which provides space, advice and support for digital businesses. A £300,000 grant funded the construction of a river defence wall, which supported the required development of the old dry dock area.

Our Bright Future has shown the value of sector-focused initiatives. Participants have set up new businesses and social enterprises in the environmental sector, based around forestry, bee keeping, and products made from natural and recycled materials. One of the programme's most successful enterprise projects is the [Student Eats](#) initiative, which has worked in 50 colleges and universities across the UK, encouraging young people to grow food on campus and/or establish food-based social enterprises, such as farmers' markets and food co-ops. Of the 67 young people who completed the training, 53 went on to trade successfully as social enterprises.³³ One example is Wiltshire College students selling apple juice, preserves and cakes to the local community. "I [now] understand how to carve out a niche, valuable career for myself to fit my interests and abilities as well as to benefit the environment", explained one project participant.

Many local charities and networks do similar work. And we often find that businesses and social enterprises created with our support have a social element, because people want to give back to their community or support people who've been through similar experiences.

[B Collective](#), a community enterprise in Newcastle, has supported 138 women on their journey to self-employment, through accredited training, workshops, trading opportunities and business advice. 36 women are now trading regularly, with 21 members registered as self-employed.



Fulfilling Lives Newcastle

Creating lasting impact

Informed by lived experience

The barriers people face to employment, the experiences they've gone through and the behaviours that can result may be hard for others to understand. Many charities and community groups recognise this lived experience as something to learn from to inform and improve their projects and services.

One way they've done this is by adopting a co-production approach, bringing people and stakeholders together to create and deliver services.³⁴ People with lived experience have helped to change attitudes and have directly informed services, helping to transform the way they are delivered.

It's not just charities and public services that have benefited from the insight of lived experience. Young people from Talent Match have been commissioned by employers like Centrica, Bupa and Unilever to review their recruitment, employment and training practices. They've cut out jargon from their job adverts, improved their recruitment videos, and done some myth-busting about employment of (young) people without work experience. The young people's leadership group for Talent Match Cornwall advised their council on redesigning its services and were paid by local company Ginsters for consultancy work on youth employment.



Learning conference - Birmingham

Services that fit people, so people don't have to fit into them³⁵

Birmingham Changing Futures has helped to change the way DWP Jobcentres in the city support people who are leading complex and sometimes chaotic lives. For the first time, peer mentors from Changing Futures (individuals with experience of homelessness, mental health and/or substance misuse) work alongside the Jobcentres' outreach work coaches. They share their stories and life experiences.

Michelle, from DWP, explained what staff learn from this: "We see why a person who is homeless, has mental ill health, a criminal record or experienced substance misuse, could feel intimidated walking into a Jobcentre and how that feeling of fear could translate into difficult behaviour."

Peer mentors' insights have led to many practical changes in how the Jobcentre delivers support. For instance, rather than expecting people to come to the Jobcentre for timed appointments, outreach work coaches and peer mentors meet people where they feel safe, such as local drop-in centres for the homeless. And Jobcentre staff schedule appointments differently; everything on one day, rather than expecting people to come on different days.

Every Birmingham Jobcentre now has a work coach with specialist understanding of homelessness. It's their responsibility to raise awareness and understanding among their peers. Each has shadowed peer mentors and outreach work coaches.

Information now flows more smoothly through the system: "I can flag someone to the Jobcentre as vulnerable so instead of logging a no show when they don't make an appointment, our team can look at possible causes for concern," explained one outreach work coach. "We can feedback to their peer mentor, who can go out and look for the person and help them re-connect. This way we avoid crises."

Feedback suggests the changes have had a positive effect. People are starting to open up and share earlier, before reaching a crisis point. Michelle explains: "Their life experience means it's difficult for them to trust 'the system'. They don't give the Jobcentre team the full story, so problems don't come to light until they are extreme [...] a failure to attend DWP appointments could mean Universal Credit is not paid and rent arrears accumulate, but they say nothing. Only when eviction seems certain do they finally tell their support worker. Tackling the problems much earlier makes things better for everyone. Based in a space they feel comfortable I can help address concerns straight away."

Leading the way

The impact of our funding goes beyond participants. By having the time and freedom to try things out, many of our funded projects have been able to run employment services differently. By sharing their learning and expertise, they've helped to improve the way other services and employers work with people.



Learning conference - Birmingham

Putting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) front and centre

BBO is working to make sure all delivery partners stay focused on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). They've embedded an equality lens in the programme design, asking grantholders to report their performance against EDI indicators. Many have found that conducting regular equality reviews and audits helps them to stay focused, and to avoid unwittingly restricting opportunities for people they're supporting. Actions could include lead organisations proactively working with relevant partners to reach particular demographics or, at the micro scale, checking and preventing unconscious bias.

This is a more hands on approach than we would usually have as a funder, but many recognise the benefits. A representative of **Motiv8** in Manchester explains: "We've seen the importance of raising awareness amongst staff, including: monitoring completion of Equality and Diversity training, promotion of this cross-cutting theme, and exploring ideas within our Equality working group. We have also found it important to have a diverse workforce (which we monitor annually), which incidentally also matches the population diversity of Greater Manchester."

Our Bright Future is raising awareness of the value of work placements and entry level positions to help young people overcome the “experience” hurdle – the challenge of not finding a job without experience, and not being able to gain experience without a job. As a result, many environmental organisations have started to create posts for young people who show potential but don’t have the necessary qualifications or formal work experience.³⁶ [Blackburne House](#), a Liverpool-based charity which supports women from disadvantaged backgrounds, has created two positions for participants, enabling them to apply for jobs as beekeeping tutors teaching others to look after bees, extract honey and take their products to market.

Talent Match sustainability partnerships have been working locally on the Government’s response to rising youth unemployment through Youth Hubs and Kickstart Programmes. They’ve shared learning from the programme with the [Youth Employment Group](#) (YEG) network, which brings together 100 member organisations and is currently focussing on how to address the impact of Covid-19 on young people. Two young people from Talent Match Black Country’s Steering Group have recently joined the YEG to ensure young people’s voice is at front and centre of their work.

A chance to deliver on a wider scale

Being able to access large funding programmes, and developing the capacity to deliver services at this scale, is helping charities to obtain financial support for their services.

One of the aims of BBO was to increase access to European funding for VCS groups and social enterprises, in recognition of their experience and ability to offer specialist support. Around 26% of organisations were accessing European Social Fund (ESF) funding for the first time through BBO, either as the lead grantholder or as a partner. Some have gone on to apply for further ESF funding, such as several of the partners in the Better Off Finance project, led by the Women’s Organisation. Others say that they’ve been able to increase the capacity of their organisation thanks to the BBO funding: “We developed a separate and substantial employability section of the organisation as a direct result of BBO.”

Trying out new funding models has also helped to sustain services that otherwise might not have been continued.



Drink Wise Age Well

Social investment for services that could have been lost

Using a social investment funding approach has enabled public sector organisations to carry on commissioning VCS and social enterprise providers of employment support for people with severe mental health issues.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services embed employment advisors in mental health teams. These advisors help people with severe mental health problems to get into work and then provide extended support for them when they are in the job.

A number of providers delivering IPS services were facing uncertain budgets and increasingly shorter contract lengths. By adapting to the Social Impact Bond (SIB) model of Mental Health and Employment Partnerships (MHEP), they were able to enter into payment by results or outcomes-based contracting with the commissioners. This meant they weren't taking the same level of risk as previously, because the SIB places the risk on the social investor who will get a return for their investment based on performance.

In all previous IPS service delivery contracts, providers experienced over-subscription of their services at the same time as funding shortages. Through entering into an outcomes based contract, the service can be fully funded (depending on performance) through outcomes payments made by the local commissioners. They've been able to expand their teams and free up managers from frontline duties so they can manage more effectively and focus on innovations to the service model, such as greater use of digital communications and social media.

A commissioner explained that the new funding model had led to improved partnership working, giving "greater sense of urgency and drive as a collective because we all want to see it to work and want it to be financially viable for the provider."³⁷

This social investment approach, which is facilitated by the Commissioning Better Outcomes (CBO) fund and Life Chances Fund (LCF) means that delivery can be made at a scale far larger than previously envisaged. This will provide more evidence of the impact and effectiveness of IPS as an intervention in the UK

Insights for the future

We also contribute to new research in the employment sector, which helps to inform future policies and practice.

We're funding [Drink Wise, Age Well](#), a major new programme of work which addresses the challenges of alcohol-related harm in older adults. They've carried out a survey looking at the relationship between alcohol and labour market activity in the over 50s population of the UK. It shows that 40% of older men (aged 55-64) and older women (aged 55-59) on Jobseeker's Allowance are a high risk group in terms of problem drinking, almost twice the proportion of the next highest age group, those aged 16-24. At the same time, just 16% of employers would hire someone with previous alcohol problems.

Greater Manchester Talent Match's research into 'hidden' young people has influenced regional policy. They found that there were over 21,000 young people living in Greater Manchester who weren't known to any service: they weren't working, studying, registered unemployed, or claiming benefits. As a result of their research and dialogue with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), support for hidden young people is now included in the local Strategy Implementation Plan. They've secured further National Lottery funding to continue their work with hidden youth.



Fulfilling Lives Newcastle

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CBO and LCF: These support the delivery of outcomes based contracts that seek to tackle complex social problems, some of which include employment outcomes either as the primary focus of the programme or as one of their supplementary outcomes. Eight of these Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) use the Individual Placement Support (IPS) 'place then train' model. An Employment Specialist helps participants gain competitive employment and then supports them as necessary, in the job, according to their needs. Other programmes support primary outcomes, such as supporting homeless people into sustained accommodation; with employment acting as a secondary outcome.

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Key contacts: Anne-Mari Hall and Jo Woodall

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