

## Aims

Routes to Employment aims to engage with unemployed residents across Redcar and Cleveland and help them to meet the demands of emerging labour markets. With Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council the intervention supports a 'network of intermediaries' to assist employers identify opportunities to encourage and prepare people for a return to the labour market.

Routes to Employment has four functions –

- ◆ Preparing people for work
- ◆ Intermediate labour markets
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Matching people to jobs

## Location

Redcar is the main urban centre of the Redcar and Cleveland borough on Teesside. It is characterised by the contraction of traditional industries in the Tees Valley, which has resulted in approximately 82,000 redundancies in the chemical, iron and steel, heavy engineering and shipbuilding sectors.

The resident population of Redcar and Cleveland, as measured in the 2001 Census, was 139,132. The level of unemployment in the Borough is significantly above the national average. It is currently twice the national rate and in particular wards the level is 4 or 5 times higher.

19 per cent of those unemployed were aged 50 and over, 11 per cent had never worked and 36 per cent were long term unemployed. In August 2000, there were 3,380 Jobseeker Allowance claimants in the borough, of which 31 per cent had child dependants.

The Routes to Employment initiative is delivered through offices in Redcar town centre, but staff and work opportunities are available across all the NRF wards in the borough.

## The Intervention Strategy

The Wise Group, a not for profit company that delivers training opportunities in Scotland and North East England delivers the programme in partnership with the Borough Council.

Routes to Employment is the only Intermediate Labour Market service in the borough and maintains a network of intermediaries advising employers and the service on opportunities to match people to emerging markets.

In considering training and employment, increasing use is being made of Intermediate Labour Markets as an additional approach to assisting people gain employability skills. They offer a progression route from welfare to a job ready situation for those people who are either excluded or new to the local labour market.

The core feature of the ILM is to improve participants' employability skills through paid work on a temporary contract, coupled with training, personal development and job search activities.

In the Borough, the Routes to Employment Programme is being supported by the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership. This initiative seeks to establish ILM activity that can assist regeneration activity to benefit local communities.

## Funding

Establishing an ILM is dependent upon assembly of various funding sources at a local level. At present there is no single source of funding to cover operational costs of ILMs.

The Routes to Employment programme was allocated £185,000 NRF finance up to the end of 2002.

## Operating Method

Routes to Employment offers a client centred assessment of training needs and opportunities. The advisors work with clients to support them through training, ILM and work placements.

Progress is calibrated with the expectations and concerns of the client – many clients are anxious and have faced crisis and a sense of personal failure in work in the past.



## Achievements of the Intervention

### Main achievements

- ◆ Successful return to work for 146 long term unemployed people,
- ◆ 70 clients in ILM
- ◆ 215 clients gained accredited qualifications
- ◆ 234 clients have received advice and guidance

The service was originally funded as a very intensive project and high levels of client support and liaison with potential employers was designed into the business plan. The concentration of resources and clear priority for the clients has meant that the number of clients assisted is nearly twice the expected level.

Unemployment has fallen faster in Redcar & Cleveland than the national average to 7 per cent in 2002, though it remains above national and regional rates and the need for continuing focus on this issue remains

### Mainstreaming strategy

Currently, the Government is in discussion regarding future policy and activity related to employability initiatives such as ILMs.

Redcar and Cleveland Council are monitoring the work of Routes to Employment and are planning to integrate the model into mainstream economic development in 2004/5.

## The Learning Curve

Routes to Employment is successful because it is client centred and has strong links with potential employers.

The high level of initial funding has ensured that clients receive high quality advice and employers trust the service. This has created a virtuous circle of good referrals encouraging more offers of placements. The ILM part of the work was originally considered to be quite expensive compared to similar services in other parts of the country. Experience has shown that the attention to quality has produced a very effective and efficient service.

## Key Lessons

Client centred assessments are essential to successful ILM and training

Employers and labour markets will respond positively if they are convinced the referral agent is trustworthy and has done a thorough assessment of client needs and skills



# Routes to Employment

### Contact

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**NRF Priority**  
Employment

**NRF Authority**  
Redcar and Cleveland

**NRF Funding**  
Medium

**PTO for additional Information**

#### **Lead Agent**

The Wise Group – a registered charity

#### **Main Partners**

Redcar and Cleveland Council

#### **Location**

Redcar

#### **Main achievements**

Successful return to work for 146 long term unemployed people, 70 clients in ILM

215 client gain accredited qualifications

High quality employment services will produce efficiencies in costs and successful placements

### **Contact details**

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