

## Aims

To work in high areas of deprivation and unemployment, to provide new and flexible ways of removing barriers to employment for disadvantaged jobless people, enabling them to apply for and secure employment/self employment seamlessly.

The provision of individually tailored advice and guidance delivered in the community designed to move the customer closer to the labour market, or seamlessly into work or self-employment.

## Location

The programme is delivered through 4 of the NRF target wards in the district at various locations which include:

### East Bedlington:

- ◆ Sure Start
- ◆ Bedlington Station Infopoint
- ◆ Bedlington Job Centre

### Choppington:

- ◆ Choppington Community Association

### Sleekburn:

- ◆ Bedlington Station Healthy Living Centre
- ◆ Mobile Unit Outreach Facility

### Guidepost:

- ◆ Guidepost Infopoint
- ◆ Cleasewell Hill Healthy Living Centre]

Wansbeck is a semi-rural authority in south Northumberland.

## The Intervention Strategy

### Staffing

The team is managed by a Project Manager, an Adviser Manager and three advisers working on an outreach basis. The core NRF team is supported by an additional team of Advisers and a Finance Officer.

The Lead Agent for the intervention is the Wansbeck Action Team for Jobs. Also included in the delivery and management of the initiative as key partners are the following:

- ◆ Wansbeck District Council
- ◆ Northumberland County Council
- ◆ Northumberland Guidance Company
- ◆ The Community
- ◆ Learning and Skills Council
- ◆ Wansbeck Council for Voluntary Service
- ◆ SureStart
- ◆ Business Link
- ◆ Probation Service

### Operating method

NRF is the sole source of funding allowing replication of the DWP Action Team for Jobs model, avoiding duplication and adding value to mainstream provision. In the financial year – 2003 –04 the initiative received just over £130,000 NRF finance.

There are a number of features which are key to the delivery of the service. These include to:

- ◆ Become an accepted part of the target communities
- ◆ Establish the needs of the target group
- ◆ Provide individual help and support to each individual jobless person who volunteers to take part
- ◆ Provide local solutions to local problems
- ◆ Build links with local employers and maximise local employment opportunities
- ◆ Explore employment opportunities outside of the target area and build relationships with relevant employers to encourage them to consider target group people



- ◆ Enhance 'employability' and basic skills levels for all participants
- ◆ Provide the practical help needed to bridge the gap between unemployment and jobs and financial assistance by tapping into existing funds or Action Team subsidy packages
- ◆ Explore transport provision within the target area travel to work boundaries
- ◆ To keep those people who start work in sustainable employment
- ◆ Work in partnership with relevant bodies
- ◆ Ensure that the lessons learnt from the work of the Action Team is fed back to relevant partners to inform and influence future projects, bids and mainstream provision

## Achievements of the Intervention

### Main achievements

Current activity in this financial year shows that the Action Team is on track to meet and in fact exceed their annual targets. Below is an outline of their activity for the past two years.

Annual Objectives for NRF wards, which are being achieved include to:

- ◆ Engage and caseload 200 jobless people
- ◆ Place 50 jobless people facing barriers into work
- ◆ Place 50 jobless people into training with the aim of securing employment

The Action Team initiative is one of a number of measures aimed at achieving the Government's floor target to increase employment rates in disadvantaged areas and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate. As this target is measured on an aggregate basis across the 30 Local Authority Districts with the poorest initial labour market position, local data is not available.

One initiative supported by the Wansbeck Action Team for Jobs has been the provision of transport links between target areas and employment opportunities in neighbouring retail and business parks. This service is initially being offered free of charge to unemployed local people. This initiative has recently received praise from the Minister for Work, Nick Brown for recognising that transport can be a barrier preventing people in the area from accessing jobs.



# Action Team for Jobs

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### NRF Priority:

Employment

### NRF Authority:

Wansbeck

### NRF Funding Level:

Medium

PTO for additional information

**Lead Agent:**

Wansbeck Action Team for Jobs

**Main Partners:**

Wansbeck District Council  
Northumberland County Council  
Northumberland Guidance Company  
The Community  
Learning and Skills Council  
Wansbeck Council for Voluntary Service  
SureStart  
Business Link  
Probation Service

**Location:**

The programme is delivered in 4 key locations within the Wansbeck areas – East Bedlington, Choppington, Sleekburn and Guidepost. Wansbeck is a semi-rural authority in south Northumberland.

**Main achievements:**

Annual Objectives for NRF wards:

Engage and caseload 200 jobless people

Place 50 jobless people facing barriers into work

Place 50 jobless people into training with the aim of securing employment



### Mainstreaming

The Department for Work and Pensions is currently rolling out its new Jobcentre Service under the name of Jobcentre Plus. Current Government strategy involves looking at the innovative work of Action Teams, and introducing as many of these ideas and practices into Mainstream activity. There are already examples of this at national and local level, for example Outreach work and flexible funding packages have been incorporated in Mainstream Jobcentre Plus work. As such, this fits perfectly with the concept of using NRF money to influence mainstream activity as part of a longer-term strategy. The team continues to test new approaches and develop solutions to meet local need.

### The Learning Curve

#### Positives

The use of NRF funding has given the flexibility to allow the expansion of the Action team service into areas of greatest need

#### Problems

Engagement of the target client group in hard to help areas.

Finding suitable outreach facilities

### Key Lessons

Flexibility to be able to deliver a package of support and services in accessible locations is one of the key factors to the success of the Action Team for Jobs model.

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