

# West London Working

## Meta evaluation



P2054

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

- 1.1 This report provides an evaluation view of the activities of the West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder.
- 1.2 West London Working is one of 15 City Strategy Pathfinders established by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2006, with an initial three-year life. In 2008, their lifespan was extended to 2011.
- 1.3 The City Strategy Pathfinders (CSPs) were meant to establish a template for devolution of Department for Work and Pensions responsibilities in tackling worklessness to localities.
- 1.4 In this meta-evaluation, we have performed a structured analysis of each of the evaluations of the individual strands of West London Working's activities. In addition to evaluations of each strand, we have also used the West London Working Final Report which provides West London Working's summary of its activities.

## West London Working Vision

- 1.5 West London Working adopted the following vision:

*“Our vision is to transform the coherence and effectiveness of the existing structure of services in West London to deliver a sustainable increase in the number of local residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty.”*

(West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder, Business Plan, April 2007)

- 1.6 This vision has two parts. The first relates to improving services. The second relates to positive outcomes from so doing. **Achieving increases in employment and reductions in child poverty have been completely blown off course by the overwhelming impact of the recession.**
- 1.7 Overall our judgment is that the vision for West London Working has been met in part. We conclude ‘in part’ because the vision was very ambitious and went beyond merely seeking to improve employment and skills services in West London and sought their transformation.
- 1.8 West London Working undertook a wide range of activities to fulfil its vision:
  - Influencing investment in West London's employment and skills services (Investment and Target Group)
  - Improving information on employability services available in West London (Directory of Employment Services)
  - Improving the market by helping people and organisations to identify high performing employability service providers and so giving providers an incentive to drive up their own performance (Employability Performance Rating)
  - Capability building for employment and skills providers (Provider Confederation and the Business Partner Programme)
  - Outreach to hard to reach and hard to help groups (Personal Advice and Outreach)

- Strengthening the links between learning and work (Building Employability Pathways)
- Tackling English language barriers to employment (Work Focused ESOL for Parents)

## Key Findings

- 1.9 The role of City Strategy Pathfinders such as West London Working was seen as bringing benefits to its sub-region, especially in terms of acting as a catalyst to create linkages in the area which would otherwise not exist, leading to a better coordination of employment and skills services, and in terms of providing a recognised voice able to articulate the employment and skills needs of the whole of the area.
- 1.10 West London Working was not simply ‘a talking shop’. It produced concrete outcomes and activities and not just ‘strategies’. WLW established a coherent set of activities which matched up against the challenges and objectives identified by the Board, in their business planning phase.
- 1.11 The mixed public – private composition of the West London Working’s Board was an advantage providing it with a wide perspective. The Board was unusual among CSPs in having such high profile businesspeople involved. This gave the Board considerable clout to break through logjams and get things done.
- 1.12 The importance of the leadership provided by the Chair of the Board was noted by a substantial number of the people we interviewed. This demonstrated the importance of individual leadership for an initiative such as West London Working to be successful combining a strength of purpose with knowledge of the issues so that the leadership directed West London Working in an appropriate direction.
- 1.13 In addition, WLW’s localist approach has had its benefits. The Investment & Target Group managed to influence investment in West London so that it better met local need. The Employability Performance Rating has significant potential to help drive up the quality and effectiveness of employment and skills provision in West London (and beyond) if used widely in future.
- 1.14 The Confederation’s role in providing a means of networking to build relationships with other providers, share best practice, and obtain information about, for example, new programmes, and opportunities was identified as something which had had a significant capacity building effect on employment and skills providers.
- 1.15 The small amount of money invested in support of Building Employability Pathways has helped to implant the issue of employability into the normal day to day operations of West London’s FE colleges and adult education institutes which was expected to have a longer term positive impact on learners’ chances of obtaining work subsequent to the end of their courses.
- 1.16 The impact has also had its limits. The Investment & Target Group has not been successful at pooling funding. This is due to a number of reasons including the fact that regional and national funders have priorities which can trump sub-regional objectives. They also have their own commissioning processes which tend to be inflexible and on different timescales.

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- 1.17 The Employability Performance Rating system has been developed but at the time of reporting has had limited actual usage, with 72 grants being rated in 2010/11. Thus its impact to date is limited despite its potential. It has been adopted by the LDA for rating its skills and employability programmes and ESF programmes. London Councils and the Ministry of Justice are using the rating with their London ESF contracts. The GLA and LDA have strongly recommended the use of the performance rating system to Work Programme bidders.
  - 1.18 Part of the rationale for the Business Partner Programme was to create better links between employment and skills providers and local employers in order to make providers more attuned to employer need. The fact that the majority of mentors were drawn from specialist training and development firms, rather than mainstream businesses, probably limited this impact. Both the outreach and ESOL projects had targets with respect to participants obtaining sustained work. By the end of the project, the ESOL project was just under its targets, while the Personal Advice and Outreach projects remained well below target.
  - 1.19 There is universal acceptance amongst those we interviewed that WLW could have achieved more with a greater degree of borough engagement, even if this improved over time. Given that the CSP in West London was determined by central government, rather than resulting from a locally based bid, more could have been done in the early stages of the programme to promote borough engagement.
  - 1.20 Our assessment is that West London Working overall had significant Strategic Added Value impacts through strategic leadership and influence, and synergy within West London. It also levered in close to £7 million of funds, roughly double the amount of programme expenditure on West London Working.

### **Value for Money**

- 1.21 West London Working identified a range of issues that it felt needed product development and change management through the employment and skills infrastructure rather than simply programme delivery. It prioritised its spending accordingly.
- 1.22 In this, they intended to lay the groundwork for a continuing set of changes to the activities of the infrastructure to focus more closely on securing employment outcomes than had been the case.
- 1.23 Where we have been able to judge the effectiveness of the product development and change management programmes, they seemed to be successful, but at high cost. It will be the case that such change management programmes can only be finally assessed for value for money after a considerably longer period than West London Working was given, and without the extraneous factor of a severe recession affecting measured outcomes.
- 1.24 The change management activities were beginning to bear fruit at the point that funding for West London Working finished. Therefore, at this stage, we cannot advise that they provided value for money, but it remains possible that they could have contributed to a more substantial improvement in later years.

- 1.25 We would make a similar judgement about the product development activities. The Employability Performance Rating system has been taken up outside West London Working, and has been recommended for use by Work Programme Prime Contractors by London stakeholders. The prime contractors may (or may not) decide to use it. There is therefore a risk that the product development may not bear fruit. The same applies, with less visibility to the other product development exercises.
- 1.26 In the context of the recession taking place in the UK, and West London's particular reliance on the success of Heathrow airport, it would not be surprising that objectives for job outcomes that were set in 2007 might not have been achieved.
- 1.27 Employment provision is, to a degree, counter-cyclical. The numbers expand in recessions and reduce in recoveries due to the state of the economy, and success rates of securing job outcomes follow the same pattern. Therefore, the costs per job outcome are likely to be very much higher in a recession period than in a recovery or in a boom.
- 1.28 If we look at the assessment of the eight WLW projects we see that four are judged to have delivered value for money against one which is judged not to have done so. Hence on balance we might conclude that WLW has overall delivered value for money from its activities.
- 1.29 Therefore our overall assessment of value for money is, to a degree, rather more positive than a simple assessment of the job outcomes per money spent, as we have, as we should, taken into account the economic context in which West London Working operated throughout its life, and we have taken into account the product development some of which has agreed continuation and other elements are well regarded.

### Longer Term Sustainability

- 1.30 Perhaps the most significant benefit was the building of relationships between key organisations such as the LDA, Jobcentre Plus etc. with local providers and Local Authorities. This was identified as something which had not happened before in West London. As a couple of quotes from our interviews illustrate this point:
- "The programme will leave behind some discrete pieces of work ... but the links are the most important thing."*
- "It has established relationships that didn't exist before. That's very important."*
- 1.31 The six local authorities are now working together in ways they did not before West London Working, and stakeholders recognise that they are able to deal jointly with the grouping rather than having to deal individually with six local authorities. The Provider Confederation has brought providers together for networking and information exchange which has made them more aware of how they can productively work together for mutual benefit. In consequence West London appears better prepared for the new Work Programme with smaller providers potentially better placed to act as effective sub-contractors to the large Prime Contractors.

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- 1.32 Other potential longer term impacts depend on the extent to which various activities are taken forward by others, after WLW ends in March 2011. It appears that the influence of the Investment and Target Group on EU, national and regional funding decisions will largely be lost as a proposal for a West London Employment Commissioning Unit will not proceed in the current period of retrenchment for West London's six local authorities.
- 1.33 The Directory of Employment Services will be sustained at least until 2014. The West London Working's Directory has been by taken on with ESF funding. The Directory will expand to cover all of London's ESF funded employment related services for adults. However, there remains the issue of updating the information on provision not funded by the ESF in West London. The GLA, LDA and London Skills and Employment Board have *requested* that Prime Contractors use, and update the new directory. However, with no contractual requirement to support this and no way of monitoring the situation, it is unlikely that the information will be consistently kept up to date.
- 1.34 There is also uncertainty over whether or not the Employability Performance Rating system will continue into the long term. The new Work Programme represents a very significant change in the marketplace for employability services. The onus of programme management will now be placed on the Work Programme's Prime Contractors rather than public sector funders. It will be challenging to secure implementation by DWP Prime Contractors without DWP making this a contractual requirement. The use of the system depends on Prime Contractors responding to the requests from London government and the Employment and Skills Board to use the rating, and that they see a business case for implementing it.
- 1.35 The evaluation of the Provider Confederation noted strong support that it should continue as it is seen as supporting joint working and improved service delivery in West London. The potential lead role for sustaining the Confederation lies with the large Prime Contractors on the basis that they potentially stand to benefit from the impact on potential sub-contractors: the smaller, specialist providers in terms of driving up their performance.
- 1.36 A significant output of the Business Partner Programme was the preparation of a toolkit. The toolkit is designed to provide guidance on how to set out similar activities in the future and so has the potential to offer wider longer term benefits.

### Implications for Future Policy

- 1.37 This meta evaluation will be retained as a record of West London Working's approach and impact. It will provide further information to support policy makers that are interested in building on or replicating any aspect of the West London Working programme.
- 1.38 The current position in the policy cycle is that interest has moved away from collaborative partnership working. There are moves towards localism and devolution, through local voluntary initiative, and through contracting to private and voluntary contractors, as in the Work Programme. In this context, collaborative partnership working may be seen as anti-competitive. However, the evaluators are aware of policy swings in the past. These provide reasons for believing that sub-regional collaboration in employment matters, especially in support of an economic hub, such as Heathrow, may end up being reinvented.

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- 1.39 In addition, a number of the approaches that West London Working adopted remain relevant in the context of the new approach to welfare to work policy. There will continue to be a requirement for Prime Contractors and others to have good information on what employment and skills services are available in West London in a similar fashion to the Directory of Employment Services. The capacity building that smaller and more specialist providers can obtain from networking via the Provider Confederation remains decidedly relevant where Prime Contractors are seeking effective sub-contractors. Appropriately designed financial incentives can be effective in this regard. But these can be complemented with capacity building, training, and mentoring. Furthermore, the Employability Performance Rating system will continue to be relevant in a system where Prime Contractors need to ensure that their sub-contractors are going deliver effectively if it is not to jeopardize their own performance related payments from the Work Programme.
- 1.40 Policy development associated with various activities undertaken by West London Working took a long time. Given the time limited nature of West London Working this had the consequence of crowding out the time for delivery and in consequence a number of activities, for example the Employability Performance Rating system, appears not to have had the time to reach its full potential. The four year lifetime accorded to CSPs contrasts with the 10 year life of the New Deal for Communities, another area based policy. CSPs were simply too short lived to achieve their full potential and this finding should be recognised in future policy development.
- 1.41 Local engagement is fundamental to maximising the success of locally specific policies. There was unanimity amongst those we interviewed that West London Working could have achieved more with a greater degree of borough engagement, even if this improved over time. Future policy initiatives need to ensure that local authorities and other significant local stakeholders are fully engaged in the development of locally delivered policies.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an evaluation view of the activities of the West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder. It provides a synthesis of the evaluations conducted of the individual streams of work carried out by West London Working between 2007 and 2011. This synthesis has been carried out within the form of a meta-evaluation, where the evaluations have been analysed for their answers to a structured set of questions reflecting the overall objectives of West London Working.
- 2.2 The meta evaluation will be retained as a record of West London Working's approach and impact. It will provide further information to support policy makers that are interested in building on or replicating any aspect of the West London Working programme. The main anticipated audiences for meta evaluation are the DWP City Strategy Pathfinders team, the London Development Agency, the accountable body for West London Working, and more general the wider policy community engaged in developing to welfare to work activities to assist individuals into employment.
- 2.3 The individual evaluations conducted of each activity stream are listed in the annex, and are available on the West London Working website.

### Purpose of the report

- 2.4 The Programme Meta Evaluation evaluates the impact of West London Working as a whole. It brings together findings from all WLW evaluations and relevant information from the National CSP Evaluation.

### Structure of report

- 2.5 This report is structured in the following manner. Firstly, there is an Executive Summary identifying the findings from each chapter of this report. Then, this introduction describes the purpose and structure of the report, and gives a description of the policy intentions of DWP in piloting a City Strategy concept. It then describes the changing economic and policy context over the lifetime of West London Working. Chapter 3 describes the approach which the authors, as evaluators, have taken to the production of this report, and compares this with the national evaluation of City Strategies commissioned by DWP.
- 2.6 Chapter 4 moves into the discussion of West London Working as such, and analyses how West London Working saw its purpose, designed its interventions and analysed the rationale and objectives for its activities.
- 2.7 Chapter 5 is the largest chapter, and provides an analysis of spending, outcomes and impacts of each of the major activity streams of West London Working
- 2.8 Chapter 6 examines the contribution of local governance of West London Working to the achievements of the whole set of activities – the strategic added value of West London Working.
- 2.9 Chapter 7 examines the value for money of West London Working as a whole, and Chapter 8 concludes.

## The policy context

- 2.10 West London Working is one of 15 City Strategy Pathfinders established by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2006, with an initial three-year life. In 2008, their lifespan was extended to 2011.
- 2.11 The City Strategy Pathfinders were meant to establish a template for devolution of Department for Work and Pensions responsibilities in assisting benefit claimants towards work to localities<sup>1</sup>. The context is that the Department for Work and Pensions, and its largest delivery arm, Jobcentre Plus, is a Department in which activities, while delivered locally, are determined centrally. Activities are conducted according to standard operating models that mean that Jobcentre Plus officers may be reading out the same text to customers in West London as in the West Highlands of Scotland.
- 2.12 Other Government departments, such as the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Education, operate to a much larger extent as funders and managers of services that are devolved to local bodies, such as local authorities or schools, which have a degree of autonomy to deliver services in a locally appropriate fashion.
- 2.13 Local authorities and other local interests criticised the DWP for its' one-size-fits-all approach, and argued strongly that local knowledge held by local authorities and their partners could produce increased impact of DWP funding over centralised delivery. As, during the course of the long upswing in the economy, long-term benefit claimants became increasingly concentrated in urban areas, the concept of devolution to cities was born.
- 2.14 From the point of view of local authorities, it seemed that while other government departments accepted that local bodies either were or should be the experts on their areas, DWP did not. Local authorities do, as part of the operation of their main functions, maintain relationships with a wide variety of local organisations and enterprises.
- 2.15 The issue of devolution has been controversial within DWP, as there have been strong countervailing views that it was the characteristics of benefit claimants that determined both what was useful to deliver and the outcomes, with only a tiny residual effect being due to local differences.
- 2.16 DWP has also had strong views that labour markets did not work on the same boundaries as local authorities, and were, in urban areas, larger. Statisticians have, for many years, used travel to work areas depending on census information on commuting flows. Therefore, if DWP functions were to be devolved, they should be devolved to a level that was appropriate to the labour market in which people were attempting to find work. It was felt that a sub-regional level was appropriate. This necessarily involved partnership arrangements between the local authorities and linked stakeholders within the sub-regional area.
- 2.17 West London appeared a natural fit for such a sub-region as the local authorities in the area had an established partnership (the West London Alliance) and Jobcentre Plus and the local Learning and Skills Council had been working closely with employers in the Heathrow area.

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- 2.18 The degree of centralisation of DWP services has developed over time. Before the creation of the DWP, its predecessor in the employment field, the Department for Education and Employment, devolved management of contracted employment and training programmes to employer-led Training and Enterprise Councils. In West London, there were two of these, West London and North West London.
- 2.19 The experience of Training and Enterprise Councils, which were run as private sector companies, was not always positively regarded, particularly by the local authorities in their areas. Board members were appointed by the Secretary of State, and local authorities had varying amounts of influence or input depending on personal and organisational relationships rather than a formal requirement to work in partnership. The practice of TECs, in many but not all cases, involved private sector leadership and governance rather than influence on what was delivered, which remained highly structured by formal DfEE guidance and funding conditioned on that guidance.
- 2.20 At the same time as DWP was becoming more centralised, related functions were implemented through local government. In particular, regeneration funding through the Single Regeneration Budget and, later Neighbourhood Renewal funding, was delivered through local authorities and partnerships of local authorities. Local authorities developed Local Strategic Partnerships including Jobcentre Plus and the local Learning and Skills Council as well as the local authority and other partners. Other departments had a range of area-based initiatives that local authorities managed or influenced.
- 2.21 By 2006, DWP accepted that it should at least try out a devolution of strategy responsibilities to localities. The proposals as originally discussed were expansive, with a possibility of control over the entire DWP programme budget, and in some discussions, over the Jobcentre Plus budget as well.
- 2.22 The eventual proposal offered to local partnerships were, however, based on local control of DWP's existing area-based funding – the Deprived Areas Fund, with an objective to ensure 'alignment' of other funding streams such as the CLG and DTI (now BIS) area-based funding, with co-operation with the Learning and Skills Council. A small amount of additional funding was made available to fund the necessary partnership-building. DWP mainstream funding for Jobcentre Plus and for programmes was not part of the offer to local partners
- 2.23 This affected the nature of the City Strategy work, as the funding streams that remained to be 'aligned' had previously had very different requirements from DWP's requirements. Local programmes funded from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and from regeneration funds were not required by central government to concentrate on job outcomes as the only objective. Objectives such as 'liveability' and basic skills acquisition were also important. In many cases, employment was seen as an additional outcome to a variety of 'employability-related' outcomes such as first full level 2 qualifications. Therefore, for the 'alignment' of programmes to work as intended, a major change in the orientation and culture of services was required.

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- 2.24 After the City Strategies had been extended to 2011, the recession started in early 2008 (dates vary according to the data source and definition used), and affected the probability of the projects achieving job outcomes.
- 2.25 At the same time, the pressure of the recession on DWP, as well as unrelated policy changes, resulted in a concentration on measures to combat the recession. West London Working took part in some of these, such as the Future Jobs Fund. DWP interest in City strategies waned markedly.
- 2.26 After the formation of the Coalition Government in June 2010, DWP interest in City Strategies has not been renewed. However, devolution of responsibilities to Jobcentre Plus local staff, and to private and voluntary sector contractors has continued. From a local perspective, this devolution to Prime Contractors operating over a contract area that covers West and North London appears as a reduction in devolution to the localities. ‘Adviser flexibilities’ within Jobcentre Plus are intended to result in greater personalisation of the service but do not necessarily link to any local-level strategic direction.
- 2.27 West London forms part of one Contract Package area for the Work Programme which is currently (March 2011) under procurement. The Work Programme procurement exercise has been conducted rapidly following the election of the Coalition government. This has not provided the degree of opportunity that West London Working had to influence the (aborted) procurement exercise for the Flexible New Deal. Prospective bidders have been asked to liaise with local stakeholders, and evidence of this has been requested by DWP, but they have not been required to accept local strategic direction, as this is seen as contrary to the ‘black-box’ nature of the programme procurement.

## 3 EVALUATION APPROACH

### Introduction

- 3.1 This Meta Evaluation brings together the results of all the evaluations of the various WLW activities to give a single overarching evaluation of the impact of West London Working. In addition, we include relevant findings from the national evaluation of the City Strategy Pilots.
- 3.2 Given the contrasting nature of the various documents to be reviewed, from evaluations, to business plans to statistical reports, the formal statistical processes involved in meta-analysis do not appear appropriate or actually practical to deploy. Instead we undertake a systematic review of the literature available.

### Background

- 3.3 The nature of the City Strategy programme has posed significant challenges for both the national evaluators<sup>1</sup> (Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick) and local evaluators.
- 3.4 The City Strategy programme, in its essentials, concerned developing a wholly different approach to the administration and management of welfare to work activity in the 15 localities tested. There were, thus, a wide range of different strands of activity in each area, and, they differed between different areas as one of the ideas behind the strategy was that local bodies would be able to identify issues and responses more effectively than a national approach.
- 3.5 As DWP felt the City Strategy approach was a high-risk one compared to the standard operating model as used by Jobcentre Plus and the DWP, DWP limited the risks by limiting the scope for City Strategies and their funding latitude. While DWP believed that their centralised methods were tried and tested, and produced results, they considered that it could be possible to improve outcomes by enabling local actors to better shape local delivery functions, primarily on the basis that existing provision was ineffective at tackling local needs or issues.
- 3.6 West London Working was, therefore, attempting to demonstrate that some devolution to their locality could show sufficient promise for a further stage of devolution to become possible, within limited scope and resources.
- 3.7 As West London Working and the other City Strategies were variously termed 'pathfinders' or 'pilots', and had numerous activity strands, it evaluated each of the activity strands. Some of these evaluations were continuous evaluations, intended to inform the

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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of Phase 1 City Strategy; Anne E Green, Duncan Adam and Chris Hasluck, DWP Research Report 639, 2010.

development of activity as it progressed, rather than summative evaluations meant to answer whether or not a particular strand 'worked'.

### Methodology for WLW meta-evaluation

- 3.8 DWP devolved not only the delivery of services and strategic function, but also the evaluation of the City Strategies. Each City Strategy was required to perform evaluations of their activities as a whole and of each strand of their activity. The national evaluation therefore drew together the reports to attempt to answer the research questions that DWP had identified. These were, largely, whether the City Strategies had improved outcomes over comparable areas, and whether the relationship between DWP and the City Strategies had been productive or the opposite.
- 3.9 The local evaluations were supported by local evaluation advice, financed by DWP. Many of the evaluations of the streams of work were formative and process evaluations. These examined how the streams of work were conceived and organised and informed improvements over the course of the life of the programme stream. Summative evaluations, recording the impact and value for money, were intended as part of the final evaluation exercise, of which this meta-evaluation of West London Working forms part.
- 3.10 In this meta-evaluation, we have performed a structured analysis of each of the evaluations of the individual strands. We have analysed each of the evaluation reports against a series of questions that are designed to show: what West London Working intended to deliver; whether or not the delivery was implemented or changed in response to developing understandings and circumstances; how the activities had performed; whether the local governance of the activity by West London Working added value; and whether the activities provided value for money.
- 3.11 Our meta-evaluation assesses the quality and methodology of the individual evaluations used. In this case, we can report that: none of the evaluations were randomised controlled trials; none of the evaluations used control groups to assess the net impact; the quantitative elements of the reports were derived from either management information from West London Working or from small-scale surveys of beneficiaries of the strands; and the process evaluation was derived from qualitative interviews with stakeholders, in some but not all cases using formal qualitative analysis methods.
- 3.12 Many of the methodological issues with the evaluations stem from design decisions made by the Department for Work and Pensions rather than West London Working, and are common to all the City Strategy evaluations. It was a design decision for the City Strategies not to include randomised, controlled, trials. The London City Strategy areas were invited by DWP to prepare proposals, without a formal control area comparison with, for example, other areas of London, being put in place. The overall resources supplied to the partnerships were sufficiently small that evaluations conducted according to the standards used by DWP for the assessment of its own initiatives would have consumed a significant part of the resources available.
- 3.13 Further, the overall aim of the initiative, to test whether local governance in West London showed sufficient promise of improved performance for devolution to be extended, is

diffuse. It is, however, a necessary stage in the process of the development of a different model from the centralised DWP/Jobcentre Plus administration.

- 3.14 In addition to this review of the available literature we undertook nearly 60 individual telephone or face to face interviews. This gives us a wide range of views about the programme of activities provided by West London Working; what has been effective and worked well, what did not work as well, where improvements could be made, and the strategic added value obtained through co-ordinating and influencing employment and skills activities in West London.



## 4 WEST LONDON WORKING: PURPOSE, RATIONALE AND INTERVENTIONS

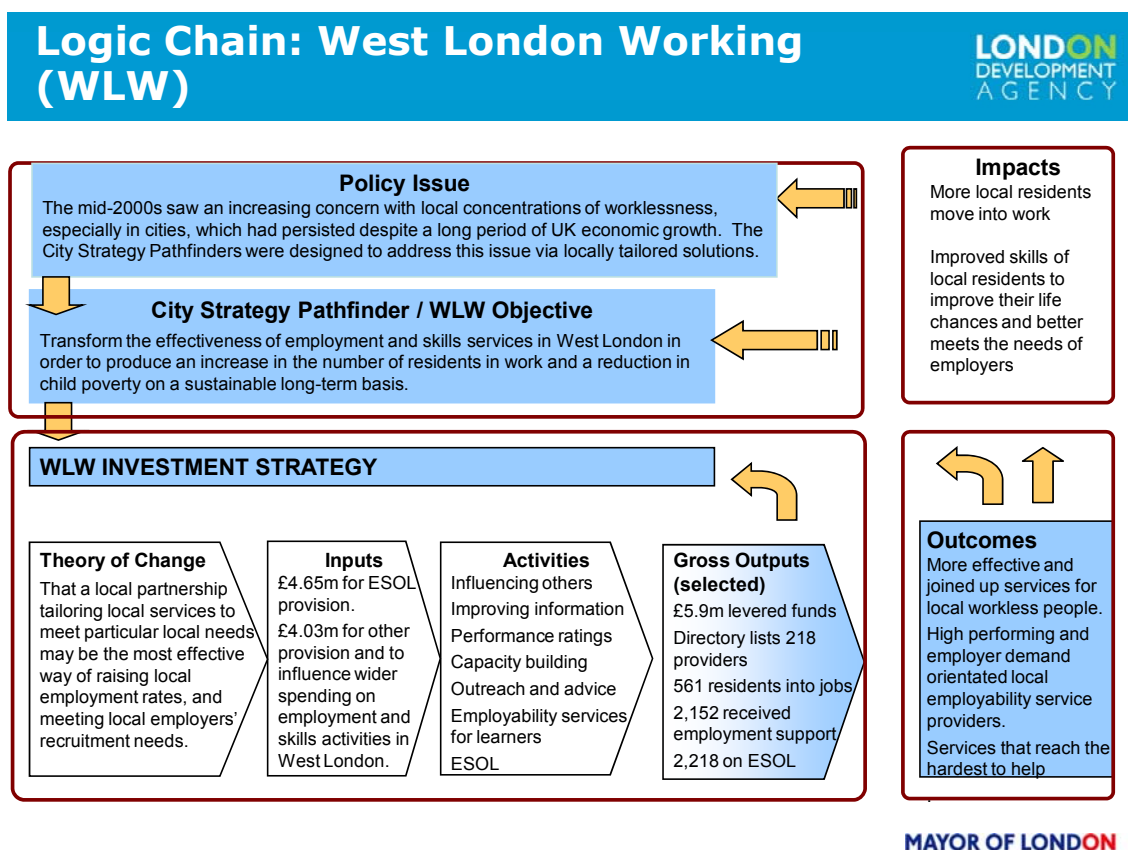
### Introduction

- 4.1 Understanding what WLW aimed to achieve will be central to the evaluation. Evaluators can only tell if WLW has been successful if they know what it set out to deliver in the first place.

### West London Working Logic Chain

- 4.2 A logic chain, as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below for the West London Working (WLW) programme, allows us to set out the ‘theory of change’ or the way in which the programme is expected to achieve its objectives and more widely, those of the City Strategy Pathfinders.

Figure 4.1 West London Working Logic Chain



### Rationale

- 4.3 Despite being a general prosperous area which has enjoyed considerable economic success along side other parts of the London economy, West London, at the time of the establishment of West London Working in 2006, had an employment rate (69%) which was below the national average (73%) and this has remained the case through to 2010. The experience of West London was part of a wider pattern of local concentrations of

worklessness in cities often alongside areas which were economically successful with available jobs. The City Strategy Pathfinders, including West London Working, were an attempt to see if these persistent local concentrations of worklessness could be tackled with local tailored solutions delivered by a locally based partnership covering both the public and private sectors.

### **Policy Approach**

- 4.4 The focus of West London Working was not on spending more in order to tackle these problems, rather it was to try and ensure that existing resources were deployed more effectively. As the precise causes of worklessness vary from place to place it was thought that local public sector agencies and businesses working in partnership would be best placed to identify, understand, and address these. Hence West London Working adopted the following vision:

*“Our vision is to transform the coherence and effectiveness of the existing structure of services in West London to deliver a sustainable increase in the number of local residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty.”*

(West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder, Business Plan, April 2007)

- 4.5 This expectation (or theory of change) was strongly “localist”; that a local partnership tailoring local employability services could effectively address particular local needs (local solutions to local problems) and so meet both social (reducing worklessness and associated child poverty) and economic (meeting the recruitment needs of local employers) objectives. The challenges that WLW faced in seeking to fulfil this vision were that there was:
- no central quality and performance management system;
  - a lack of coordination in the provision and planning of services;
  - a system that does not adequately incentivise service providers at all stages of intervention;
  - multiple and confused points of contact for residents and employers;
  - a supply led system with disjointed employer engagement; and
  - a lack of personalised focused provision with few referrals between providers, and no system that can track or support an individual’s progress through the system
- 4.6 As the focus of West London Working was on coordinating and improving existing local services the amount of direct expenditure involved was modest at around £4.03 million between 2006 and 2011. This covered most of the direct provision and influencing activities of West London Working. West London Working was intended to influence much larger volumes of spending by organisations not under its direct control, such as Jobcentre Plus and the then Learning and Skills Council, in West London. For example, in 2006-07 at the time of the establishment of West London Working around £200 million was estimated to have been spent on employment (£40 million) and skills provision (£160 million) in West London.
- 4.7 In addition, West London Working received £4.65 million to deliver work focused ESOL reflecting the diversity of the population, for example the proportion of secondary school

pupils in the six boroughs for whom English was not their first language was estimated to be 45% compared to 10% for England as a whole.

4.8 West London Working undertook a wide range of activities to fulfil its vision which are detailed further in this chapter below but in summary they consisted of:

- Influencing investment in West London's employment and skills services (Investment and Target Group)
- Improving information on employability services available in West London (Directory of Employment Services)
- Improving the market by helping people and organisations to identify high performing employability service providers and so giving providers an incentive to drive up their own performance (Performance Rating System)
- Capacity building for employment and skills providers (Provider Confederation and the Business Partner Programme)
- Outreach to hard to reach and hard to help groups (Personal Advice and Outreach)
- Strengthening the links between learning and work (Building Employability Pathways)
- Tackling English language barriers to employment (Work Focused ESOL for Parents)

4.9 Given the diversity of activities undertaken these produced a variety of different outputs. Again these are detailed later in this report but include, for example, over 2218 individuals starting ESOL courses and 180 residents moving into work after being assisted by the Personal Advice and Outreach project.

4.10 More widely the desired outcomes from West London Working's activities were:

- More effective and joined up services for workless individuals in West London
- High performing employability service providers who are attuned to the recruitment needs of local employers and thus able to successfully place more local people in work and so out of poverty
- Services that reach the hardest to help as well as those who are closer to the labour market

4.11 Finally, the hoped for impacts that would flow from WLW's strategy were that it would lead to more local residents being in work than would otherwise be the case, with improved skills, and that these achievements would both enhance their life chances and provide a supply of labour which better meets the needs of West London employers.

### **Links between challenges, objectives and activities undertaken**

4.12 Given the challenges, objectives and activities to address these noted above it is important to understand the relationship between them. This relationship is summarised in the table below. This demonstrates the fit between the activities undertaken by West London working and the challenges and objectives identified in their business planning phase.

WLW Activity	Objective / challenge addressed
Investment and Target Group	<p>lack of coordination in the provision and planning of services</p> <p>More effective and joined up services for workless individuals in West London</p>
Directory of Employment Services	<p>multiple and confused points of contact for residents and employers</p> <p>More effective and joined up services for workless individuals in West London</p>
Performance Rating System	<p>no central quality and performance management system</p> <p>a system that does not adequately incentivise service providers at all stages of intervention</p> <p>High performing employability service providers who are attuned to the recruitment needs of local employers and thus able to successfully place more local people in work and so out of poverty</p>
Business Partner Programme	<p>a supply led system with disjointed employer engagement</p> <p>High performing employability service providers who are attuned to the recruitment needs of local employers and thus able to successfully place more local people in work and so out of poverty</p>
Provider Confederation	<p>a lack of personalised focused provision with few referrals between providers, and no system that can track or support an individual's progress through the system</p> <p>High performing employability service providers who are attuned to the recruitment needs of local employers and thus able to successfully place more local people in work and so out of poverty</p>
Advice and Outreach	<p>multiple and confused points of contact for residents and employers</p> <p>Services that reach the hardest to help as well as those who are closer to the labour market</p>

Building Employability Pathways	<p>a lack of personalised focused provision with few referrals between providers, and no system that can track or support an individual's progress through the system</p> <p>More effective and joined up services for workless individuals in West London</p> <p>Services that reach the hardest to help as well as those who are closer to the labour market</p>
Work Focused ESOL	<p>Services that reach the hardest to help as well as those who are closer to the labour market</p>

### Activities undertaken by West London Working

- 4.13 As noted above, West London Working undertook a wide range of activities. The first five of these were different ways of seeking to improve the effectiveness of existing services and funding streams, whilst the latter three involved the provision of actual services to workless individuals.

#### *The Investment and Target Group*

- 4.14 The Investment and Target Group objective was to influence investment in employment and skills services in West London. Established in 2007, its membership includes: Jobcentre Plus, the Learning & Skills Council (now Skills Funding Agency), the London Development Agency (LDA), the London Borough of Ealing (on behalf of all West London Boroughs), West London Alliance, and West London Working (WLW). Although not permanent members, DWP inputted into the Investment and Target Group through bilateral meetings with a WLW representative.
- 4.15 Activities can be split into the following; evidence building, influencing investment, target setting, and securing sustainability.

#### *Evidence Building*

- 4.16 An Investment and Target Group commissioned business analyst (on a fixed term basis from August 2008 to March 2010) provided evidence-based analysis to inform key decisions. Their main role was to examine socio-economic and demographic data in West London in order to identify trends and areas of need. This statistical information collected was disseminated through bulletins.

#### *Influencing investment*

- 4.17 This is the core Investment and Target Group purpose. In order to influence investment decisions amongst the key funders, it was intended that the Investment and Target Group members would consult with each other on new policy, business cases, and programme specifications. The Investment and Target Group also gave members the opportunity to share their procurement timetables so that the partnership could inform the commissioning process. Beyond commenting on tender specification, it was intended that the Investment

and Target Group would be part of the funder's selection process by also commenting on the bids received.

- 4.18 A key planned activity for the Investment and Target Group related to target setting. This links strongly with the objective of influencing investment as each funder's particular targets clearly strongly influences their pattern of spending. If the target indicators are different, it can impede joint funding. Thus one of the tasks identified for the Investment and Target Group was to agree on common targets for inclusion in West London contracts.

#### *Ensuring sustainability*

- 4.19 With funding ending in March 2011, the continued ability to influence investment in West London beyond this date was a key concern. In order to address this, the Investment and Target Group commissioned Rocket Science to explore the options available to them. The Investment and Target Group built on this report to develop a business case for a West London Employment and Skills Commissioning Unit that was put forward to the West London Local Authority Chief Executives.

#### *West London Working Directory of Employment Services*

- 4.20 The West London Working Directory of Employment Services brings together information on organisations which offer employment support and employability training in the six West London boroughs. The design of the Directory was informed by focus-group discussions with employment advisers, which generated a high degree of consensus about their needs.
- 4.21 It is accessible on line and can be searched by postcode, borough, free text search or via an advanced search option including by: the type of organisation, services offered, eligibility (residence, age etc) and sector.
- 4.22 After several months of operation, feedback from users was gathered and a number of enhancements to the Directory were made in response, for example, events and news listings, an employer facing page, and return the nearest JCP location for each search. In order to ensure that the Directory is used, on-going marketing activity takes place to maintain providers' awareness of it. Front-line employment advisers are the key target group for the Directory, but it is accessible to everyone.

#### *Employability Performance Rating System*

- 4.23 The Employability Performance Rating system benchmarks the performance of contractors and sub-contractors engaged in delivering skills and employment services in West London. The best performers are awarded four stars; the worst receive no stars. It was intended that all ratings would be made public, allowing identification of high performing suppliers and so also providing an incentive for suppliers to improve their performance.
- 4.24 The performance rating system aims to
- Transparently assess and benchmark the performance of skills and employment providers by using management and performance information collected by delivery partners and funders.
  - Provide an evidence based track record of delivery against grant.

- Provide a framework for Lead Delivery Partners to performance manage their sub-delivery partners.
  - Support customer choice and collect evidence of customer satisfaction.
- 4.25 Stars are awarded on the basis of a weighted assessment of performance in three key performance areas (KPA's): Contract Performance, Quality and Contract Compliance.
- 4.26 The performance rating applies to each contract a provider supplies. The majority of LDA and LA funded contracts are delivered by multiple delivery partners. Performance ratings therefore cascade down through contracts, with the funder rating the prime contractor, and the prime contractor rating any sub-contractors (sub-contractors being rated have to have an annual minimal contract value of £50,000 to be included).
- 4.27 Weightings attached to the indicators were developed via pilot work of the Project Board and Development Group, which was made up of contract managers from funders and deliverers of employment and skills services.
- 4.28 The Performance Rating went further than the collation of the usual management information on contract compliance and target delivery. One of the more innovative features of the Performance Rating was that it measured, firstly, client satisfaction (the satisfaction of service users with the provision they received). Secondly, the process included a self assessment of quality (by Service Providers rating their own performance).
- 4.29 The Employability Performance Rating timetable incorporated a six month review of draft self assessment scores where Contract Managers and or prime contractors were able to request that the Provider reviews its self assessment ratings.
- 4.30 Between May 2008 and September 2009, a prototype performance rating was piloted and further developed. Between January and March 2009, the Key Performance Areas, and beneath these the key performance indicators, were finalised. There was then a phased implementation of the Performance Rating system during 2009 and 2010, beginning in November 2009.

### **Provider Confederation**

- 4.31 The key activities of the Confederation have revolved around building the capacity of West London employment and skills providers, helping them to create links and contractual relationships with Prime Contractors and through regular communications, keep them up to date with new funding and contracting opportunities. A programme of work was developed and the Confederation began in April 2009. The programme has included:
- Five themed networking events attended by an average of 30-40 providers at each event with subjects ranging from 'Meet the Primes' through to Mental Health and Work and more recently Getting Parents Into Work. These were in addition to the larger annual review event.
  - Six smaller training events on negotiation, building consortia and developing better relationships with, and contracting with large Prime Contractors.
  - Monthly as well as ad hoc e-bulletins (45 in total) promoting events and support provided by local partners, funding and tendering opportunities and relevant national

news. The e-bulletin collates relevant employment and skills news, events and funding announcements with a London and West London focus into one single news service.

- 4.32 An interrogative online database of 690 members was established comprising of employment and skills providers from the West London sub-region.

### ***Business Partner Programme***

- 4.33 The Business Partner Programme (BPP) aimed to provide coaching and mentoring to employment service providers' managers and delivery staff by partnering them with mentors from West London businesses. The programme had four stages: Marketing and Recruitment, Matching and Induction, Mentoring, Training and Review.

#### ***Marketing and recruitment***

- 4.34 Marketing involved promoting the programme and recruiting both mentors and mentees. A variety of recruitment efforts aimed at attracting mentors and mentees to participate on the programme were tested. These included:

- Seeking to source mentors from the employers represented on the WLW Board.
- The Provider Confederation was used to disseminate information on the programme and encourage the recruitment of providers
- Email campaigns – potential mentors and mentees were sent information about the programme
- Direct telephone contact – with both potential mentors and mentees.

#### ***Matching***

- 4.35 Mentees were matched to mentors as follows. First, mentees' declared requirements concerning the expertise and experience that they hoped to obtain from their mentors were reviewed and matched with suitable mentors. Then the mentees and mentors were contacted to verify that the proposed matches were appropriate. If necessary, alternative mentors could be allocated. Where mentors were found not to have the range of skills and experience that mentees requested or the match was otherwise not suitable, they were not allocated. This meant that some mentors recruited to the programme were not used.

#### ***Mentoring***

- 4.36 Mentoring consisted of six one hour sessions between mentor and mentee. Both mentors and mentees were required to prepare a set of objectives for what they, as individuals, and their organisations were hoping to achieve through participation in the BPP. Mentor and mentee were encouraged to share their objectives and use them to direct their sessions.

#### ***Training and Review***

- 4.37 A set of four workshops and review events were held. These were: a workshop focusing on best practice in recruitment, "Seeing is Believing" event with presentations by three large companies; Knight Frank, Vue Cinemas and Enterprise Car Rental on the companies' recruitment policies and practices, a business growth and sustainability workshop to give both mentors and mentees guidance on building a commercial enterprise in the current economic climate, A review event to enable mentees and mentors to share experiences.

4.38 A Business Partner toolkit has been produced to provide those interested in running a similar type of programme the means to do so without the need to reinvent it.

4.39 The Business Partner Programme was delivered for 12 months from January 2010.

### ***Personal Advice and Outreach Programme***

4.40 The activities that were funded and managed through the Personal Advice and Outreach project were specific to each borough. In total, six projects were delivered across West London's six Local Authorities. The target groups for engagement were slightly different for each project, and linked to pockets of geographical worklessness. The activities in the six boroughs were:

- energize in Brent aimed to address worklessness by encouraging greater joint working across agencies locally and the voluntary sector and refer workless people to the local Brentin2Work employment provision. energize facilitated networking and training in order to advance partnership working and the benefits to workless individuals of referral between providers
- Local Solutions in Ealing aimed to reduce worklessness amongst social housing tenants by providing advice and employment support. The project assisted the hardest to help into work. A staff training programme enabled housing staff to signpost clients to appropriate local services.
- Employment Ladder in Hammersmith and Fulham provided employment focused advice, guidance and practical support to workless residents in temporary accommodation.
- Xcite in Harrow provided outreach, advice and support services to help residents move into jobs and training via mainstream provision. The service was based in a range of locations including children's and community centres. Xcite provided one to one individual advice and on-going coaching to help clients get into work and training.
- Workmates in Hillingdon supported parents into sustained employment. Support was available for up to 52 weeks from first starting employment.
- The HOPE Project in Hounslow aimed to assist individuals into work via training, job search help, advice on benefits and money management and job brokerage. Personal advisors worked with Hounslow Adult and Community education to target those estates that have the highest rates of worklessness. It also assisted West London's Housing Needs Officers to give them the skills to signpost those in housing need and those in temporary accommodation onto training and employment opportunities.

4.41 Projects began in June 2008 and were funded to run until March 2010. The project end dates for Brent and Hounslow were extended to June 2010.

### ***Building Employability Pathways***

4.42 The primary set of activities centred on the Building Employability Pathways, Pathways for Parents pilot that operated in eight West London Further Education Colleges and Adult Education Institutes (Large Learning Providers (LLPs)). These LLPs undertook a range of activities to embed employability pathways for parent learners. These activities were identified through identifying gaps in the LLPs' existing employability services with support

from Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC). The activities varied and included: one to one sessions with learners, employability workshops, training for staff on employability issues, and making connections between the colleges and job brokerage and employability providers. Unlike previous attempts at integration of employment and skills in LLPs, the Pathways for Parents pilot sought to build upon existing activity and strengthen referrals between LLPs and providers of job brokerage and employability services.

- 4.43 Calls for expressions of interest from West London's Further Education Colleges and Adult Education Institutes (Large Learning Providers (LLPs)) were issued in September 2008. Planning of activities occurred between January and March 2009 and delivery began in some LLPs in April 2009. Due to delays caused, for example, by Ofsted inspections and restructuring, some LLPs began delivery as late as January to March 2010. Delivery mainly continued until July 2010 although some activities continued beyond this date.
- 4.44 In addition, a series of workshops for 18-24 year old college leavers called 'Playing to Win' were being delivered at the time of writing. These workshops focused on interview skills and providing an understanding of what employers are looking for in potential recruits.

#### ***Work Focused ESOL for Parents***

- 4.45 ESOL provision began in August 2008 in both the East and West London CSP areas. Four providers were contracted to deliver work focused ESOL in West London. They already had some experience of delivering ESOL and employment training programmes to disadvantaged and unemployed groups prior to their involvement, such as New Deal and Skills for Life programmes.
- 4.46 Providers delivering the pilot generally adopted similar approaches to course structure, timing (courses typically lasted between 10 and 15 weeks), curriculum content, and locations for delivery in community venues. All providers designed their ESOL programmes with an emphasis on employability in line with the work-focused aims of the pilot and delivered training around, for example, CV writing and job-search activities. They also delivered individual learning plans, numeracy and IT skills and one-to-one information, advice and guidance (IAG), and job-brokerage services. There was however variation between providers in their approaches to delivery, for example, in offering work experience placements to learners. Some only offered these to 'work-ready' participants.
- 4.47 Learner support was another key element of the design of the pilot, particularly childcare support.

## 5 INVESTMENT, METHODS OF DELIVERY AND IMPACTS

### Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter provides an analysis of spending, outcomes and impacts of each of the major activity streams of West London Working. First an overview of the programme is set out covering its governance structures, spend, outputs and outcomes. Then a set of individual project summaries is provided. Finally, key cross project whole programme issues are explored covering the effectiveness of management and governance structures, net impacts or the additionality of West London Working, and stakeholder views regarding the programme.

### West London Working governance structures

- 5.2 The three key bodies in WLW's governance structure are; the Board, the Implementation Group and the Investment and Target Group.
- 5.3 The evaluation of WLW undertaken in 2008 reported a general lack of clarity around the governance arrangements for WLW and in particular the role of the different management structures. The Board was seen as being too involved in the detail of delivery. This was addressed by WLW with the Board's function clarified as being to provide a strategic steer, with funding decisions referred through the Investment and Target Group.
- 5.4 The membership of the Board included individuals from both large and small businesses, the three major public sector actors for employment and skills provision (Jobcentre Plus, London Development Agency, and the Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency), West London Alliance (representing the six local authorities covered by West London Working – Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow) and the voluntary sector.
- 5.5 The Investment and Target Group focuses on developing effective methods of influencing and coordinating investment in employment and skills services in the sub region. In order to influence investment decisions amongst the key funders, the Investment & Target Group members consult with each other on new policy, business cases, and programme specifications. The Investment and Target Group also facilitated members sharing their procurement timetables so that the partnership could inform commissioning processes. Beyond commenting on tender specifications, it was intended that the Investment & Target Group would be part of the funder's selection process by commenting on the bids received.
- 5.6 The membership of the Investment and Target Group included representatives from Jobcentre Plus, the Learning & Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency, the London Development Agency, the London Borough of Ealing, the West London Alliance, and the West London Working programme team. Although not a permanent member of the group, DWP inputted into it via bilateral meetings with West London Working.
- 5.7 The Implementation Group's role is to deliver the vision and objectives of West London Working. Specifically, the role of the Implementation Group is to:
- drive the design and implementation of activities;

- consider all activities and projects for recommendation to the Board;
- provide feedback and guidance to the Programme Office regarding form and content;
- review progress against approved plans and suggest to the Programme Team revisions to the Board's strategy to achieve the desired objectives; and the West London Working Business Plan
- support the work of work package project boards

5.8 The membership of the Implementation Group included representatives of the two main public sector organisations in the areas of employment support and skills, Jobcentre Plus, and the Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency, the six West London local authorities, the West London Alliance and the West London Working programme team itself.

## Overview of the WLW Programme

### Spending on West London Working

5.9 The table below shows the breakdown of the total expenditure on West London Working (£4.02 million) between programme expenditure (£3.37 million, 84% of the total) and operational expenditure in support of that programme expenditure (£0.65 million, 16% of the total), including for example the cost of employing the WLW programme management team. The table also provides a breakdown of the programme expenditure by project.

#### Programme and Operational Expenditure: 2007 -2011<sup>3</sup>

<b>Total Programme Expenditure</b>	<b>£3,373,454</b>
WLW Passport	£156,732
Investment and Target Group	£124,801
Performance Rating	£226,825
Confederation	£149,738
Business Partner Programme	£99,354
Personal Advice & Outreach	£980,576
Childcare Employment Advisors	£86,428
Building Employability Pathways	£222,400
West London Sustained Employment Programme	£1,046,600
New Pathways to Work (Transnational ESF)	£190,000
Heathrow Local Recruitment Project	£90,000
<b>Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>£653,320</b>
<b>Total West London Working Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,026,774</b>

<sup>3</sup> Includes March 2011 forecast expenditure

- 5.10 This expenditure was very largely funded from various DWP sources. DWP provided around 90% of the funding for West London Working with the remaining funding being provided by the London Development Agency and the Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency. The DWP Seedcorn Funding supported WLW's operational costs.

**Programme Funding: 2007 - 2011**

DWP Deprived Area Fund	£2,690,121
DWP Seedcorn Funding	£653,320
DWP Reward Funding	£333,333
Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency	£100,000
London Development Agency	£250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,026,774</b>

***Outputs and Outcomes from West London Working***

- 5.11 The projects implemented by West London Working were required to report on a wide range of different outputs, which included a range of process measures, and on outcomes, such as moves into sustained work.
- 5.12 The final legacy report on West London Working groups its work programme under three broad headings.
- Improving the coherence of local employment and skills provision by improving connectivity
  - Improving the local effectiveness of employment and skills provision by increasing capability
  - Delivering local targeted programmes
- 5.13 Below we summarise some key outputs from West London Working under these headings.

***Improving the Coherence of local Employment and Skills Provision by improving Connectivity***

- 293 public sector front line workers have received training to help them understand how and where to refer residents to employment and skills support.
- 218 service providers are listed in the Employment Services Directory which receives an average of 1,200 hits per month.
- 8 West London Colleges and Adult Education Institutes built employability pathways for their parent learners
- £5.9m of funding was levered for West London

***Improving the local effectiveness of Employment and Skills Provision by Increasing Capability***

- 74 providers across London are using the West London Working developed employability performance rating.

- £20m of London Development Agency's funding will be employability performance rated in 2011/12.
- There are 690 members of the Provider Confederation, which held 16 Provider Confederation events attended by 450 people.
- 19 employability and skills providers partnered with 14 West London businesses partnered to improve the performance and capacity of their services and better understand employer's recruitment needs.

#### *Delivering local targeted programmes*

- 5.14 As a result of the Personal Advice and Outreach, Building Employability Pathways, Reach West London, and New Pathways to Work Programmes:
- 2152 West London residents have received support to help them find work.
  - 1346 residents have been referred onto other organisations that can provide them with further support to help them find work.
  - 268 residents have gained employment.
- 5.15 In addition, as a result of the Work Focused ESOL for Parents Pilot:
- 2218 West London residents have received employability and English language support to help them find work.
  - 293 residents have gained employment.

## **Individual Project Summaries**

### *Investment and Target Group*

#### *Budget and Spending*

- 5.16 The total spend on the Investment and Target Group amounted to £124,801 within the budget of £133,210. Funding for the group was supplied by DWP's Deprived Area Fund.
- 5.17 The bulk of spending - £99,990 - went to the London Borough of Ealing to fund a Business Analyst to provide labour market intelligence and analysis in support of West London Working's activities together with some additional expenditure to support the collation of bids for funding on behalf of the six local authorities. The rest - £24,811 - was spent on a research contract to explore how commissioning activity at sub-regional level might be sustained post March 2011, when WLW ends.

#### *Method of delivery*

- 5.18 The Investment and Target Group operates via the membership of the group. Jobcentre Plus was represented by its West London External Relations Manager; the LSC by the Area Director for London West; the London Development Agency by the Director of Employment & Skills; the London Borough of Ealing by its Director of Property and Regeneration; the West London Alliance by its Director; and West London Working by its Director. DWP on the other hand did not have a permanent representative, although a main contact was agreed in December 2009. The accountable body for WLW is the LDA and the Investment and Target Group was chaired by its representative.

### *Organisational Links*

- 5.19 The Investment & Target Group was expected to link to the WLW Passport; the Performance Rating System; and the Provider Confederation.
- 5.20 Initially, it was intended that the Passport would identify which employment and skills services West London residents use, no matter who funds these. However, West London Working concluded that the business benefits that a Passport system could bring did not exceed the cost and complexity of implementation, so the Passport work package was not progressed further.
- 5.21 There is a strong link with the Performance Rating System as some key funders participating in the Investment and Target Group have decided to adopt it as part of their performance management processes. All LDA learning and skills contracts will be performance rated from April 2011, London Councils have implemented it since October 2010, and the National Offenders Management Unit will use it to rate their new London ESF contract. The boroughs of Hillingdon, Ealing and Harrow all used the rating with their 2010-11 LDA grants.
- 5.22 The links with the Provider Confederation involve it in being the conduit for the Investment and Target Group to engage with the local supply chain. With a growing membership, it played a key role in helping providers adapt to the changes in commissioning being brought in by the major funders, and in making sure that smaller specialist local delivery is not being lost in the new context of large contracts.
- 5.23 There were also links with the WLW Board through regular meetings during which Investment and Target Group made recommendations on funding allocations.

### *Outputs*

- 5.24 The outputs listed for the Investment and Target Group in the 2007 Business Plan are as follows:
- Priority targets agreed and rolled out across West London provision.
  - Common funding terminology and interpretations agreed and disseminated across West London providers.
  - Practical examples of match funded projects generated or joint prospectuses.
- 5.25 However, this evolved over the life of the Investment and Target Group as the policy context changed towards prime contractors. The activity of the Investment and Target Group was not directly output focused, it was about influencing employment and skills provision in West London.
- 5.26 The Investment and Target Group has been partially successful in delivering these outputs.

### *The funders agreed on a priority target indicator...*

- 5.27 Sustained employment is seen by all funders as the ultimate target for all employment and skills interventions. However, this reflects a London wide decision rather than Investment and Target Group's own activities.

*A number of projects were delivered in West London as a result of Investment and Target Group activity*

5.28 Investment and Target Group influenced investments in West London through its linkages with key funders. The main projects are presented in the table below.

**Table 5.1 Employment & skills projects in West London influenced by the Investment & Target Group**

<b>Programme / Project name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Reaching out – IAG</b>	Capacity building project in Advice & Guidance within the Voluntary and Community Sector in the West London boroughs. The bid put forward for this project was informed by the challenges identified in the West London Working business plan.	£500,000 was allocated by the LDA and later reduced to £477,000
<b>HELP</b>	HELP works with West London's Housing Needs Officers to equip them with the skills to signpost customers in housing need and those living in temporary accommodation into training and employment opportunities. This project was shaped as a response to challenges identified in the WLW business plan.	CLG supported the initiative with a grant of approximately £290k
<b>Personal Advice &amp; Outreach Programme</b>	The project aimed to link front line staff from other public and third sector services with employment and skills provision. It also aimed to provide customised support to the hardest to help and access to information, advice and guidance for all workless residents. WLW led the development of this project and was the majority funder. It secured match from Local Authorities.	Approx. £450,000 from LDA ESF, LB Hillingdon, LB Hammersmith & Fulham
<b>Sustained Employment Programme</b>	The programme focuses on developing a pathway to sustained jobs including specific consideration of the public sector and its supply chain. West London Working coordinated the development of the business case presented to the LDA, then worked closely with LB Ealing during its procurement.	WLW funds: £1m (£750k Deprived Area Fund & DWP Reward Funding + £250k LDA Single Programme Economic Recovery Action Plan funding). LDA match funding: £2m.
<b>New Pathways to Work Transitional Programme</b>	This project aims to: improve the links between frontline services and existing employment support services in West London; bring mental health and employment support services closer together; develop new and improved pathways into employment for the most disadvantaged communities in West London. There was direct support from WLW for putting together the bid for this project.	WLW funds: £190k Deprived Area Funding, circa £580k match from WLW's personal advice and outreach programme ESF: £1m
<b>Gateway Heathrow 2012</b>	Provides training in sectors of relevance to Heathrow such as customer service for the hospitality, leisure, travel & tourism sector. Also provides support with job search and employability skills. Led by the London Borough of Hillingdon.	LDA / ESF: £900,000

<p><b>Future Jobs Fund</b></p>	<p>Aimed to create 300 new, additional posts across the six West London Alliance boroughs. It is led by West London Alliance working with Groundwork (London) and a range of Third Sector organisations as key employment partners.</p> <p>LB Ealing is the accountable body.</p> <p>There was direct support from WLW for putting together the bid for this project.</p>	<p>DWP: £1,950,000,</p>
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## Outcomes

5.29 The 2007 business plan sets out the following outcomes for the Investment and Target Group:

- Improve the ability to articulate West London’s needs.
- Direct EU/National & regional funding to those areas most in need.
- Improve the coordination of delivery in West London and enable better informed strategic decision making.
- Strengthen WLW’s leadership role
- Improve efficiency at provider and funder level.
- Improve personalisation of routeway into employment
- Reduce duplication of provision.

### *Improved ability to articulate West London’s needs*

5.30 The Investment and Target Group has developed a good understanding of the needs of West London’s residents as well as the gaps in the existing provision. This was used to inform the commissioning process both with funders and with providers. For instance, with the Sustained Employment Programme, the partnership was able to clearly identify the target group in order to complement existing support.

### *Influenced allocation of EU/National & regional funding in West London*

5.31 The Investment and Target Group helped to shape the specifications of tenders from major funders; and by commenting on the bids received in response to these tenders.

### *Shaping ITT specifications to better convey the needs of West London*

5.32 Tenders issued by regional and national funders tend to be standardised documents, with little or no information on the needs of the areas they may be targeting. The Investment and Target Group has brought valuable local knowledge to the process. This received positive feedback from providers who felt the local information was helpful. Providers were able to draw from local information to best target their delivery offer and respond to local needs and challenges.

5.33 Being involved earlier in the process would be helpful. Normally, by the time the specification is circulated, it is difficult to make any fundamental changes to its contents.

5.34 There remains a need be able to communicate very clearly what the priorities are for the sub-region and what differentiates it from the national / regional average. This links in directly with the activities of the business analyst and the contract register.

5.35 While this was a successful outcome from Investment and Target Group activity, its influence could have been greater as, outside the European Social Fund, it seems to have almost exclusively concerned DWP tenders while no ITT bids from LSC / SFA or the LDA were commented upon.

*Commenting on bids received*

5.36 The Investment and Target Group commented on a large number of DWP bids, including on LinkUp, Workchoice, Community Task Force and Flexible New Deal Phase 2.

5.37 Through their involvement in commenting on DWP's Flexible New Deal Phase 2, the Investment and Target Group identified a number of weaknesses and inaccuracies in the bids submitted. Based on their local knowledge, they were able to point out:

- inconsistencies between criteria for selecting supply chain providers and those chosen
- inaccurate descriptions of geographical locations and transport links
- unrealistic models of delivery due to West London's geography
- inadequate assessments of local demography and barriers to employment
- inconsistencies regarding portrayal of local engagement both of sub-regional organisations and in terms of employer engagement

5.38 However, the group felt that insufficient guidance was provided about their role in this process and that not enough account was taken of their comments. As the majority of DWP procurement activity, such as Flexible New Deal 2, was aborted following the change in Government at General Election 2010, it is hard to make conclusions regarding the impact of the Investment and Target Group's comments.

5.39 In an example of good practice, the agreement from DWP that West London Working could follow the same grading system as DWP was found to be very useful as it helped the Investment and Target Group to focus when commenting on their bids. The Investment and Target Group hoped that quantifying score would enable DWP to understand their relative views on each question.

5.40 While commenting on bids was felt to be a successful outcome from Investment and Target Group activity, its influence could have been greater. It seems to have almost exclusively concerned DWP tenders while no ITT bids from LSC / SFA or the LDA were commented upon, beyond those that were explicitly co-commissioned using West London Working funds. The Investment and Target Group was keen to influence the make up of Invitation to Tender questions and the weighting available to each of this, and to comment on the entire procurement pack. They were only able to do this with the LDA's ESF 11-13 procurement round.

*Joining ESF co-commissioning and co-financers committees*

5.41 West London Working joined the London ESF co-financing organisation (CFO) group and the London ESF Committee in October 2009. This has enabled West London Working to have an input into how co-financers planned to invest ESF money in London.

5.42 As a result of Investment and Target Group involvement, the ESF co-financers agreed to fund the Heathrow Employment and Upskilling Programme. Investment and Target Group

was able to make a clear business case for this programme. Unfortunately, as the Heathrow Upskilling programme is match funded by the London Development Agency, its procurement is currently suspended. The London Borough's of Hillingdon and Hounslow, together with BAA are investigating how they can provide 50% funding to match the LDA's ESF allocation to enable this programme to progress, albeit at a smaller scale.

#### *Securing funding for West London*

- 5.43 The influencing activity of Investment and Target Group and West London Working overall did bring investment into West London.
- 5.44 The Investment and Target Group contributed to specifications and bid appraisal for approximately £40m annual DWP investment in West London. It has also influenced the use of approximately £20m annual investment in West London through ESF.
- 5.45 Overall, West London Working has levered in £5.9m of funding through support of sub regional projects such as the Future Jobs Fund, HELP and Gateway Heathrow 2012.

#### *Aligning funding*

- 5.46 As well as influencing individual funders to invest in West London, the Investment and Target Group had hoped to get them to work more closely and coherently in order to align their spend and reduce duplication.
- 5.47 This was not successful in the time frame of the project for a number of reasons:
  - Funders worked to different timescales and different targets
  - They have different commissioning processes
  - They had different strategic priorities at regional (LDA) or national (DWP / SFA) level which took precedence over West London Working's goals.
- 5.48 As a result, the Investment and Target Group did not succeed in aligning funding in West London, except for the Sustained Employment Programme. This was an ambitious objective in the first place as it relied on a sub-regional organisation effecting change in regional or national organisations.

#### *Limited improvement to coordination of delivery or reduction in duplication*

- 5.49 The Investment and Target Group may have helped improve coordination at sub-regional level amongst some funders by supporting a more coherent approach and helping to shape delivery to respond to local needs.
- 5.50 The London European Programme Management Unit pointed out that Investment and Target Group's involvement in their Co-financing group had a positive impact on dealing with duplication.
- 5.51 On the other hand, the failure to pool funding means that coordination across funders in West London will not have improved dramatically.
- 5.52 Finally, to succeed in this outcome, the process would have needed to take in funders' commissioning processes in order to identify how 4 funders commission 200 providers to run over 400 services, each with separate targets, measures of success and reporting procedures.

*Potential to improve efficiency at provider and funder level*

- 5.53 At provider level, the Investment and Target Group may have contributed to an improvement in efficiency insofar as, through its relationship with the Confederation, it has disseminated information on the commissioning process of large funders, and enabled providers to be better aware of the competition and prime contractors' expectations.
- 5.54 The Sustained Employment Programme illustrates what can be achieved by collaborative work. Feedback to DWP suggests that 'there have been clear benefits to the close involvement with the six boroughs in informing and developing the contractor specification, facilitating access to local subcontractors and passing on of local knowledge to the prime contractor to help it launch this new programme. The Prime Contractor has commented on the benefits that this sub regional approach has had in its implementation, compared to when they have implemented DWP or London Regional programmes in the area. Other bidders for this programme commented favourably on the level of West London specific information in the bidding pack and bidder events compared to similar national or regional bidding rounds'.
- 5.55 There is therefore potential for an approach such as that taken by Investment and Target Group to improve the efficiency of providers, not only in their bidding process but also ultimately in the delivery of services.
- 5.56 On the other hand, the impact on the efficiency of funders is not as clear. While the Performance Rating might help if it is taken up, Investment and Target Group's impact has been mostly in shaping tender specifications and trying to prevent further duplication. Beyond this improving efficiency amongst regional and national funders is an impossible challenge for a sub-regional organisation like West London Working. It is beyond its remit in fact. ESF did mention that a benefit of West London Working's involvement was the opportunity it offered them to discover new products, such as the Directory for Employment Services and the Performance Rating, which have already been piloted.

*No robust way to measure any impact on the final user*

- 5.57 While there may have been some improvement to the customer journey on individual projects such as the Sustained Employment Programme, the limited impact on co-ordination means that individuals are still likely to be faced with a lack of clear signposts across services.
- 5.58 It might be that over the long term, the Investment and Target Group's activities, by simplifying provision, would have improved the pathway to work in West London. However, as it only has an impact – and quite a limited one – on new provision but cannot simplify existing arrangements, it would take a very long time to see changes to the system.

*Strengthen West London Working's leadership role*

- 5.59 The Investment and Target Group did strengthen West London Working's leadership role by enabling a dialogue with national and regional funders.
- 5.60 It supported West London Working's strategic role through its ability to articulate West London's specific needs to regional and national funders which made it a valuable partner.

For instance, without the Investment and Target Group, West London Working would not have been involved with ESF's co-financers. As a result of Investment and Target Group, West London Working was able to comment on bids and tender specifications and to shape regional and national investment decisions.

- 5.61 Aside from this strategic and influencing role, Investment and Target Group also strengthened West London Working's leadership role by providing a conduit to disseminate its activities to the funders. In particular, it helped raise interest about the Performance Rating and the Directory of Employment Services and ultimately secured their legacy.

*Unintended impacts*

- 5.62 We have no evidence of any significant unintended impacts from the Investment and Target Group.

*Longer run impacts / sustainability*

- 5.63 The Investment and Target Group influenced EU, national and regional funding decisions by helping to shape the specifications of tenders from major funders; and by commenting on the bids received in response to these tenders. It was not successful in achieving a pooling of resources in the time frame of the project for a number of reasons. However none of these impacts seem likely to be sustained after March 2011 as the Investment and Target Group was part of the governance structure of WLW which will disappear when WLW ends.
- 5.64 A proposal for a West London Employment Commissioning Unit was put forward in order to take forward the work that WLW and in particular the Investment and Target Group had been doing in West London to influence national, regional and European spending on employment and skills.
- 5.65 Unfortunately, as the result of a lack of available funding, consequent on the more general public spending cuts being experienced in the UK, the boroughs were not able to commit the resources needed to establish the West London Commissioning Unit and the idea had to be shelved.
- 5.66 As a result of the work of the Investment & Target Group the West London Local Authorities have a clear understanding of how they can work effectively with the new prime contractors who will be delivering welfare to work services in West London from summer 2011. Their regular link up meetings will feature relationships with prime contractors as a standing item on the agenda. Brent Council has agreed to coordinate communications between the prime contractors and the Local Authorities.
- 5.67 As part of its "Asks of the prime contractors", West London Working has asked that they work closely with Local Authorities to ensure that employability support reaches all local residents especially those hardest to reach and help, provide customized training to maximise job opportunities from major West London regeneration developments, integrate their employability services with councils' front line services, and provide regular performance updates. In return, the Local Authorities have offered to share intelligence on key regeneration areas in their areas, advise on specialist local provision, broker access to

employment opportunities within key regeneration sites, and to council and/or Local Strategic Partnership member organisations.

*Worked well*

5.68 Our evaluation of the Investment and Target Group indicates that the main elements which helped it to influence investment in employment and skills in West London were:

- Having the key funders around the table and facilitating a dialogue with sub-regional organisations. This had not happened before. Commissioning had been a top-down process with little or no co-ordination between the main funders.
- It offered WLW an opportunity to input into tender specifications so that the services procured better addressed West London's needs.
- The opportunity to comment on bids, inputting in an understanding of the local context.
- The pro-active approach taken by the West London Working team which ensured that these opportunities were maximised.
- The engagement with the supply chain through the Confederation.

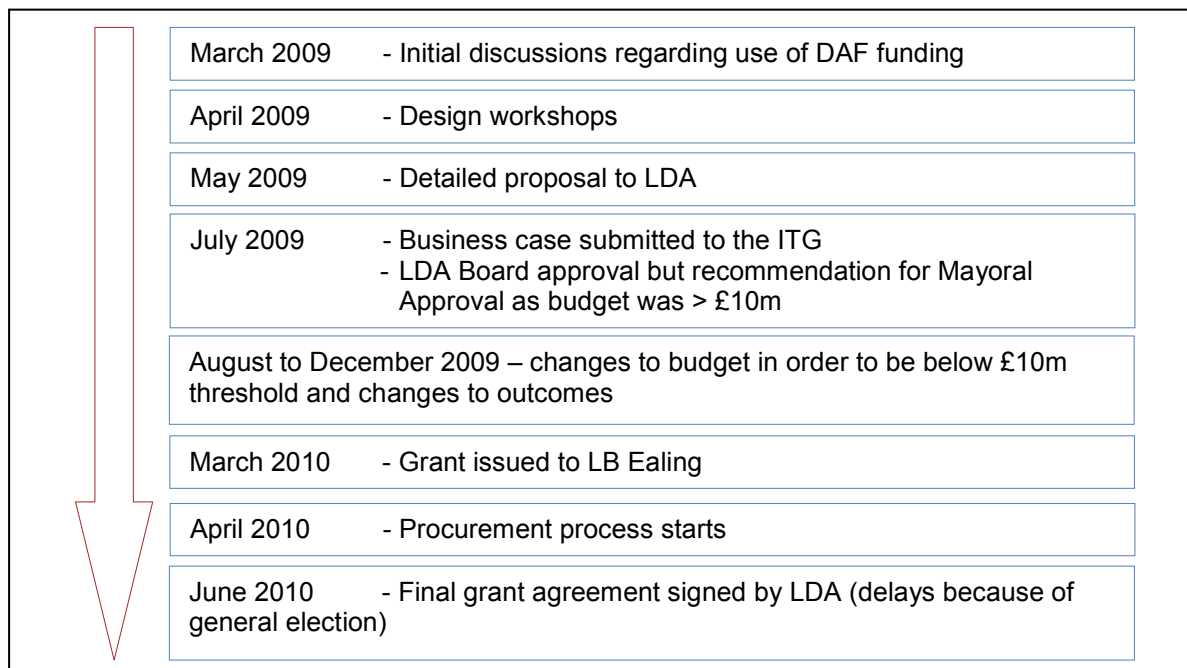
Having the infrastructure – through the WLW Programme Team and DWP funding – to carry out on-going sub-regional activity and engagement with funders

*Not so well*

**Different processes and timeframes amongst funders**

5.69 There are deep-rooted and complex systemic issues which hinder pooling and aligning of funding. Each funder has their own set of processes, target indicators, strategic priorities and timeframes.

5.70 For instance there have been difficulties in pooling Deprived Area Fund from DWP with LDA funding with respect to extended decision making processes when dealing with two sets of authorisations and approvals. The Sustained Employment Programme is a good illustration of these problems. The decision making process is summarised in the diagram below. It took over a year from the inception of the project to receipt of the grant.



- 5.71 For the same reasons, difficulties appeared if changes to the funding allocation needed to be made (e.g. additional funding). Again an extended approval process, involving a range of departments / groups / committees was usually necessary.
- 5.72 This is in part because public bodies do not differentiate between the movement of funds from or to other public bodies and more traditional grant funding / contracting mechanisms. As a result for the LSC to provide funding to the LDA as WLW's accountable body, the LSC had to use their normal grant funding agreement, in the same way as if they were working with a traditional LSC provider of services.
- 5.73 Both of these issues result in a considerable disincentive to pooling funding and reluctance for one public body to take on both the administration and the risk of another's funding. They are not unique to West London working but reflect deep sated barriers which constrain the ability of public bodies to integrate funding at regional and national level. Given this their solution is not something that WLW could realistically delivered by itself.

#### Securing the right representatives

- 5.74 There was a problem with the involvement of DWP in the Investment and Target Group. DWP did not agree a permanent representative for the Group, but did agree that a representative would be made available to attend Group meetings as required to provide expert advice and guidance. Only in December 2009 was a main contact was named. A Jobcentre Plus representative did consistently attend the Investment and Target Group. , but the fact that DWP led on procurement issues did prove problematic.
- 5.75 There were wider concerns in this regard: some of the representatives who attended the meetings did not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisations. This was most pronounced for the national organisations such as Jobcentre Plus/DWP and the LSC/SFA.

### Different political agendas at local level

- 5.76 While the members of the ITG wished to agree shared objectives on principle, achieving this in practice proved more difficult. Each borough tended to focus on their own local interests rather than the wider sub-regional objectives and this led to some tensions and obstructed some projects (e.g. Westfield). It was difficult to obtain a combined view because of the range of political drivers across the different boroughs. It also meant that it was difficult to rationalise provision across the sub-region when it could involve cuts or redistribution of services and expenditure across borough boundaries.

### Conclusions / key findings

- 5.77 The Investment and Target Group has been successful in influencing spending decisions on employment and skills services in order to make them better fitted to London's employment and skills needs. However it could have greater impact in this regard if it has been involved earlier in the process of developing service specifications. In addition, its ability to comment on specifications was limited to DWP and ESF funded tenders and those involving the LDA and Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency which directly made use of WLW funding. It was unable to influence other LDA and Learning and Skills Council / Skills Funding Agency provision.
- 5.78 The group's influence did not extend to full alignment and pooling of resources. This was due to the different regional and national organisations having different timescales, priorities and commissioning processes. Overcoming these barriers would have required a much deeper model of devolution than that provided by CSPs as regional / national targets took precedence over the more local WLW goals. The positive role that the group has played in influencing spending and articulating West London's needs seems set to be lost as the proposed West London Employment Commissioning Unit will not proceed due to a lack of available public funding.

### Directory of Employment Services

#### Spend

- 5.79 A total of £71,596 has been spent to date on the project.

#### Method of delivery

- 5.80 The West London Working programme team led on the development of the project. Following consultation with providers through focus groups, West London Working and the East and South East London CSP developed the specification to research, develop and deliver the Directory.
- 5.81 Following an open procurement process Experian won the contract to compile the data, set up the Directory and host it. The West London Working team maintains and updates the entries in and the content of the Directory and are responsible for marketing it to providers and other stakeholders.

#### Organisational links

- 5.82 According to the 2007 Business Plan, the main links with other WLW activities were expected to be with the Employability Performance Rating System; the Provider

Confederation; and the Personal Advice and Outreach programme. Performance ratings were planned to be incorporated in the Directory. This has not taken place as the Performance Rating System has not been mainstreamed yet.

- 5.83 The Confederation complements the Directory and provides a mechanism for promoting its use. Through monthly e-bulletins and regular events the Confederation enables West London providers to be better aware of what others do, encouraging referrals across organisations.
- 5.84 The links with the Personal Advice and Outreach programme relates to the Directory's role in signposting. It is a tool to help boroughs and their partners identify which organisations they might work with in delivering this activity. This same role in identifying potential providers was also useful to the potential prime contractors, helping them better understand their local supply chain for commissioning.

### *Outputs*

- 5.85 Two output indicators were set:
- No. of people accessing the Directory (i.e. no. of hits)
  - No. of organisations posting information on the Directory.
- 5.86 The latest data supplied by the West London Working team shows that the number of hits per month rose from 41 in August 2008 to 1,217 in November 2010.
- 5.87 This presents a positive picture, one of a sustained increase in usage of the Directory over time. These figures indicate two phases: the first phase, up to August 2009, during which usage rose sharply and the second phase, from then onwards, where usage stabilised, hovering around 1,200 monthly hits on average.

### *The Directory continually attracted new organisations*

- 5.88 The cumulative number of organisations joining the Directory rose steadily from 253 in January 2009 to 290 in November 2010.
- 5.89 West London Working's November 2010 figures show that there were 218 entries in the Directory. A significant number of entries were deleted. This is to be expected as funding changes result in services ceasing and new ones commencing.

### *Outcomes*

- 5.90 The 2007 Business Plan outcomes for the West London Working Passport, which included the Directory included:
- Enable better informed decision making;
  - Generate proactive and evidenced change;
  - Improve efficiency, clarity of entrance to routeway, accuracy of referrals;
  - Improve the demand (individuals) led system;
  - Increase the number of businesses using West London brokerages and Jobcentre Plus in order to recruit and retain staff;
  - Increase the number of vacancies filled by referrals from West London providers.

- Reduce the duplication of provision and the number of drop outs.

5.91 The Directory offers more information than previously available to advisers. It provides an enhanced level of information compared to some other resources, but not always in the most relevant way.

5.92 However, the results returned by the Directory were too broad and not always appropriate. It returned quite long lists that were not necessarily local. The Directory provides more and better information than previously available but not in the most user-friendly way.

#### Employment advisers use the Directory although not as their primary source of information

5.93 Employment advisers are familiar with the Directory and they consult it when needed. Its' use has been embedded amongst this target group. It is found to provide additional information. However, the use of the Directory is mostly infrequent and that it is one amongst several sources of information used by employment and skills advisers. The Directory is seen as a supplementary source of information, rather than a centralised database. It mostly seems to add a layer of potential information sources, rather than simplifying access to information on employment and skills services.

#### An improvement in the referral process?

5.94 Improving the referral process depends on the ability of the Directory to provide the right information to employment brokers. Only 26% (12) of the 47 respondents to our survey of learners felt it had improved their referrals. Overall, the impact of the Directory to improve the referral process seems to have been limited.

#### Less duplication?

5.95 Evidence of reduction of duplication would not be expected from the Directory as such. It would arise because the Directory exposed duplication of provision to funders, that was then dealt with in succeeding contract rounds. In these circumstances, we could not credit the Directory with this outcome, even if it was a contributory factor.

#### Unintended impacts

5.96 We have no evidence of unintended impacts of the Directory. Changes to provision have related much more to national and regional factors such as the recession response from the last Government, the Mayor's strategy changes and the financial stringencies imposed by the Current Coalition Government than as a result of the Directory.

#### Longer run impacts / sustainability

5.97 The Directory of Employment Services will be sustained at least until 2014. The format of West London Working's Directory has been adopted by London's European Social Fund Co-Financers. The Directory will be expanded to cover all of London's ESF funded employment related services for adults. The expanded Directory will be launched in the summer of 2011 and will be operational on this basis until 2014.

5.98 However, there remains the issue of updating the information on non-ESF funded projects in West London. The GLA, LDA and London Skills and Employment Board have requested that Prime Contractors use, add to, and update their and their supply chain entries on the follow on directory. However, with no contractual arrangements to support this and no

infrastructure to keep track of providers and monitor their input, there is a risk that non ESF service information will not be consistently kept up to date, diminishing the value of the Directory as a comprehensive cross West London and cross funding stream source of information.

*What worked well*

- 5.99 The Directory's main strength was the provision of more information than other existing sources, as it was not limited to a specific funding stream, target group, or type of organisation. This is an important achievement and the only way to deliver an integrated view of sub-regional provision.
- 5.100 Another strength was the on-going marketing of the Directory to local providers, in particular through the Confederation newsletter and events. This ensured that providers remained aware of its existence and continued to use it.
- 5.101 The benefits of the Directory were sufficient for the London European Programme Management Unit to decide to take it forward after WLW ends in March 2011 and expand its coverage to the whole of ESF funded provision in London.

*What did not work so well*

- 5.102 The main limitation of the Directory is its inability to remain up-to-date as a result of providers not supplying new information consistently. This potentially leads to a loss of credibility amongst users and deters regular use. This is a key issue to resolve for the future.
- 5.103 Feedback from some our interviews suggested there was still some confusion amongst some potential users (e.g. colleges providing adult education) about how the Directory fitted in with other sources of information (e.g. Next Steps, Skills Account), or more precisely what differentiated it. If it is to be accessible to all, not just employment advisers, it needs to be very clear about what it offers.
- 5.104 In addition, while the Directory identified employment advisers as their key target group, it remained accessible to all. This may have turned into a weakness because it had implications for the kind of information available on it. It provides general information (e.g. contact details to switchboards) rather than professional information (e.g. contact detail to employment advisers).
- 5.105 Finally, the timeframe for the project has not allowed the full benefits to come through yet. According to the Interim Evaluation survey, the Directory remains seen as an additional source of information rather than the central one and its impact on referrals has so far been limited.

*Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.106 Usage of, and the number of providers on the directory has risen over time. The directory offers greater information on the range of available provision than existed before and this information was not limited to a particular funding source or organisation. The directory is a useful source of additional information for employment advisers rather than a primary, consolidated source of information. Finding effective mechanisms to keep the directory

fully up to date has proved a difficulty and this has lessened its usefulness. In addition, trying to have a directory which is accessible to employment advisers, business and the general public has proved very difficult in practice. It might have been better to focus on the key constituency of employment advisers.

- 5.107 The benefits of the directory have proved sufficient for it to be taken up and sustained by the European Social Fund through to 2014. In this new form it will cover all ESF funded employment and skills provision in London. This leaves the issue of non-ESF funded provision in West London. It is not clear that there are any effective measures in place to keep information on this up to date.

### *Employability performance rating system*

#### *Spend*

- 5.108 In total, £226,825 has been spent on the project. This has been spent on KPMG's fees who were contracted by WLW to develop, pilot and implement the performance rating system.
- 5.109 In addition, the project also absorbed considerable amounts of time of WLW staff and other stakeholders who worked collaboratively with KPMG to develop the system.

#### *Method of delivery*

- 5.110 The pilot and development of the performance rating was overseen by the West London Working Performance Rating Work Package Board, consisting of representatives from WLW, London Development Agency (LDA), Learning and Skills Council, DWP and the London Borough of Brent. Given the broad spread of organisational linkages required for the project to achieve its objective of widespread take-up, broad buy-in to the project was required. KPMG was appointed to develop, pilot and implement the performance based rating system.
- 5.111 A number of delivery partners and contract types were selected for the pilot phase from July 2008 to July 2009. This phase included Burleigh College, Catalyst Communities Housing Association, Hammersmith and Fulham Council, Hammersmith and Fulham Volunteer Centre, Heathrow City Partnership, Imperial College NHS Trust, LB Ealing Learning Curve, Refugees into Jobs, Notting Hill Housing Trust, Brent Into Work, P3, and Nord Anglia Lifetime Development.
- 5.112 The role of the pilot delivery partners was to help develop and test the prototype Performance Rating methodology, including
- the definition of each of the proposed performance indicators and their measurement;
  - the definition of assessment criteria/benchmarks against which performance would be assessed; and
  - the additional administrative commitment, for example new data-collection processes.

#### *Organisational links*

- 5.113 In the long term, WLW's hope was that the Performance Rating would be integrated into the overall West London infrastructure as follows:

- Information from the Performance Rating system would bolster the Directory. It is an objective to publically publish the star ratings generated by the Performance Rating system, and one of the ways of doing this would have been through the Directory.
- Information from the Performance Rating system would bolster the Investment and Target group, allowing the members of this group to make better informed investment and targeting decisions.
- Information from the Performance Rating system would strengthen the Confederation by providing transparent data on how providers could manage their supply chains and support informed choices on who to work with.
- Information from the Performance Rating system would benefit residents directly. The star ratings would be available to personal advisors, who could use these ratings to point clients towards higher quality provision. Over time, the flow of clients to higher quality organisations should generate internal pressures to force lower quality providers to either improve or to exit the market.

5.114 To date the above linkages are more potential than actual given that the Performance Rating System has not so far been widely rolled out across provision in West London.

#### *Outputs and outcomes*

5.115 There were no specific quantified output targets for the performance rating system. It did not aim to directly assist people into work, or provide training.

5.116 Rather the desired outcome was to create the Performance Rating system, so that it could lever up the quality of employability provision in West London, so contributing to the delivery of the overall objectives of WLW.

#### *Unintended impacts*

5.117 The process of development of the Employability Performance Rating system appears to have had unanticipated positive impacts. The Development Group meetings were viewed to have been a good way of getting to know other providers in West London, and sharing best practice. We heard evidence that (together with other networking events undertaken by WLW) the Performance Rating development process has proven useful in assisting the larger prime contractors to develop relationships with smaller providers in the area. This was of benefit to both smaller organisations and the larger ones. More importantly, these links should be of significant benefits to individuals assisted, as they facilitated improvements in the process of passing clients through to the most appropriate provision.

5.118 One interviewee stated that:

*“the WLW area does seem more joined up than other areas. This has genuine benefits, and helps link everything together, helps [their organisation] as smaller providers are better linked to bigger ones. The Work Programme commissioning process might be better [in the WLW area] than elsewhere due to these relationships being built up.”*

### *Longer run impacts / sustainability*

- 5.119 There is some uncertainty about whether the Performance Rating system will be sustained into the long term. The Performance Rating system is in the process of transferring its sponsoring organisation from the LDA to the GLA. The risk is that without a very active sponsoring organisation, the system may fall into disuse over the medium term.
- 5.120 Most significantly, the new Work Programme represents a very significant change in the marketplace for employability services. The onus of programme management will now be placed on the Work Programme's Prime Contractors rather than public sector funders. The London Skills and Employment Board and Greater London Authority have requested that preferred suppliers on the Department for Work and Pensions' Employment Related Services Framework (ERSS), including Work Programme Providers, utilise the Employability Performance Rating to transparently manage their supply chains, and publish these results regularly on London's Employment and Skills Observatory.
- 5.121 Despite this it will be challenging to secure implementation by DWP Prime Contractors without DWP making this a contractual requirement. The DWP have not done this to date. The use of Performance Rating for DWP Provision is dependent on Prime Contractors responding to the requests from London government and the Employment and Skills Board to use the rating, and that they see a business case for implementing it.

### *What worked well*

- 5.122 The development of the Employability Performance Rating system appears to have been an excellent example of collaborative development. As one participant to the project put it, those managing the project (from both the consultant and WLW side) were "willing to listen, willing to talk and willing to discuss. There is nothing difficult about that but it is amazing how often we manage not to do it".
- 5.123 Our interviews for the project indicated strong support for the system, and a broad belief that it would contribute to quality outcomes if used more widely in future. One interviewee stated that: "The employment performance rating I think is an incredibly good piece of work, which really should be taken on more widely." The same interviewee stated that the some kind of measurement system was "vital", and that this tool gives an indication on who is providing effective services whereas it might be "guesswork" in other sub-regions.
- 5.124 The more ambitious providers were keen to use the system. As they saw it, it would be useful in demonstrating quality to funders, and to incentivise staff. One provider interviewee thought that from his perspective "you need to know how you are doing compared to others. We can use this sort of information to motivate staff and understand our own provision...I am a believer in healthy competition". One interviewee expressed the hope that the more competent providers would be able to use the Performance Rating system as a way of improving their own performance, and display that quality to funders, and so win contracts to provide services.
- 5.125 Separately, West London Working has also received email enquiries from providers who wish to use the Performance Rating system to generate their own ranking – which is presumably intended to be of use in attracting funding / winning contract bids.

5.126 We also heard evidence that the Performance Rating system could assist with the management of sub-contractors by helping lead partners see how their sub-contractors are performing. With Performance Rating in place, the LDA also gets a view of the quality of the supply chain; and lead partners can use it to lever up the project quality of their contractors.

*Not worked so well*

5.127 Self assessment systems are commonly used by the larger providers to identify areas of improvement, and this element of the Performance Rating System was seen as a way of introducing these quality management techniques to smaller, often community-based organisations. However, there is clearly something of a moral hazard problem here, given that the provider has the means of boosting their own score. Two main problems have been experienced with this self-assessment. Firstly, the self-assessment process has been very uneven: some providers have done a good quality, careful piece of work, whilst others have made little or no effort. Secondly, the moral hazard risk noted above has occurred in practice. In many cases, draft self-assessment ratings seemed inversely related to overall performance - suggesting that weak delivery organisations are tempted to “claw back” marks by awarding themselves high self-assessment scores.

5.128 Ideally, a performance management system would allow ongoing monitoring of subcontractor performance to take place. This would allow contract managers to identify when a sub-contractor’s project was going off course, in order that early corrective action could be taken. However, the system has been designed as a system which operates on a year-by-year basis – in order that this matches the typical contract period. The WLW Associate Director has successfully created a workaround to enable like for like publication of a six month stock take of the Performance Rating, but reports that the system does not readily allow this to take place.

*Conclusions / key findings*

5.129 The development of the performance rating system involved a wide range of stakeholders and proved to be an excellent example of collaborative development. This had the unexpected benefit of bringing West London providers together and building relationships between them including between the large prime contractors and smaller providers.

5.130 If widely used the performance rating system has the potential to contribute to improved employment and skills provision by identifying high performing providers and incentivising others to up their game.

**Provider Confederation**

*Spend*

5.131 In total, £149,738 has been spent on the Provider Confederation.

*Method of delivery*

5.132 The day to day work of the Confederation was overseen by a small Project Board consisting of West London Working, provider representation from A4E and Skills Training

UK and Rocket Science. Rocket Science led on the development and delivery of the events and the e-bulletins.

### *Organisational Links*

- 5.133 One of the main aims of the Provider Confederation was to create stronger links between providers in West London, to aid partnership working, the sharing of information, and additionally to support the continued professionalisation of the sector. Organisational linkages between providers and their supply chains were key to the success of this programme, and crucially what it aimed to do. The Confederation provided a 'bottom up' conduit to inform the Investment and Target Group where there were gaps in provision or duplication of service. It promoted the Directory of Employment Services, and provided a method of disseminating information on the Business Partner Programme.

### *Outputs*

- 5.134 The agreed outputs for the Confederation were:
- 20 providers invited to workshops to design the Confederation
  - 6 updates of the capacity building on-line resource
  - 5 networking events
  - 15 communications to providers advertising events and training opportunities
  - 300 providers representatives attending 'speed dating' or themed events
  - 5 training sessions delivered where no other capacity building or workforce development funds were available
- 5.135 The following outputs were achieved for this project:
- Establishment of online database of 690 members of mainly employment and skills providers in WL sub-region,
  - 16 events attended by 450 delegates
  - Series of monthly and ad-hoc e-bulletins (45 in total)

### *Outcomes*

- 5.136 The specification that WLW set out for the Confederation states that that the network of providers in the Development of the Confederation should:
- Add value to existing networks such as the Brent in2Work Provider Network.
  - Build on the London Employment and Skills Taskforce 2012 Pan London Guidance and Brokerage Confederation "Relay London Jobs".
  - Give providers the opportunity to establish clear referral route ways with agreed protocols.
  - Inform the West London Working Investment and Target Group of demand & supply on the ground.
- 5.137 Ultimately, the desired outcome from the Confederation was to build the capacity of providers by helping them to create links with each other and with Prime Contractors and contractual relationships with Prime Contractors.

### *Unintended impacts*

- 5.138 We have no evidence on unintended impacts of the Confederation.

### *Longer run impacts / sustainability*

- 5.139 The evaluation of the Provider Confederation noted strong support that it should continue as it is seen as enabling joint working and improved service delivery in West London. Given the ending of WLW and the more general retrenchment in public spending, the potential lead role for sustaining the Confederation seemed to lie with the large Prime Contractors on the basis that they are best placed to benefit from the support offered to smaller, specialist providers in terms of driving up their performance as potential sub-contractors in the context of the new Work Programme and its payment by results. Hence it is hoped that the Prime Contractors will recognise that it is in their own self-interest to sustain the Confederation. The GLA and the London Skills and Employment Board have supported the approach taken by the Confederation in West London and recommended that this approach be replicated in London's other sub-regions.

### *Worked Well*

- 5.140 The sub-regional perspective provided by the Confederation and the propagation of this perspective (through e-bulletins, networking and training events) was well-received by respondents. Respondents to this project's evaluation questionnaire indicated that the Confederation had supported improvements in their organisations, and that the events provided invaluable networking opportunities.

### *Not so well*

- 5.141 The level of involvement from primes in the Confederation was something that respondents noted could be improved and there should also be further collaboration between the Confederation and the Association of Learning Providers.
- 5.142 Given the development of the new Work Programme, there is an increasing need for prime contractors to form partnerships with smaller, specialist providers to deliver effective welfare to work services and to ensure that these providers have the capacity to operate effectively in the new results driven commissioning environment. The Confederation but with stronger leadership from the prime contractors should be an effective mechanism for delivering these objectives.

### *Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.143 The Provider Confederation has built stronger links between providers in West London which has led to joint working, networking and the exchange of best practice information. It has developed a database of 690 members. The Confederation is highly regarded by those who have participated in its activities and the GLA and LSEB have called for similar bodies to be set up in London's other sub-regions. Given this there is strong support for it to be sustained beyond 2011. The hope is that the self-interest of the large Prime Contractors to have highly performing sub-contractors in the context of the new Work Programme's payment by results will drive them to sustain the Confederation.

## Business Partner Programme

### Spend

- 5.144 £99,354 was spent on the Business Partner Programme, within the budget for the project of £100,000.

### Method of delivery

- 5.145 The Business Partner Programme was delivered by Park Royal Workforce. Two main modes of delivery were used:
- Meetings between mentors and mentees. The majority of the meetings were carried out face to face, although some were via telephone due to participants' business commitments away from West London.
  - Workshops and training were conducted as group sessions either involving just the mentees/mentors or the full cohort.

### Organisational Links

- 5.146 The Business Partner Programme linked into the Provider Confederation which aimed to build a trusted network of providers of employment services. It was also hoped that linkages could be developed between the employer businesses and the employability providers on a corporate as well as personal basis.

### Outputs

- 5.147 Two output targets were set for the Business Partner programme:
- Recruitment of 10 employer organisations to provide mentors and act as partners to the employability providers.
  - Recruitment of 20 employability providers, who would provide staff as mentees.
- 5.148 The target for mentors was met comfortably in terms of numbers. However, the output target was that mentors were drawn from employers; large and small businesses. Only three of the 14 mentors involved met the original profile rather than specialist mentors and training firms. 19 employability providers were recruited to provide 21 mentees.

### Outcomes

- 5.149 The Business Partner Programme aimed to make employment support in West London more demand led (responsive to employer need). This in turn would improve the ability of employment and skills providers to successfully place workless people in West London into work. In part this appears to have been achieved. A quote from the interviews undertaken:

*"I had a 'third sector' mentality before starting the programme. My mentor has helped me to change the way I see things and more importantly, how I do them, and as a result I now recognise [my organisation] as a competitive business with an excellent product."*

- 5.150 However, the shortage of mentors from mainstream business (3 out of 14 mentors) may have constrained this impact. To compensate for this lack of direct exposure to business recruitment needs and practices, the Business Partner Programme provided training

workshops and an event with three large employers. However there was only partial attendance: 47% of mentees attended the training and 58% the large employers' event.

#### *Unintended impacts*

- 5.151 As many of the mentors were professionals this meant that the mentoring gained by the mentees had different impacts than intended. The mentees were asked to comment on this. Comments included:

*"I think this is a difficult choice to make as the truth is that I don't know if having a sharp end person would have been more beneficial to our project. In terms of my own professional development it was good to have a mentor who was trained and I know that I have benefited from it on a personal level"; and*

*"Impossible to say whether better or worse but definitely different. A professional mentor brings a structure and a person centred approach, which was beneficial to identifying my real needs, but then there was less looking at "trading business" overall. This was not a loss, but the learning was different".*

- 5.152 Hence whilst mentees appear not to have received as much exposure to business as had been hoped they may have gained in other ways from being mentored by specialist mentors.

#### *Longer term impacts / sustainability*

- 5.153 The Business Partner Programme participants, the mentees especially, expressed great interest in maintaining contact with each other and in some cases continuing the mentoring relationship. This suggests the possibility of some ongoing longer term benefits for participants beyond March 2011. Following on from the success of their involvement in the first business partner programme, Compass UK Ltd., have offered five further business partner mentors.

- 5.154 A significant output of the Business Partner Programme was the preparation of a toolkit. This is intended to provide those interested in running a similar type of programme to do so without the need to reinvent it from scratch. Instead the toolkit is designed to guide them on what and how to do the things that were judged to be crucial for success.

#### *Worked well*

- 5.155 The survey of participants asked participants in the Business Partner Programme to indicate that the following parts of the programme worked well. Communications to mentors and mentees were good throughout the programme. The set up generated a sense of programme and belonging.

#### *Not worked so well*

- 5.156 The recruitment of mainstream business mentors into the Business Partner Programme was not successful – only 3 out of the 14 mentors were from mainstream businesses with the rest coming from a specialist mentoring background. Not having more mentors from such a background inhibited the degree to which mentees could increase their

understanding of the recruitment needs and practices of employers. Hence this probably reduced the extent to which the goal of providers becoming more demand led was achieved.

### *Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.157 The Business Partner Programme involved a combination of mentoring, workshops and training. It had been the original intention that the mentors for the mentees from the employment and skills providers would be drawn from mainstream businesses and that this would give the mentees exposure to business practices and needs. In practice the majority of mentors were drawn from specialist mentoring and training backgrounds. In order to try and overcome this reduced exposure to business practices workshops and training was organised. However attendance at these was only partial and so the programme gave participants less exposure to the needs of business than had been hoped. The exposure to professional mentoring gave participants a different but not necessarily better or worse experience. The programme attempted to create a legacy in the form of a toolkit to guide others through the process of establishing such a mentoring programme rather than them having to develop such activity from scratch.

### *Personal Advice and Outreach*

#### *Spend*

- 5.158 In total, £1,917,497 was allocated to deliver the outreach projects in the six boroughs. Around £892,997 was awarded through Deprived Area Funding and a further £1,024,500 was levered in from other sources. In addition, a further £80,100 was awarded to Tank Consulting to provide coordination, support and evaluation activity. The WLW Implementation Group took the decision to give local authorities the responsibility to determine the funding models for this work package and it was decided that they should be awarded six individual grants (one to each borough). The actual expenditure on these six projects is shown in the table below.

<b>Borough</b>	<b>Grant award</b>	<b>Additional funding</b>	<b>Total</b>
Brent	£147,687	£500,000 <sub>1</sub>	<b>£647,687</b>
Ealing	£149,914	£19,500 <sub>2</sub>	<b>£169,414</b>
Hammersmith and Fulham	£143,250	£110,000 <sub>3</sub>	<b>£253,250</b>
Harrow	£150,000	£263,000 <sub>4</sub>	<b>£413,000</b>
Hillingdon	£150,000	£92,000 <sub>5</sub>	<b>£242,000</b>
Hounslow	£150,000	£40,000 <sub>6</sub>	<b>£190,000</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£890,851</b>	<b>£1,024,500</b>	<b>£1,915,351</b>

#### *Method of delivery*

- 5.159 The mode of delivery differed across the six local authorities. Some Local Authorities delivered projects directly and others sub-contracted delivery to partner agencies. There was a varying degree of experience across the boroughs in terms of delivering projects like this, and the WLW team worked closely with boroughs to develop output targets. Additionally each of the six Outreach projects worked with a variety of organisations.

#### *Organisational Links*

- 5.160 Managing the projects at a local level has enabled good integration with a large range of existing bodies and local services like for example with children’s centres. They were also encouraged to work closely and develop linkages with Jobcentre Plus.
- 5.161 There were key differences in the links developed across the six projects. Some projects worked closely with staff who were internal to their local authority (e.g. in Hounslow they worked closely with the Widening Participation Officers within the Hounslow Adult and Community Education team for referring people on to the project) while others worked more with external agencies (e.g. Brent worked with a variety of community agencies).
- 5.162 The programme also sought to link front line staff from other public and third sector services, especially those engaged in housing (given the concentration of worklessness in social housing) with employment and skills provision. This involved training for staff in five of the six local authorities, with Hillingdon being the exception. For example, in Ealing a staff training programme was developed for front line housing staff to ensure they were better able to signpost their clients to local employment related services and information sources.

#### *Outputs*

- 5.163 There were 12 outputs planned for the Outreach programme, six of which were defined as ‘key’. These were for:

- Residents supported
- Referrals to employability and skills providers
- Residents gaining work
- Residents sustaining work at 6 months
- Frontline staff receiving training
- Accessing childcare support following intervention

5.164 Some of the individual projects also had their own list of outputs. There was a wish to remain flexible on these outputs to ensure that they met the needs of individual Local Authorities.

**Performance for the six key outputs.**

	Target	Actual	Percentage difference
<b>Residents supported</b>	644	704	+ 9
<b>Referrals to providers for further support</b>	1024	806	- 21
<b>Residents gaining work</b>	235	180	- 23
<b>Residents sustaining work at 6 months</b>	117	111	- 6
<b>Front-line staff receiving training</b>	257	252	- 2
<b>Accessing childcare following intervention</b>	143	56	- 61

*Outcomes*

5.165 The desired outcomes were to develop:

- innovative approaches to outreach that link frontline staff delivering other public and third sector services, with employment and skills provision, and
- pilot innovative methods of personal support to increase the number of people that successfully achieve their goal through accessing skills or employment services

5.166 The Outreach programme has created a ‘new thinking’ at a local level and the provision of new local services. Projects were delivered at a local level so existing networks and opportunities could be used as well as the knowledge and experience of staff working in the area. Additionally, there was a good use of outreach locations to engage local communities.

- 5.167 In total, the Personal Advice and Outreach projects have supported 704 residents and four out of the six boroughs continued providing this service once programme funding ended. 180 residents started work, and 111 sustained that work at 6 months. One borough, Hillingdon, did not have any job entry targets as was providing in work support.

*Unintended impacts*

- 5.168 Local authorities varied on the extent of their previous experience as a provider of outreach and advice services. Where these projects were completely new, there was an unanticipated lead in time to become known and trusted locally. This affected the ability of projects to deliver these services.

*Longer run impacts / sustainability*

- 5.169 In some cases, the development of new outreach sources as part of the Personal Advice and Outreach programme has led to changes within the practice of organisations that could lead to longer term positive changes and integration of good employment practices. Some of the local authorities within this programme have had very little recent history of delivering this type of project and they have now started to link activities on worklessness with other services.

*Worked well*

- 5.170 The Personal Advice and Outreach work package has been successful in linking frontline staff from public and third sector services with employment and skills provision. The programme has helped to increase the number of residents in west London accessing suitable employment and support services. They had good outreach locations which helped with obtaining participants. The outreach locations varied from local libraries, community centres, housing estates, housing offices to the premises of the delivery partners.

*Not work well*

- 5.171 Some of the sub-contracting arrangements were not managed effectively. For example, one sub contractor announced a 'freeze' on recruitment just after signing the contract and the local authority had to wait for this to be lifted before the contract could be started.
- 5.172 Additionally there were staffing issues for some local authorities (length of recruitment processes and high turnover) and cross borough working did not work as well as had been hoped. In some cases front-line staff were not clear as to whether they had attended training, and the support provided was not always seen as relevant by all projects.
- 5.173 Other barriers included engaging clients (particularly with regards to outreach activities on local estates), referrals to projects were not always appropriate, providing suitable childcare support and/or ESOL was a challenge, and referring clients on to other providers was not always successful due to some projects not being happy with quality of provision available elsewhere.

*Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.174 The advice and outreach activities were delivered separately in the six boroughs in order to try and meet particular local needs. Links were established between public sector staff,

especially those engaged in housing, and employment and skills provision and five out of the six boroughs (Hillingdon being the exception) provided their staff with training so that they were better able to signpost clients to employment and skills provision. The project used good outreach locations which had the effect of increasing the number of residents who were engaged with employment and skills provision.

### **Building Employability Pathways**

#### *Spend*

5.175 Expenditure on Building Employability Pathways is shown in the Table below:

<b>Element of work package</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Grants to FE Colleges / Adult Education Institutes	£100,000 (8 x £12,500)
Consultancy Support to Cambridge Policy Consultants	£92,400
Playing to Win delivery to Prospects Ltd.	£30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£222,400</b>

5.176 Actual spend at £222,400 was the same as the planned budget.

#### *Method of delivery*

5.177 Building Employability Pathways was delivered through two sets of activity; the Building Employability Pathways and Pathways for Parents pilot and the Playing to Win workshops. A range of FE college / adult education institute staff were engaged in developing employability pathways and delivering the Pathways for Parents pilot. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) staff and course tutors delivered one to one sessions and workshops to learners. Other staff were often responsible for making changes to management information systems, and staff in management roles for raising employability issues at senior management team meetings. Prospects Ltd delivered the Playing to Win workshops.

#### *Organisational Links*

5.178 Building Employability Pathways led to a number of organisational linkages. Cambridge Policy Consultants gave advice and assistance to the colleges in delivering the Pathways for Parents pilot. Colleges were brought together regularly to discuss progress on the pilot as well as to create linkages with other organisations such as Jobcentre Plus, job brokers and Next Steps.

#### *Outputs*

5.179 The Colleges and Adult Education Institutes were given the following targets to measure quantitative delivery of Pathways for Parents. The output data shows that the Pathways for

Parents pilot performed well in terms of starts and employability plan delivery but less well in terms of referrals.

	Ealing Adult Education	Brent	West Thames College	Stanmore College	Harrow	Hillingdon Partnership	Total
Starts on Pathways for Parents	100	200	100	100	100	200	800
Achieved	97	207	50	83	57	235	729 91%
Referrals received from progression pathway providers	50	100	30	50	50	100	380
Achieved	39	38	0	7	0	75	159 42%
Learners receiving an individual employability plan	100	200	100	100	100	200	800
Achieved	22	207	36	83	38	178	564 71%
Referred onto progression pathways providers that give support to secure work	50	100	50	50	50	100	400
Achieved	97	207	36	69	41	90	540 135%

### Outcomes

5.180 The Building Employability Pathways project had three quantitative outcome targets set for it:

	Ealing Adult Education	Brent	West Thames College	Stanmore College	Harrow	Hillingdon Partnership	Total
Completing a qualification	75	150	75	75	75	150	600 75% of starts
Achieved	68	99	36	18	27	218	466 78% of target
Participating in work experience or a work trial	50	100	50	50	50	100	400 50% of starts
Achieved	31	57	0	9	23	1	121 30% of target
Gaining employment	30	60	30	30	30	60	240 30% of starts
Achieved	12	9	3	5	2	6	37 15% of target

5.181 Both employment and work placement outcomes were significantly less than their targets. Large learning providers did not track these normally; so the outcomes may well be better. Perhaps unsurprisingly, qualification outcomes were significantly better measured. This is the core business of large learning providers and is their funding basis. This does point to the improvement that requiring colleges to report employment outcomes may lead to.

5.182 The learner survey undertaken by the evaluators showed that 30% of survey respondents had found work. This compares well with the outcome target.

*Unintended Impacts*

5.183 We have no evidence on any significant unintended impacts.

*Longer run impacts / sustainability*

5.184 The injection of a small sum of money via the Building Employability Pathways programme has had, and will hopefully continue to have positive and longer term effects on the importance placed on employability within the supported FE Colleges and Adult Education Institutes acting as a catalyst to mainstream employability into the way these learning providers operate.

*Worked well*

5.185 The combination of limited funding and working with the colleges to find appropriate activities that were missing from their existing employability offer worked well in making the pilots a catalyst for further action. The learner survey showed us that as a result of their employability work, most respondents felt that they had a better idea of what they would like to do in the future in terms of moving into employment (72%). Fifty five percent of

respondents felt that since their course has finished, they now have a better idea of where to look for jobs, and there were high levels of confidence reported for updating and completing CVs and job application forms. Hence the project appears to have had a substantial impact on the employability of participant learners.

*Not worked so well*

- 5.186 There was significant delay in the set up of the pilot in some of the FE colleges / adult education institutes. This was partly due to confusion and misunderstanding in the set up stage of the pilots, but also because of factors such as Ofsted inspections and restructuring in a number of the FE colleges / adult education institutes. Many LLPs were not clear about the requirements of the initial brief and the proposals that they submitted to WLW had to be changed and were not similar to the activities that were eventually agreed upon and delivered. Those who started late sometimes felt that they could have achieved more if they had got started more quickly. Respondents to the survey reported lower levels of confidence for applying for jobs and attending job interviews compared to other competences developed by the project, so it appears that the training that was delivered through the pilot could be improved for these aspects of employment support.

*Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.187 The project did not meet its target for individuals assisted into work or into work placement opportunities. However at least in part this was due to an inability to follow up the experience of former students once their courses had finished and nearly three quarters of learners surveyed had a better idea of what they wanted to do in terms of employment after participating in the project. The small amounts of money provided to the individual FE colleges / adult education institutes had a catalytic effect in terms of raising the importance they accorded to employability issues. However the impact of Building Employability Pathways was reduced by the delays which occurred in setting up the project in part due to the colleges and adult education institutes being unclear about what they were required to deliver.

***Work Focused ESOL for Parents Pilot***

*Spend*

- 5.188 The West London Work Focused ESOL for Parents pilot was allocated £4.65m funding from DWP, with the Skills Funding Agency being the accountable body.

*Method of delivery*

- 5.189 DWP led a Project Steering Group that was attended by WLW. The contract management for the ESOL programme was carried out by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) who were the accountable body for this strand. The following organisations were contracted to deliver work focused ESOL for Parents:

Brent: College of North West London in partnership with BACE's and Brentin2Work	Ealing and Hammersmith & Fulham: Burleigh College
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Harrow: Harrow Adult Education	GLE: Hounslow, Hillingdon, and Ealing
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5.190 In addition, LLU+ based at London South Bank University, delivered a series of workshops during the second year of the project. The workshops aimed to support networking and the sharing of good practice between the providers.

*Organisational linkages*

5.191 Providers involved in the ESOL Pilot used existing links and networks to engage and recruit participants to the pilot. They utilised community locations like schools and children centres to enable them to do this. Most of the providers were working in partnership with other organisations to deliver the pilot outcomes: these were either organised through formally sub-contracted arrangements or service level agreements (SLAs).

*Outputs*

5.192 The targets and actual outputs for Work Focused ESOL are shown in the table below, this project has a further six months of delivery.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Target (Actual) to end March 2011</b>
Starts	2,400 (2,394)
Sustained job Entries	479 (303)

5.193 Actual starts were 99.8% of the target by March 2011. Sustained Job entry rates are 12.6%, with the highest rate reported by one provider being 17.2%. The 20% sustained employment target was seen as a ‘challenge’ from the point of view of providers. By March 2011, providers reported reaching 63% of the sustained job entries target. However, a high proportion of residents that obtain jobs do keep these jobs (79%).

*Outcomes*

5.194 The output targets for this project included outcomes: job entries and sustained jobs. Learners that had moved into work found jobs as sales assistants, cleaners, porters and security guards. The 2008-09 recession created an inhospitable economic environment for job entries.

*Unintended impacts*

5.195 Some but not all providers recruited participants who were closer to the labour market in order to better meet their job outcome targets.

5.196 The development of ‘soft skills’ was seen by the work focused ESOL for parents providers as an important unintended outcome from the Pilot. The most frequently cited soft outcomes for learners were: increased self-confidence and motivation, improved communication skills, and enhanced job search skills.

*Longer run impacts / sustainability*

- 5.197 A potential longer term benefit of the Work Focused ESOL for Parent Pilot has been the development of links between training providers and community organisations. Some providers commented positively about the opportunity the Pilot had offered them to develop stronger relationships with BAME and other community-based organisations.

*Worked well*

- 5.198 Overall, the project was successful in recruiting and offering training to parents with ESOL needs, and has significantly helped participants with soft skills. Participants were also helped to overcome some of their other barriers (e.g. childcare). Providers feel that working flexibly with the group has been positive, and that it has helped to foster relationships with other providers, training providers and community partners.
- 5.199 A key feature of the Pilot has been the work placements offered to some participants, that were seen, both by providers and learners, as a valuable means of gaining experience of the UK workplace. There was considerable variation among providers in their approach to offering work placements: while for some it was an integrated part of their provision, others were not offering any at all, or only to selected 'job-ready' participants.

*Not worked well*

- 5.200 Integrating the language and employability elements of the programme appears to have been a challenge for some providers and partners, particularly those more used to delivering a more 'conventional' ESOL curriculum. Additionally, there was no budget allocated to learner support at the beginning, so many providers found it quite hard to offer for example childcare support. This meant that some learners found it very difficult to firstly attend the sessions, and subsequently find work with these barriers. Additionally there were differences between the providers ability to reimburse travel costs, making access to the service difficult/ impossible for some. Some providers also found the length of the courses quite restrictive in moving learners into employment especially for those who only had very basic levels of English.

*Conclusions / key findings*

- 5.201 The targets for assisting individuals into employment were very challenging for a clientele who were typically distant from being job ready. This had the unwelcome effect that some providers sought to recruit individuals who were closer to the labour market in order to try and meet these targets at the expense of the hardest to help. Given the significant disadvantage of most participants the development of soft skills such as improved confidence, motivation and job search skills was a significant benefit from the project. Some participants were able to benefit from work placements and for these individuals they a very valuable way of obtaining experience of the UK work environment.
- 5.202 Combining the language and employability training was a challenge for some providers particularly those used to delivering conventional ESOL. Another difficulty was the initial lack of a budget for learner support which in particular meant that some potential learners were unable to obtain the childcare provision that would have allowed them to attend the provision on offer.

## Effectiveness of Management and Governance

### *Effectiveness of the development of the WLW work programme*

- 5.203 West London Working's programme was developed collaboratively with the Implementation Group. It was strongly influenced by the agreed Vision. The development of the work programme focused on activities that could contribute to overcoming the challenges identified in the Business Plan
- 5.204 The precise nature of the relationships between West London Working and the LDA was unclear to outsiders to begin with. The national evaluation reported that "it was felt, initially, that the CSP partnership had no real presence in the boroughs"<sup>iii</sup>. This is one of the very few comments on West London in the national evaluation report. Over time as discussed below the degree of engagement between WLW and the six boroughs improved although it remained an area that was very widely seen as one for improvement.
- 5.205 The development of those strands where there is evaluation evidence is discussed below, followed by a summary of areas of improvement.

### *Building Employability Pathways*

- 5.206 The Building Employability Pathways work package was developed by West London Working's staff and the Building Employability Pathways Project Board, who included members from the (then) Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus.
- 5.207 Previous initiatives at integration of employment and skills in Adult and Further Education colleges were examined in order to see how Building Employability Pathways could build upon this work and learn lessons from it. These plans were then fed through to the Implementation Group.

### *Work Focused ESOL for Parents*

- 5.208 Providers saw that the development of this work took into account the nature of local labour markets, when developing ESOL programmes for the targeted hard-to-reach groups. Consequently, the key employment sectors that were targeted were: health and social care, childcare, security, hospitality and catering, retail, customer service and cleaning.

### *Employability Performance Rating System*

- 5.209 All interviewees on the Performance Rating System were very impressed by the Performance Rating's development process. Interviewees praised West London Working and KPMG staff.
- 5.210 West London Working and KPMG staff ran tight meetings with well defined and clearly articulated aims; they involved a range of stakeholders, and listened carefully to their ideas; and explained options and alternatives. The different underlying conceptual approaches to performance rating, such as the relative merits of absolute and comparative performance measures, were discussed thoroughly. The development meetings were seen as "a good use of time"; more than one participant has said that the meetings were enjoyable. Another said that both West London Working and KPMG staff were "genuinely interested in what other people knew, keen to learn and to think about other systems".

### *What could have been improved during the development?*

- 5.211 There were some cases where initial development stages of work could have been improved. These were in relation to the involvement of key partners and stakeholders in the development process and timely contracting at the outset of work.
- 5.212 In Building Employability Pathways both West London Working staff and large learning providers felt that the large learning providers could have been engaged earlier in the development in order both to inform the project design as well as to build relationships.
- 5.213 The evaluation of the Performance Rating system suggested that if the rating system had come to fruition sooner – perhaps through an accelerated development process – then some of the benefits of the Performance Rating system may have been more apparent.
- 5.214 Interviewees on the Performance Rating system believed that whilst the development process took a long time, and could possibly have been condensed, this would have needed either a) more intensive input time from project providers and West London Working, which many would have found difficult to provide, or b) lower quality consultation with users.
- 5.215 In retrospect, it may have been worth accelerating the development process in order to get the Performance Rating system into place however this may have damaged the successful collaborative approach of the project.

### *Was the programme well run and managed?*

- 5.216 Overall the programme was well managed and there are examples of this across the strands of work carried out by West London Working. The project management of each strand of work is discussed in turn below, highlighting examples of what worked well and any areas for improvement.

#### *Building Employability Pathways*

- 5.217 Large learning providers reported that their interactions with West London Working staff were helpful and supportive. They valued the support that was available from the consultants, though they sometimes felt that there was a lack of clarity about the objectives of this support.
- 5.218 One common criticism was that the information provided at the start of the project was unclear. Involving large learning providers at an earlier stage of development could have improved this.
- 5.219 Some large learning providers felt that the administration required by contract managers was onerous given the amount of funding (£12,000) that they received.

#### *Personal Advice and Outreach Programme*

- 5.220 Managing and coordinating the six unique projects operating in the six boroughs was complex, and diverse nature of the projects meant that the management of them was fairly time consuming.
- 5.221 Overall, managers of projects felt that the West London Working team provided good support, and that advice and guidance offered to them throughout the duration of the

projects has been good. However, some felt that the monitoring requirements could be intimidating and this was especially true for this project because of its failure to meet its target outputs.

#### *Provider Confederation*

- 5.222 The evaluation of this strand suggests that ‘the slim non-bureaucratic management style of the Confederation was seen as a plus’. The semi-formal nature of the management team was also seen as a positive aspect of the project management of this.

#### *Business Partner Programme*

- 5.223 West London Working management expressed some concern that time was lost early in the programme, and mentoring did not start until June 2010 – six months into the designed 12-month programme. Previous proposals from potential contractors were deemed unsuitable.
- 5.224 The programme participants were positive about the way the programme was managed with 95% indicating that it was either run ‘well or expertly’.

#### *Employability Performance Rating System*

- 5.225 The development process and running of development meetings were examples of good project management for this strand of work with positive feedback on West London Working and KPMG staff involved in these.

#### *Directory of Employment Services*

- 5.226 Development activities were an example of good project management. The inclusive development process resulted in the user group’s requirements being met. The Directory was marketed to ensure its use and continued awareness amongst its target group. Enhancements were made in response to user feedback. This willingness to listen to users and adjust the Directory accordingly is good management practice.
- 5.227 A suggested area of improvement for the Directory was in relation to monitoring the project’s objectives. In particular, one of the agreed outputs, the number of registered organisations, was not monitored consistently.

#### *Work Focused ESOL for Parents*

- 5.228 Some contracts between the (then) Learning and Skills Council and providers were finalised later than planned, and in some cases, this meant that they were not able to start delivering programmes until late 2009. There was a perception amongst providers that in cases where this happened, delays significantly impacted upon their abilities to meet project targets.

#### *Effectiveness of West London Working’s governance structures*

- 5.229 The 2008 evaluation of WLW noted some confusion over its Governance structures. These were reformed to address this issue and this helped delineate the strategic role of the Board and take it away from the detail of delivery. In order to support this, the Board also moved to meeting less frequently on a quarterly basis.

- 5.230 The three key parts of WLW's governance structure, the Board, the Investment and Target Group, and the Implementation Group all have distinct roles. The Board's remit is to drive WLW's strategy and the reforms noted above, together with a move less frequent quarterly meetings, helped deliver this. The Investment and Target Group's role is to influence and coordinate investment in employment and skills in West London and screen West London Working's direct funding investment decisions before they reach the Board for approval. Its recommendations to the Board were usually accepted, but this was not simply a rubber stamping process as the Board asked questions and scrutinised recommendations put to it. The Implementation Group was involved in overseeing and monitoring progress on implementing West London Working's Strategy. However there remains some confusion about the relationship between the Investment & Target Group and the Implementation Group, as both appear to be involved in commenting on proposals and making representations to the Board. In addition, some members of the Board were unclear as to the functions of these two groups with one commenting they could not remember seeing minutes of any meetings of these two groups and that they had interacted with the WLW programme management team rather than either of these two groups.
- 5.231 The mixed public – private composition of the Board was an advantage providing it with a wide perspective and our interviews did not suggest any obvious missing constituency. The Board itself however suggested that they had not managed to achieve representation from or sufficient links with the Health sector, which would have helped them to try and assist the large numbers of workless individuals on long term sickness or disability related benefits. The Board was unusual in having such high profile businesspeople involved. This gave the Board considerable clout to break through logjams and get things done, for example, it had worked with Jobcentre Plus about improving some of its ways of working so that they would better meet the employers' needs.
- 5.232 A number of people we interviewed believed that the Board could have achieved more if it had more borough level engagement. It was noted that borough representatives had not attended Board meetings very frequently and this in part had led to the boroughs being represented indirectly by the West London Alliance. Also, the lack of communication between the Board and relevant parts of the six boroughs' organisations was noted.
- 5.233 Finally, with regard to the Board the importance of the leadership provided by the chair of the board was noted by a substantial number of the people we interviewed. This demonstrated the importance of individual leadership for an initiative such as West London Working to be successful combining a strength of purpose with knowledge of the issues so that the leadership direct West London Working in an appropriate direction.
- 5.234 The role of the Implementation Group was initially greeted with a degree of scepticism by some of the borough representatives we interviewed. They saw it as something designed to keep them quiet, and consequently did not engage with it fully, which in turn led to a lack of influence on what boroughs were themselves doing. However this situation did improve over time with a shift in the view held by some boroughs towards seeing the Implementation Group as having a real purpose in terms of reviewing progress which then more recently helped to encourage closer joint working.

## Net Impacts

### *What additionality has been achieved by WLW?*

- 5.235 None of the evaluations of the projects supported by West London Working attempted to quantitatively assess the extent to which the outputs and outcomes they generated were additional or would have occurred anyway. Hence we assess the overall additionality of West London Working qualitatively by comparison against other areas. In order to assess this we interviewed representatives of two sub-regions in London which do not have a City Strategy Pathfinder (CSP), North and South London, and the representatives of two other CSPs, Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire.
- 5.236 Having a City Strategy Pathfinder (CSP) has given West London the advantage of being able to develop activities of benefit to the sub-region. As one interviewee said:
- “Other sub regions have done some of this work [attempting to coordinate activity across the sub-region] to a degree, but west London have had the added value of being so much more advanced in that respect. They have had the ear of DWP a bit, so they are in a slightly better position than some of the other sub regions who didn't have it.”*
- 5.237 One of the areas of London without a CSP had very few sub-regional employment and skills projects, and they ascribed the fact that West London had more programmes at this geography to the mechanism that the CSP provided to deliver ongoing sub-regional activity. The existing sub-regional partnership in their area did not provide a substitute for a CSP because employment and skills were not the main focus of the partnership.
- 5.238 There was a contrast with the other sub-region of London, which possibly indicated less additionality. It had not had a CSP but it had had the experience of joint working across the sub-region as a result of an earlier alternative sub-regional economic development policy being operated in the area. Hence the catalyst for working across the sub-region provided by the CSP in West London had been obtained in another way.
- 5.239 It is difficult to conclude whether or not West London Working performed better or worse than other CSPs. The two CSPs we interviewed had similar general approaches, noting that in the absence of significant sums of new money they had focused on trying to coordinate existing spending and influencing what was happening locally. The difficulties thrown up by engaging with local authorities in West London noted above also existed in one of the other CSPs and this was despite a long tradition in this city region of Local Authorities seeking to work together and having some city region wide public institutions. The representative of this city region noted that engagement with Local Authorities was challenging, you had to decide what battles to pick and that councils wanted to do what they wanted with the available funding, rather than completely buy into city region wide priorities.
- 5.240 Finally, one larger contractor with experience of working with several CSPs commented on West London Working in comparison with these. In this person's view what stood out about WLW was that it had a set of clearly defined objectives and a clear statement of how it intended to go about meeting them. They also felt that it had effectively built up sub-regional relationships and so was strong on partnership / joint working but that

commissioning had been done better elsewhere. Thus overall WLW and other CSPs were different but it was difficult to say who had been better.

- 5.241 The national evaluation of the CSPs attempted to assess their additional impact via regression analysis<sup>4</sup>. The CSPs were designed to accelerate exits from benefits and entry to employment by increasing the effectiveness of employment and skills policies for workless people within the areas they covered. If successful, CSPs including West London Working could be expected to have a positive impact on the propensity of individuals to stop claiming benefits and entries to employment. One method of assessing the impact of CSPs is, therefore, to examine exits from receipt of benefits for evidence of an increase following the establishment of CSPs in April 2007. Hence regression analysis was performed to model firstly off flow rates from Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) and secondly movements from JSA into work in the 15 areas covered by a CSP.
- 5.242 The results of these two sets of regressions did not provide completely definitive evidence of an additional CSP impact. For the first series of regressions, the presence of a CSP from April 2007 in an area was found to have a positive and statistically significant impact for the majority of the CSPs, including West London Working. Although this might suggest a positive CSP impact, a positive post-April 2007 impact was also observed in the combined comparator area used by the national evaluation, which was not covered by a CSP. Although this impact in the non-CSP area was less statistically significant than in most of the CSP areas, including West London.
- 5.243 For the second series of regressions the presence of a CSP in West London was found to be negative, but not statistically significantly so, indicating that since the start of West London Working, flows from JSA to employment had actually decreased. Again, this relationship was observed in the comparator area which did not contain a CSP, but here the negative impact was statistically significantly negative. At best these results suggest a stronger positive impact for West London Working compared to areas without a CSP in the case of simple movements off JSA and a less negative impact in the case of off movements from JSA into work.
- 5.244 Overall however the national evaluation concludes that: "It is questionable whether any effect [of CSPs] would be detectable, given that ... [the policy] does not seek to engage with all of the JSA clients in the area. Furthermore, since the same effects were also observed in the comparison area, this suggests that there may be a time series effect occurring in both the CSPs and the comparator area, which was not adequately accounted for by the specification of the model."

### ***Was there any duplication of provision?***

- 5.245 Evaluations of Building Employability Pathways, the Business Partner programme and the Employability Performance Rating system suggest that these strands of work did not

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<sup>4</sup> Regression analysis attempts to statistically model the relationship between one variable and the factors that may affect the values of this variable.

duplicate existing provision in West London. There was however a degree of duplication within West London Working strands of work, rather than between strands of work. In particular this can be said of the early stages of outreach activities, and to some extent in the activities of the four providers commissioned to deliver work-focused ESOL in West London. Duplication of provision for each strand of work is discussed in turn below.

#### *Building Employability Pathways*

- 5.246 It does not appear that there was any duplication of provision resulting from the Pathways for Parents Pilot. The relatively small amount of funding that each large learning provider received meant that they could not begin new activities that would potentially duplicate existing provision, but instead had to build upon what they were already doing. In addition, the work from Cambridge Policy Consultants in helping the large learning providers to identify their employability baseline and areas in which their employability offer was lacking led the large learning providers to focus their activity in areas that did not duplicate provision.

#### *Employability Performance Rating system*

- 5.247 The evaluation of this system noted that the West London Working Performance Rating system was not intended to replace the existing similar DWP or Skills Funding Agency (SFA) systems, or to compete with them. Instead, it intended to fill the “gap in the market” between the DWP Star Rating and SFA Framework for Excellence systems to create a product that could be used by. Rather than duplicate these systems the Performance Rating system built on the Star Rating system and tailored it to be used by Councils, ESF projects, and sub-regional partnerships for sub-contracting.
- 5.248 The existence of both of these rating systems was known at the start of the Performance Rating development process which helped to avoid duplication. For example, consultants appointed were partly chosen on the basis of their participation in the development of the LSC/SFA Framework for Excellence. Both West London Working and the chosen consultants were also aware of the DWP Star Rating system which was under development at the time of project inception, and its Australian forerunner.

#### *Personal Advice and Outreach Programme*

- 5.249 The programme sought to avoid duplicating existing provision and instead refer clients onto other services. However, many projects failed to achieve this in the early stages of the programme. While some projects started to work more collaboratively as the programme progressed, some duplication remained. In the interim evaluation of the programme, some Personal Advisors were negative about the quality of some other agencies’ services and felt they were not suitable for their clients. This sentiment came up again from some Personal Advisors and managers when interviewed for the final evaluation of the programme.

#### *Work Focused ESOL for Parents*

- 5.250 ESOL provision is wide spread and its importance is reflected in national policy. Therefore by its nature any ESOL provision is likely to duplicate that provided by Jobcentre Plus or by learning providers and further education colleges. However, in this pilot it was noted that

demand had outstripped supply and the ESOL provision was 'work-focused ESOL' therefore potentially minimising duplication with existing provision in West London. Furthermore, the providers as part of this pilot targeted community locations such as schools and children's centres, rather than Jobcentre Plus offices, limiting the duplication of referrals by Jobcentre Plus staff.

### How satisfied are stakeholders with West London Working?

- 5.251 The stakeholders we interviewed as part of this evaluation generally expressed positive views about West London Working. In particular, the most commonly mentioned benefit identified by stakeholders was the building of relationships between key organisations such as the LDA, Jobcentre Plus etc. with local providers and local authorities. This was identified as something which had not happened before in West London. The existing West London Alliance had brought the six local authorities together but not the wider set of organisations which were engaged via WLW. This building of relationships was seen as having helped to increase coordination of employment activities which should stand West London in good stead for the move to the new Work Programme. As one interviewee said:

*"There's much greater awareness of opportunities, organisations in West London coming together, some of the smaller providers in West London having a better awareness of opportunities to work with prime contractors and knowing how to promote themselves ..."*

- 5.252 The pro-activeness of West London Working was also frequently mentioned by interviewees. It was noted that WLW was not simply 'a talking shop' and that it had produced tangible outcomes and activities that have the potential to be taken forward and not just 'strategies'. A typical quote from our interviews was:

*"They've achieved quite a lot as they focused on quite practical things... Given that there wasn't a huge amount of external funding in West London, that probably helped in not getting too concerned with existing money"*

- 5.253 The advantage of having West London Working as a single voice for West London was also noted in particular with regard to influencing contracts for services delivered in the sub-region and in terms of more generally advocating (with evidence) the particular needs of West London.

- 5.254 Some criticisms were also made. Chief amongst these was the issue of borough engagement in West London Working. The 2008 evaluation noted that support for WLW amongst the boroughs was waning perhaps due to a lack of evidence of tangible benefits at borough level. There was very widespread acceptance that WLW could have achieved more with greater buy in from the six Local Authorities. However there was a mix of views as to the root of this problem from one borough representative saying they were not given "enough say" in what WLW decided to do and "were not listened to" to the view that the borough themselves had disengaged at an early stage with another borough representative saying:

*"We didn't set off with the right frame of mind on it [West London Working]" and that "To some extent we sat back and let it happen because we just*

*wanted to focus on what we were doing in our borough and delivering, and we knew that there was no way that we were going to get any money to do what we wanted to do."*

5.255 It appears that boroughs did not at the start of the process buy into the WLW strategy of trying to build something for the longer term, instead appearing to want a focus on immediate employment opportunities and building relationships with employers. The national evaluation of CSPs in 2010 notes that *"concerns have been expressed in London about the role of the London Development Agency (LDA) which could be seen as driving the London CSPs to an agenda that was not derived from within the local areas involved."*

5.256 The origins of West London Working did not help in this regard. The two London CSPs were not selected in the same way as those elsewhere. As noted in the national evaluation of CSPs, the London CSPs came into being as a result of a decision by central government rather than coming together as a result of organic development and cooperation amongst the local authorities it covered. The national evaluation noted that:

*"Whether leadership of a CSP partnership was 'rooted' in the local area or whether it has been 'imposed' has emerged as another important aspect of CSP leadership. In London, many partners felt that control lay outside the immediate local area, with the London Development Agency having been instrumental in the establishment of the two London CSPs. In West London, for example, it was felt, initially, that the CSP partnership had no real presence in the boroughs."*

(Green, Adam and Hasluck, 'Evaluation of Phase 1 City Strategy', Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report No. 639, March 2010, page 41).

5.257 In addition, the time limited status of WLW and the more general fluctuations in central government's interest in CSPs may account for some of the difficulties faced by WLW in securing borough engagement. Whatever the reason, the initial lack of borough engagement has reduced the degree of partnership working. It also creates a significant risk for the sustainability of the various projects and activities that WLW has developed, as post-March 2011 local authorities are the main players who could have taken WLW's legacy forward.

5.258 However progress appears to have been made over the lifetime of WLW as the same borough representative quoted above also said: "It [WLW] has brought the boroughs together much more strongly...we are able to have much more open conversations." Similarly the perception of an interviewee from a large welfare to work contractor was:

*"You go to other areas and you might find various authorities across a patch, none of whom do anything together at any time. So at least in West London when they had some of their larger events there were executives from most of the councils there. With the Work Programme you can visit all the Local Authorities together instead of having to visit them one by one, because of West London Working being able to bring them together. I think what it's done is begin a more joined up approach from the Local Authorities."*

- 5.259 Another concern raised by a significant minority of respondents was that WLW had been too concerned with developing 'infrastructure' and being strategic and had as a consequence not maximised the benefits for local residents of economic opportunities in the West London area – i.e. maximising the recruitment of local residents to local jobs.

## Concluding Remarks

- 5.260 The overarching rationale for West London Working posited that a local partnership tailoring local employment and skills services could effectively address particular local needs and so meet both social (reducing worklessness and associated child poverty) and economic (meeting the recruitment needs of local employers) objectives.
- 5.261 Certainly as noted in this chapter comparing West London with other London sub-regions having a CSP is seen as bringing benefits to a sub-region especially in terms of acting as a catalyst to create linkages in the area which would otherwise not exist leading to a better coordination of employment and skills services, and in terms of providing a recognised voice able to articulate the employment and skills needs of the whole of West London.
- 5.262 In addition, WLW's localist approach has had its benefits. The Investment & Target Group has managed to influence investment in West London. The Employability Performance Rating has significant potential to help drive up the quality and effectiveness of employment and skills provision in West London (and beyond) if used widely in future.
- 5.263 The Confederation's role in providing a means of networking to build relationships with other providers, share best practice, and obtain information about, for example, new programmes, and opportunities was identified as something which had had a significant capacity building effect on employment and skills providers.
- 5.264 While the small amount of money invested in support of the Building Employability Pathways has helped to implant the issue of employability into the normal day to day operations of the FE colleges and adult education institutes which was expected to have a longer term positive impact on learners' chances of obtaining work subsequent to the end of their courses.
- 5.265 The impact has also had its limits. The Investment & Target Group has not been successful at pooling funding. This is due to a number of reasons including the fact that regional and national funders have priorities which can trump sub-regional objectives. They also have their own commissioning processes which tend to be inflexible and on different timescales.
- 5.266 The Employability Performance Rating system has been developed but at the time of reporting has had limited actual usage (72 grants will be performance rated in 2010/11). Thus its impact to date is limited despite its potential.
- 5.267 Part of the rationale for the Business Partner Programme was to create better links between employment and skills providers and local employers in order to make providers more attuned to employer need. The fact that the majority of mentors were drawn from specialist training and development firms, rather than mainstream businesses, probably limited this impact.

5.268 Both the outreach and ESOL projects had targets with respect to participants obtaining sustained work. By the end of the project, the ESOL project was just under its targets, while the Personal Advice and Outreach projects remained well below target.

## 6 EVALUATING THE STRATEGIC ADDED VALUE ACHIEVED

### Introduction

- 6.1 In this section, we examine the extent to which Strategic Added Value (SAV) has been delivered by the programme.
- 6.2 SAV is a category of outcome which was devised specifically with regard to the activities of the Regional Development Agencies. Whilst RDAs are winding down their activities as a result of the Coalition Government's decision to abolish them by March 2012, the concept of Strategic Added Value is still worth exploring in this evaluation, for two reasons: firstly, delivering SAV was an objective of a programme at the time it was commissioned, and so it should be evaluated if we are to judge the success of the programme; and secondly, the ideas that constitute SAV remain relevant, both to future economic development structures which may be adopted in London, and to similar programmes which might be commissioned elsewhere in the country in future.

### What is Strategic Added Value (SAV)?

- 6.3 SAV relates to how WLW used its influencing and lobbying roles to generate positive economic outputs for the region. This recognises that the contribution of City Strategy Pathfinders can come through not just their direct work package and programme expenditure, but also through their influence on partners and stakeholders' behaviour and performance.
- 6.4 Strategic Added Value (SAV) has been defined as the "non work package activities that do not produce traditional outputs" such as the 'catalytic' and 'influencing' role of RDAs. The DTI, now BIS, makes clear that SAV must be understood and evaluated by RDAs.
- 6.5 We evaluate the Strategic Added Value from WLW's activities along the five categories identified in Government guidance<sup>5</sup>: strategic leadership, strategic influence, leverage, synergy and engagement. For the four project evaluations undertaken by RTP / Inclusion we drew this largely from our interviews conducted as part of these evaluations. For the other project evaluations which we reviewed this information was drawn from the relevant evaluation reports. Below we assess the impact of West London Working under these five headings.

### *Strategic leadership & catalyst*

- 6.6 Leadership is defined in Government guidance as: 'articulating and communicating regional development needs, opportunities and solutions to partners and stakeholders in the region and elsewhere'.

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<sup>5</sup> DTI, Evaluating the impact of England's RDA: Developing a methodology and evaluation framework, February 2006

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- 6.7 The Investment and Target Group helped strengthen WLW's leadership role by enabling a dialogue with national and regional funders and communicating the needs of West London to them.
  - 6.8 WLW successfully identified sub-regional needs related to better provision of information on employment & skills services. The Directory of Employability Services helped better understand the current provision. It also identified the needs of providers in terms of information through the focus groups ran by WLW and Experian. Thus it showed leadership in devising a product which was new and based on users' needs.
  - 6.9 Stakeholders felt that, with the Employability Performance Rating project, WLW had evidenced an understanding (and had actively sought to understand) commissioning and performance management issues. One stakeholder interviewee stated that "it was clear that there was a raft of public organisations getting money without any quality monitoring. This was trying to plug that gap. It is a tool that can commission new interventions and benchmark themselves against one another". One Prime saw this as one of the main benefits of their work with the Performance Rating development group - they were able to communicate to smaller organisations how they contracted, and better understand the challenges of working with the third sector.

### **Strategic influence**

- 6.10 According to the Government guidance, strategic influence comes about when a project or programme helps to carry out or stimulate 'activity that defines the distinctive roles of partners, gets them to commit to shared strategic objectives and to behave and allocate their funds accordingly'.
- 6.11 This is the very core of the Investment and Target Group's purpose. It was successful in influencing major funders' investment decisions. However, it was not able to achieve the pooling of funding across organisations, which was always going to be a very demanding ambition. To achieve significant pooling of resources would have required greater flexibilities from regional and national organisations which is clearly beyond West London Working's ability to deliver.
- 6.12 The Directory was directly commissioned by WLW on behalf of the implementation group and the Board. As such it succeeded in getting members and their organisations to agree to the shared objective of improving information on employment and skills provision in West London. It can claim also significant strategic influence through its ability to raise interest from ESF co financiers and their commitment to take it on and sustain it beyond the end of WLW in March 2011.
- 6.13 For some of the FE Colleges / Adult Education Institutes involved, the employability services given to learners that had been driven by Building Employability Pathways have been incorporated into high level strategic objectives to raise the profile of improving the employment prospects of learners throughout the college. This ensures that the issue was raised regularly, and to check that work was progressing in line with targets on employability. For one provider, employability was already part of their Operational Plan, but the Building Employability Pathways had served to further embed its importance.

- 6.14 For work focused ESOL there was some concern around shared objectives. There was a lack of clarity about whether the main focus of the Pilot was on the ‘learner journey’ or employment outcomes, and there was some difference of opinion among stakeholders themselves as to whether Jobcentre Plus customers should have been a key target group for the Pilot. In practice, providers who already had established relationships with Jobcentre Plus were able to make use of these for referrals. Other providers did not have these links or felt that they received inappropriate referrals from Jobcentre Plus.
- 6.15 Interviewees noted that a wide range of partners and providers came together to help shape the Employability Performance Rating system during the development process. However, one interviewee felt that this work did not involve partners committing to *alter* their strategic objectives – it was simply a case of encouraging joint action from partners with objectives that were already aligned.

### **Leverage**

- 6.16 Leverage from public intervention is defined by Government guidance as ‘providing financial and other incentives to mobilise partner and stakeholder resources – equipment, people as well as funding’.
- 6.17 The Investment and Target Group helped in bringing £5.9m of funding to West London.
- 6.18 One of the Further Education Colleges involved in the Building Employability Pathways was able to attract in a small amount of additional funding from their local authority for a small number of learners to undertake a 4 year BTEC Travel and Tourism course.
- 6.19 The Outreach project achieved considerable leverage. A total of £1,024,500 was levered in from other sources. Brent received funding of £500,000 from the South Kilburn NDC for the provision of advice and guidance. Ealing received £19,500 in kind funding from Ealing Council, ESL Forum and JCP. Hammersmith and Fulham received £110,000 from a homelessness grant. Harrow received £263,000 from ESF and Section 106 contributions. Hillingdon received £92,000 from Section 106 contributions. Hounslow received £40,000 in kind from LB Hounslow. The provision of match-funding increased a sense of ownership of the project within the Local Authority which in some cases helped to increase sustainability.
- 6.20 The Employability Performance Rating system levered in considerable time from a wide range of partners in its development but did not directly lever in additional finance.

### **Synergy**

- 6.21 Synergy according to Government guidance means ‘using organisational capacity, knowledge and expertise to improve information exchange and knowledge transfer and coordination and/or integration of the design and delivery of interventions between partners’.
- 6.22 Information exchange and knowledge transfer were key objectives of the Provider Confederation. It encouraged joint working, networking and the exchange of best practice information. The Confederation is highly regarded by those who have participated in its activities due to these significant synergy impacts.

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- 6.23 Synergy from the Investment and Target Group was limited within the timeframe of the project, the impact on duplication and customer journey would have been limited to a few individual projects. It may have occurred more substantially given time if relevant organisations had moved to increasing levels of cooperation which was a central aim of the Investment and Target Group.
  - 6.24 Similarly, the synergy impacts from the Directory have so far been limited. The results from the Interim Evaluation’s survey show that respondents use it as an additional source of information rather than as a replacement to others and that only around a quarter said it had improved their referrals. While it may have helped to reduce duplication in the longer-term, there is no evidence that it has achieved this within the time frame of the project.
  - 6.25 The Building Employability Pathways pilot was able to pull together the employability support and activities that were already available in the FE Colleges / Adult Education Institutes and to begin to address any gaps in these. The pilot also connected the colleges / institutes to providers of job brokerage and employment services, leading to improved coordination of these services for many learners.
  - 6.26 The Personal Advice and Outreach Programme helped to provide practical examples of building partnerships between a range of agencies and providers, local authorities and the private and voluntary sectors in helping more people move towards the labour market.
  - 6.27 Similarly, partnership working was seen as a distinct feature of the ESOL pilot and the way that it operated. Most of the providers were working together with other organisations to deliver the pilot outcomes.
  - 6.28 Interviewees thought that the Employability Performance Rating system had significant synergy impacts. One interviewee felt that these synergy benefits “will increase as it runs more widely with London Councils and NOMS. The system has already helped the procurement process on ESF Youth – easy to find people to talk to, and we know more about people in the LSC.[these benefits] will only increase as it gets used”.

### **Engagement**

- 6.29 The Government guidance defines enhancement as: ‘setting up the mechanisms and incentives for more effective and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in the design and delivery of regional and sub-regional priorities and programmes’.
- 6.30 The Investment and Target Group’s activity helped articulate the needs of West London Working and communicate them to the LDA.
- 6.31 There were few instances of true cross-borough working in the Outreach project, as those involved have generally been interested in delivering their projects and not on working across borough boundaries. The main forum for cross-borough exchange has been through workshops for personal advisors, however attendance was low.
- 6.32 There was some evidence that the Employability Performance Rating system had the potential to create scale economies in the commissioning process with one interviewee saying, “especially if used through the new Work Programme. But it hasn’t happened yet”.

### ***SAV conclusions***

- 6.33 Our assessment is that based on the above evidence, West London Working overall had significant SAV impacts on the matters of strategic leadership and influence, and synergy. It also levered in close to £7 million of funds, roughly double the amount of programme expenditure on West London Working.

## 7 EVALUATING VALUE FOR MONEY

### Introduction

- 7.1 In this section, we evaluate the extent to which the programme represented value for money.
- 7.2 We provide some initial comments covering the issues for the assessment of value for money of West London Working as a whole, followed by separate assessments for each project where the evaluations covered this issue. Where they did not assess value for money, we report on this. Finally, we conclude with such assessment as we are able to make of the value for money of West London Working as a whole.
- 7.3 West London Working operated at a strategic level, aiming to change the priorities of the employment and skills provider infrastructure in West London. It ran a number of change management projects and information resources that were designed to support the information needs of the infrastructure through the desired changes.
- 7.4 Some of West London Working's spending was on 'product' development that was intended to have a life well beyond the funded life of West London Working itself. This includes the Employability Performance Rating system, the Directory of Employment Services and the toolkit prepared as part of the Business Partner Programme. The value for money of these items needed to be assessed in terms of their future use as well as their use within the West London Working funded period. However, future use may have been impacted by Government decisions after the 2010 General Election, such as the abolition of the London Development Agency (and the other RDAs) and the change in focus of the Skills Funding Agency.
- 7.5 West London Working operated from 2007 to 2011. One extremely relevant factor to the assessment of value for money of organisations in the employment field is how the impact was affected by changes in the underlying labour market. The labour market nationally started turning down in spring 2008, and by September 2008 Jobcentre Plus was recording annual falls in its job outcome proportions in London. These falls were large. Our analysis of Jobcentre Plus' job outcome figures shows an annual fall in the job outcome rate of 29% for long-term unemployed people in London, and falls of 20-23% for lone parents and people with health conditions, at the same time. Recovery started at the very end of 2009, but had not fully retraced the numbers or proportions of job outcomes achieved pre-recession.
- 7.6 In the context of the recession taking place in the UK, and West London's particular reliance on the success of Heathrow airport, it would not be surprising that objectives for job outcomes that were set in 2007 might not be achieved.
- 7.7 Employment provision is, to a degree, counter-cyclical. The numbers expand in recessions and reduce in recoveries due to the state of the economy, and success rates of securing job outcomes follow the same pattern. Therefore, the costs per job outcome are likely to be very much higher in a recession period than in a recovery or in a boom.

- 7.8 For evaluation, we would ideally have a control area that was not a City Strategy area and test the spending per outcome in both West London Working and the control area. This sort of analysis is rather the function of the overall City Strategies evaluation rather than an evaluation of a single City Strategy.
- 7.9 We also need to assess the value for money of the change management strategy performed by West London Working, when central Government has decided not to pursue the idea further at this stage. The change management may have a legacy in changed behaviours of parts of the West London employment and skills infrastructure, but the assessment of value for money of such a programme that does not have outcomes reported to West London Working is profoundly challenging.

## **Did the programme represent value for money?**

### ***Building Employability Pathways***

- 7.10 The 'seed corn' money that was afforded to the large learning providers was fairly modest at £12,500 per institution. For most of the Large Learning Providers funded, it seemed that they had understood that the money was not designed to fully fund the initiative as a discrete project but rather that the funding was intended to spark and encourage further development of employability activity and referral pathways.
- 7.11 In large learning providers where the 'catalyst effect' was evident, the injection of a small sum of money has had, and will hopefully continue to have positive and long term effects on the importance placed on employability. In these cases, Building Employability Pathways has clearly represented good value for money.

### ***Personal Advice and Outreach Programme***

- 7.12 Value for money in the evaluation report was only calculated on grant award funding. Costs per resident supported, and supported into work are calculated for each local authority. When averaged, it cost £1,320 to provide support to a resident, and £5,446 into work on this project as a whole. This level of cost per job is one that is close to those accepted as realistic by the London Development Agency in its employment programmes, which are also aimed at supporting people who have low levels of access to Jobcentre Plus support or have previously been less likely to benefit from Jobcentre Plus programmes. The level of cost per job is, however, substantially higher than that deemed by DWP as an appropriate unit cost, on average.
- 7.13 In terms of delivery, therefore, the value for money of the Personal Advice and Outreach project was lower than Jobcentre Plus programmes, but comparable to LDA programmes. Outreach is normally seen as a high-cost activity so the cost per resident into work should be seen as part of a process of moving such activities towards a lower cost per outcome base.
- 7.14 As a value for money estimate, we assess the outreach project as contributing positively to the change process rather than securing a high value for money itself.

### **Provider Confederation**

- 7.15 In the evaluation of the Confederation, the cost of writing and administering e-bulletins delivered to the membership is seen as acceptable and the cost of Confederation events per delegate is considered to represent good value for money given the level of activity involved. The use of community venues for all events apart from the initial workshop and annual meeting has ensured that a large proportion of the total cost was invested in the local community.
- 7.16 The Confederation aimed to spend a small amount of money to set up methods of sharing good practice between employment providers in West London. The meetings were provided in low-cost, community venues. This reduced costs and improved value for money.
- 7.17 One danger with initiatives of this type is that providers may collude about the pricing and construction of bids as well as exchanging good practice in service delivery. We have had no evidence to suggest that the Confederation generated such effects, and therefore conclude that it did provide value for money.

### **Employability Performance Rating system**

- 7.18 No quantitative evaluation of value for money is possible for the Employability Performance Rating, as there is no quantitative output data to compare against cost and spending information. Hence we assess value for money more qualitatively.
- 7.19 Expenditure on this project amounted to £226,825 including VAT. Considerable amounts of WLW staff time were also spent on this project. This staff time is not included in the above figure.
- 7.20 It is too soon to say whether this project represents value for money. This is because the project has, at the time of writing, not yet been fully rolled out across a range of employment and skills provision. As a live (pilot) system, it has been used in the Gateway Heathrow 2012 LDA ESF project, with twelve LDA prime contracts (and an additional 32 subcontractors), and with London Council's ESF programme. Whilst there is evidence that further roll-out will take place (as we have detailed earlier, there is considerable buy-in to the concept of the Performance Rating system), any judgement on the value of the project depends entirely on whether the Performance Rating system is used widely. In 2011/12, the London Development Agency will be using the West London Working developed Performance Rating System to rate activity budgeted at £20m.
- 7.21 In short
- If the Performance Rating system is shelved the £226,825 spent on the project will prove to be very poor value for money.
  - If the Performance Rating system is widely adopted, and proves valuable in leveraging up the quality of provision and the quality of management decisions, then the scheme could prove to be good value. As one LDA interviewee stated, "the problem is that we spend a huge amount of time managing underperformance...if the system can fix that problem, [the Performance Rating system] will be worth its weight in gold."

## Directory of Employment Services

- 7.22 Because of the nature of the project, the evaluation report for this project concluded that it was not possible to estimate value for money in a meaningful way, as while the costs of the project are relatively low the benefits of the directory are very difficult to estimate quantitatively. Overall value for money will be linked to future use, which in turn requires maintenance and updating of the Directory so that it continues to be useful to Personal Advisers in West London.

## Investment and Target Group

- 7.23 The Investment and Target Group is essentially a change management project and as such does not produce standard, measurable outputs. This means that standard measures of value for money such as unit cost measures cannot be calculated. However, aside from the positive influencing role of the Investment and Target Group mentioned earlier, this spend of £124,801 should be placed in the context of the £5.9m of funding levered for sub-regional projects in West London, even if some of this funding would have been allocated to West London without the Investment & Target Group.

## Work Focused ESOL

- 7.24 The funding for this project included a proportion of output related funding based on sustained job outcomes. Therefore if the outputs were not achieved by a provider, this was not a cost to the project's funder, DWP. The payment information provided by West London Working related to contracts with providers, therefore, the Skills Funding Agency's management costs, as the accountable body, which were charged to DWP, are excluded.
- 7.25 On the basis of the available management information for the period up to March 2011 the gross cost per sustained job for the project was around £15,000 or the gross cost per start on an ESOL course was around £1,900. This figure for the gross cost per job is around double the benchmark that previous CESI research has suggested would be reasonable for hard to help groups in London. The cost per participant is higher than DWP is intending to pay for the Work Programme which, depending on job sustainment assumptions, could be as low as £1,100-£1,300, compared with the £1,900 cost per start. The payment per sustained job outcome is also higher than the Work Programme model, where the maximum payment is £13,720 for an ex-Incapacity Benefit claimant on Employment and Support Allowance securing work that is sustained for 27 months. Work Programme participants who are perhaps more comparable to the ESOL participants, the Jobseeker's Allowance Early Entry group, have a maximum payment due of £6,600 for work that is sustained for 22 months. These Work Programme comparisons are the maximum available, for a different, and more testing, definition of 'sustained job'. In comparison with previous similar projects, the Work Focused ESOL may be considered to have value for money, but not in comparison with the extremely testing, and as yet untried, Work Programme model.

## Business Partner Programme

- 7.26 The Business Partner Programme was provided for a total cost of £94,353. On the basis that the programme enabled 21 staff from 19 employability providers to take part, this equates to £3,824 per participant excluding VAT. It also funded the development of the pilot programme and the Business Partner Toolkit.
- 7.27 The cost that mentors charge private clients is between £80 and £120 per hour. Assuming a median charge of £100 per hour, the programme cost approximately the equivalent of 38 hours mentoring per participant (£3800/£100 = 38). Importantly, this excludes the additional training input, networking, mentor/mentee matching or preparation of the toolkit.
- 7.28 The evaluation of the Business Partner Programme assumes that a third of the overall cost was due to the actual mentoring, although the basis for this assumption is not set out by the evaluator. On this basis each participant might have cost the equivalent of approximately 13 hours. As each mentee was allocated six one hour sessions, this suggests rather poor value for money. However the evaluator of the programme itself notes that these “costs appear reasonable once preparation and writing up are included.”
- 7.29 We have been advised by West London Working that approximately 60% of the total cost of the Business Partner Programme was spent on the preparation of the toolkit and the model rather than in the organisation and delivery of the mentoring. This is roughly consistent with the proportion reported by the programme evaluators, and therefore supports the judgement in paragraph 7.28.
- 7.30 The overall value for money of the Business Partner Programme will depend to a considerable extent on whether the spending on the Toolkit results in its wide future use. We have no evidence as yet on the extent of take-up of this product outside West London Working.

## Overall assessment

- 7.31 West London Working identified a range of issues that it felt needed product development and change management through the employment and skills infrastructure rather than simply programme delivery. It prioritised its spending accordingly.
- 7.32 In this, they intended to lay the groundwork for a continuing set of changes to the activities of the infrastructure to focus more closely on securing employment outcomes than had been the case.
- 7.33 Where we have been able to judge the effectiveness of the product development and change management programmes, they seemed to be successful, but at high cost. It will be the case that such change management programmes can only be finally assessed for value for money after a considerably longer period than West London Working was given, and without the extraneous factor of a severe recession affecting measured outcomes.
- 7.34 The change management activities were beginning to bear fruit at the point that funding for West London Working finished. Therefore, at this stage, we cannot advise that they provided value for money, but it remains possible that they could have contributed to a more substantial improvement in later years.

7.35 We would make a similar judgement about the product development activities. The Employability Performance Rating system has been taken up outside West London Working, and has been recommended for use by Work Programme Prime Contractors by London stakeholders. The prime contractors may (or may not) decide to use it. There is therefore a risk that the product development may not bear fruit. The same applies, with less visibility to the other product development exercises.

If we look at the assessment of the eight WLW projects above we see that four are judged to have delivered value for money against one which is judged not to have done so. Hence on balance we might conclude that WLW has overall delivered value for money from its activities.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

8.1 In this section, we set out our overall conclusions from our evaluation.

### Has the programme overall achieved what it set out to?

8.2 West London Working adopted the following vision for what it wished to achieve:

*“Our vision is to transform the coherence and effectiveness of the existing structure of services in West London to deliver a sustainable increase in the number of local residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty.”*

(West London Working City Strategy Pathfinder, Business Plan, April 2007)

8.3 This vision has two parts. The first relates to improving services. The second relates to positive outcomes from so doing. Achieving increases in employment and reductions in child poverty have been completely blown off course by the overwhelming impact of the recession.

8.4 On the first of these there have been some notable positives. The Investment & Target Group has influenced allocation of European, national and regional funds in West London, helping to shape DWP and London ESF tender specifications to better reflect West London’s particular requirements. However, it only had limited ability to comment on specifications that were solely funded by the Skills Funding Agency or the London Development Agency where WLW had a direct interest in these, such as the Skills Funding Agency tender for Work Focused ESOL for Parents.

8.5 While the Investment & Target Group has managed to promote the case for investment in West London with individual funders, it has not been successful at pooling funding. A very factor behind this is that regional and national funders have their own priorities which can trump sub-regional objectives. They also have their own commissioning processes which tend to be inflexible and on different timescales. However for WLW to achieve significant traction on this issue would have required these regional and nationally organisations to change their overall policies which is not something a sub-regional organisation such as WLW can hope to achieve on its own.

8.6 The Employability Performance Rating system has significant potential to help drive up the quality and effectiveness of employment and skills provision in West London (and beyond) if used widely in future. It can help identify which organisations are providing effective services and support a movement of contracts towards such organisations enhancing the overall effectiveness of services provided to workless individuals. The Performance Rating could also assist Prime Contractors in the new Work Programme with the management of their sub-contractors by helping them to see how their sub-contractors are performing.

8.7 The Confederation’s role in providing a means of networking to build relationships with other providers, share best practice, and obtain information about, for example, new programmes, and opportunities was identified as something which had had a significant

capacity building effect on employment and skills providers. While the small amount of money invested in support of the Building Employability Partnerships has helped to implant the issue of employability into the normal day to day operations of the FE colleges and adult education institutes which was expected to have a longer term positive impact on learners' chances of obtaining work subsequent to the end of their courses.

- 8.8 Overall our judgment is that the vision for West London Working has been met in part. We conclude 'in part' because the vision was very ambitious and went beyond merely seeking to improve employment and skills services in West London and sought their transformation.

### What longer term impacts will West London Working have?

- 8.9 It is too early to be definite about the longer term impacts of West London Working. Funding for it stops at the end of March 2011, and these long term impacts rest on the extent to which various activities are taken forward by others.
- 8.10 Unfortunately, it appears that the influence of the Investment and Target Group on EU, national and regional funding decisions will largely be lost as a proposal for a West London Employment Commissioning Unit to take forward this work will in the current fiscal conditions not be taken forward by West London's six local authorities. Although, West London's six Local Authorities intend to work with the new prime contractors who will be delivering welfare to work services in West London from summer 2011.
- 8.11 As part of its "Asks of the prime contractors", West London Working has asked that they work closely with Local Authorities to ensure welfare to work services reach all local residents, provide training to maximise job opportunities from major West London developments, integrate their services with councils' front line services, and provide regular performance updates. In return, the Local Authorities have offered to; share information on key regeneration sites, advise on specialist local provision, broker access to employment opportunities within key regeneration sites, and to council and/or Local Strategic Partnership member organisations.
- 8.12 The Directory of Employment Services will be sustained at least until 2014. The West London Working's Directory has been by taken on with ESF funding. The Directory will be expanded to cover all of London's ESF funded employment related services for adults. However, there remains the issue of updating the information on non-ESF funded provision in West London. The GLA, LDA and London Skills and Employment Board have *requested* that Prime Contractors use, and update their supply chain entries on this new directory. However, with no contractual arrangements to support this and no infrastructure to keep track of providers and monitor their input, it is unlikely that the information will be consistently kept up to date.
- 8.13 There is also uncertainty surrounding whether or not the Employability Performance Rating system will be sustained into the long term. The new Work Programme represents a very significant change in the marketplace for employability services. The onus of programme management will now be placed on the Work Programme's Prime Contractors rather than public sector funders. It will be challenging to secure implementation by DWP Prime Contractors without DWP making this a contractual requirement, its use will be dependent on Prime Contractors responding to the requests from London government and the

Employment and Skills Board to use the rating, and that they see a business case for implementing it.

- 8.14 The evaluation of the Provider Confederation noted strong support that it should continue as it is seen as enabling joint working and improved service delivery in West London. Given the ending of WLW and the more general retrenchment in public spending, the potential lead role for sustaining the Confederation lies most obviously with the large Prime Contractors on the basis that they potentially stand to benefit from the impact on potential sub-contractors: the smaller, specialist providers in terms of driving up their performance.
- 8.15 A significant output of the Business Partner Programme was the preparation of a toolkit. The toolkit is designed to provide guidance on how to set out similar activities in the future and so has the potential to offer wider longer term benefits.
- 8.16 In some cases, the development of new outreach sources as part of the Personal Advice and Outreach programme has led to changes within the practice of organisations that could lead to longer term benefits. Some of the local authorities within this programme have had little experience of delivering this type of project and they have now started to link activities on worklessness with some of their other services.
- 8.17 The injection of a small sum of money via the Building Employability Pathways programme has had, and will hopefully continue to have positive and longer term effects on the importance placed on employability within the supported FE Colleges and Adult Education Institutes.
- 8.18 A potential longer term benefit of the Work Focused ESOL project has been the development of links between training providers and community organisations. Some providers stated that the project had enabled them to develop stronger relationships with BAME and other community-based organisations.

### **What were the programme's strengths and weaknesses?**

- 8.19 Perhaps the most significant benefit was the building of relationships between key organisations such as the LDA, Jobcentre Plus etc with local providers and local authorities. This was identified as something which had not happened before in West London. As couple of quotes from our interviews illustrate this point:

*"The programme will leave behind some discrete pieces of work ... but the links are the most important thing."*

*"It has established relationships that didn't exist before. That's very important."*

- 8.20 WLW also established a coherent set of activities which matched up against the challenges and objectives established by the Board, see paragraph 4.12 and the associated table in Chapter 4.
- 8.21 The benefit of West London Working providing a single voice for West London was also noted by a number of the people we interviewed in connection with this study. In particular, the ability to influence contracts for employment and skills services delivered in the sub-

region and more generally acting as an advocate (with evidence) of the particular needs of West London.

- 8.22 Another strength was the levering in of close to £7 million of additional funds, roughly double the amount of programme expenditure on West London Working.
- 8.23 A weakness was the degree of borough engagement in the programme. The 2008 evaluation already noted that support for WLW amongst the boroughs was waning perhaps in part due to a lack of evidence of tangible benefits at borough level. It appears that boroughs did not initially buy into the WLW strategy of trying to build something for the longer term, instead appearing to want more of a focus on immediate employment opportunities. In addition, the origins of the CSP in West London which did not come out of more organic co-operation between the six local authorities but was decided by central government, the time limited status of WLW and the more general fluctuations in central government's interest in CSPs may account for some of the difficulties faced by WLW in securing borough engagement. Whatever the reason, the lack of borough engagement has reduced the degree of partnership working. It also creates a significant risk for the sustainability of the various projects and activities that WLW has developed, as post-March 2011 local authorities could have been a way of taking forward WLW's legacy.
- 8.24 Another weakness was the length of time that activities took to get going. We noted for example in Chapter 5 that it took 15 months from the inception of the Sustained Employment Programme to receipt of grant to support it. This problem was not isolated with the Performance Rating System, Business Partner Programme and Building Employability Pathways all taking a long time to develop and get going. One board member expressed particular dissatisfaction with parts of the public sector (outside of the WLW programme management team) and said, "it took six months to do things that would take a week in the private sector".

### **Lessons from West London Working for future policy**

- 8.25 The overarching rationale for West London Working that services can be improved by having a body which seeks to take a local view and influence and tailor services to better meet local needs remains relevant.
- 8.26 As noted in the WLW Final Report, there is benefit in having a more localised, sub-regional approach. The Work Programme's Prime Contractors will be in a position to promote coherent welfare to work services tailored to local needs. Local Authorities will be seeking to develop direct relationships with these Prime Contractors. There should also be benefit from DWP and the Skills Funding Agency ensuring that Prime Contractors' delivery meets local needs.
- 8.27 However, in the main the new Government has decided to adopt a strategy rather different from that developed by the CSPs. The Work Programme will pay Prime Contractors by results and in particular their performance in helping people move into work. Thus the approach is to rely on these incentives as a way of effectively meeting local needs.
- 8.28 In addition, the Coalition Government has announced the establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These LEPs will in part take over the policy responsibilities of the

soon to be abolished Regional Development Agencies. The policy areas to be covered by LEPs include working with local business, Jobcentre Plus and learning providers to help local workless people into jobs but are also rather wider. The role that LEPs will play in tackling worklessness seems likely to be secondary or supporting to the lead role of the Work Programme.

- 8.29 A number of the elements of the approach that West London Working adopted remain relevant in the context of this approach. In particular, there will still be a requirement for Prime Contractors and others to have good information on what employment and skills services are available in West London in a similar fashion to the Directory of Employment Services. The capacity building that particularly smaller and more specialist providers can obtain from networking via the Provider Confederation remains highly relevant where Prime Contractors are seeking effective sub-contractors. As noted in the WLW Final Report, the Prime Contractors will need effective sub-contractors to help them reach the hard-to-help. However small sub-contractors can often lack the management and other internal procedures required to ensure that their delivery is consistently to high standards. Financial incentives should prove effective at helping to raise quality. But these can be usefully complemented by capacity building, training, and mentoring. Furthermore, a tool such as the Employability Performance Rating system appears potentially even more relevant in a system where Prime Contractors need to ensure that their sub-contractors are going to deliver effectively if it is not to endanger their own performance related payments from the Work Programme.
- 8.30 We have noted in this report that the policy development associated with various activities undertaken by West London Working took a long time. Given the time limited nature of West London Working this had the consequence of crowding out the time for delivery and in consequence a number of activities, for example the Employability Performance Rating system, appear not to have had the time to reach their full potential. West London Working in common with the other CSPs had only a short lifetime. Initially CSPs were planned to last just two years and eventually this was expanded to a four year lifetime. Even this four year term was too short a lifetime to both develop new approaches and have a reasonable period for implementation. It contrasts with the 10 year life of the New Deal for Communities, another area based policy albeit one with a wider regeneration and economic development remit. Neither the Work Programme nor LEPs are time limited, although the Work Programme has an initial five-year referral period (plus out of work and in-work support periods combined of up to four years).
- 8.31 West London Working has helped to develop new or stronger local partnerships which have value. The six local authorities are now working together in ways they did not before West London Working, and stakeholders recognise that they are able to deal jointly with the grouping rather than having to deal individually with six local authorities. The Provider Confederation in particular has brought providers together for networking and information exchange which has made them more aware of how they can productively work together for mutual benefit. In consequence West London appears better prepared for the new Work Programme with smaller providers potentially better placed to act as effective sub-contractors to the large Prime Contractors. The GLA and the London Skills and Employment Board have supported the establishment of provider networking organisations

in London's other sub-regions. A continuation of the Provider Confederation should also assist with another of the lessons noted by the WLW Final Report, by providing a forum where Prime Contractors can talk to each other, and to smaller more specialist providers who are their potential subcontractors. This communication will depend on information flows between organisations, and in this context publically available information from the Employability Performance Rating system should prove valuable.

- 8.32 West London Working, principally via its Investment and Target Group, was able to influence the detail of provision in West London but it was not able to deliver a pooling of resources or other greater integration of provision. However this was always a very big ask in the context of the prevailing degree of devolution offered by the CSP model. The regional and national organisations engaged with WLW were still subject to their own and differing priorities, targets, timescales and processes. These naturally tended to override the priorities of any one sub-regional area such as West London. Hence greater integration would have required a much deeper model of devolution than that provided by CSPs.
- 8.33 Local engagement is vital to maximise the success of locally specific policies. There is universal acceptance amongst those we interviewed that WLW could have achieved more with a greater degree of borough engagement. Given that the CSP in West London was determined by central government rather than resulting from a locally based bid more could have been done in the early stages of the programme to foster borough engagement.



## APPENDIX 1



## List of people interviewed

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Overall Programme Evaluation</b>	<b>Individual Work Package</b>
Sarah Wilkins	WLW		✓
Sara Clarke	WLW		✓
Joanne Hughes	WLW		✓
Jane Malbasa	DWP	✓	✓
Inder Matharu	Jobcentre Plus	✓	✓
Clare Arnold	Skills Funding Agency	✓	✓
Brendon Walsh	Ealing Council	✓	✓
Ian Nichol	West London Alliance	✓	✓
Stephen Evans	LDA	✓	✓
Joanne Francis & Gursharn Rait	LB Brent	✓	✓
Mike Clasper	WLW Chairman	✓	✓
Philippa Langton	Skills Funding Agency	✓	✓
Dave Skillen	DWP		✓
Shree Mandke	SFA	✓	✓
Yvonne Fullwood	KPMG		✓
Penny Allen	Young People Learning Agency		✓
Alex Kitchin Smith	LDA		✓
Andy Hirst	Cambridge Policy Consultants		✓
Jo Lawrence	College of North West London		✓
Meena Vaya	Brent Adult and Continuing Education Service		✓
Lorraine Collins	Uxbridge College		✓
Tricia Collis	Hillingdon Adult Education		✓
Diane Hines	Ealing Adult Education		✓
Stephanie Carr	West Thames College		✓
Jacqui Mace	Stanmore College		✓
Pat Carvaleo	Harrow College		✓
Imogen Hughes	LB Ealing	✓	✓
Claire Codling	LB Hounslow (previous LB Harrow)	✓	✓
Kim Dero	LB Hammersmith & Fulham	✓	✓
Helena Webster	LB Hillingdon	✓	✓
Mark Billington	LB Harrow (prev LDA, prev H&F)	✓	✓
Rita Chircop	London European Programme Management Unit	✓	✓
Ashley Steel	KPMG	✓	✓
Surinder Arora	Arora International	✓	
Robin Mills	Compass	✓	✓
Mike Forster	Forster Associates (formerly BAA)	✓	
Avis Charles	Avis Charles	✓	

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Overall Programme Evaluation</b>	<b>Individual Work Package</b>
	Associates		
Clare Scott Booth	West London Network	✓	✓
Kishore Shah	Duck and Cover Clothing	✓	
Rebecca Shepheard	Previous WLW Board Member for LDA	✓	
Jack Mills	LSEB Board Member	✓	
Keith Faulkner	LSEB Board Member	✓	✓
Patrick Hughes	JCP London Director	✓	
Jayne Banks	Ingeus	✓	✓
Andy Gates	GLA	✓	✓
Dianna Neal	London Councils	✓	✓
Phil Dack	Sarina Russo	✓	
Graham Clarke	Skills Training UK	✓	
David Stephenson	Burleigh College	✓	✓
Ramesh Moher	New Challenge	✓	✓
Alison Marjoram	P3	✓	✓
Eve Waite	South Yorkshire CSP	✓	
Nicky Church	Nottingham CSP	✓	
Annie Smith	Manchester CSP	✓	
Kath McHugh	DWP CSP Team	✓	
Yemi Raiwe	LB Haringey	✓	✓
Angela Browne	South London Partnership	✓	✓

## APPENDIX 2



### Evaluations of West London Working and individual work packages

#### West London Working 2006 - 2011 Final Report



-  [West London Working 2006 - 2011 Final Report](#)

Two page PDF summaries of each programme activity are posted in the [Programme page](#) under the relevant page heading.





#### West London Working Evaluations

- West London Working Meta Evaluation – this report
- Provider Confederation Final Evaluation - due to be published April 2011
- Work Focused ESOL for Parents - Institute for Employment Studies Qualitative Report - due to be published May 2011
-  [Investment and Target Group Final Evaluation April 2011](#)
-  [Directory of Employment Services Final Evaluation April 2011](#)
-  [London City Strategy ESOL for Parents Pilot Lessons from Frontline Delivery Report from LLU+ March 2011](#)
-  [Employability Performance Rating Final Evaluation March 2011](#)
-  [Building Employability Pathways Final Evaluation February 2011](#)
-  [Business Partner Programme Final Evaluation February 2011](#)
-  [Personal Advice & Outreach Programme Final Evaluation February 2011](#)
-  [Directory of Employment Services Interim Evaluation July 2010](#)
-  [Business Partner Programme Interim Evaluation December 2010](#)
-  [Guidance and Skills Brokerage Confederation Interim Evaluation October 2010](#)
-  [Personal Advice & Outreach Programme Interim Evaluation October 2009](#)

#### National City Strategy Pathfinder Evaluations

-  [Learning the lessons from City Strategy June 2010](#)
-  [Evaluation of Phase 1, City Strategy March 2010](#)

#### General West London Evaluations

-  [Evaluation of the West London Area Programme 2007-09](#)
-  [West London Area Programme Evaluation - Appendices and Glossary](#)
-  [Reaching Out Project Final Evaluation August 2009](#)
-  [Housing Employment Link Project Year One Evaluation Report May 2009](#)

<sup>i</sup> DWP description of the purpose of the City Strategy pilots. This has been extracted from DWP website on 25 March 2011. This is included in full here as the DWP ongoing documentation is likely to be archived from its current location once the City Strategies terminate.

The City Strategy aims to tackle worklessness in our most disadvantaged communities across the UK – many of which are in major cities and other urban areas.

Its focus is on 15 pathfinder areas, which analysts identified as furthest from the Government's aim of 80 per cent employment. Most of these are in our major cities and other urban areas. Originally scheduled to finish in March 2009, the support was subsequently extended for all 15 pathfinders for a further two years, and is now due to cease in March 2011.

The strategy is based on the idea that local partners can deliver more if they combine and align their efforts behind shared priorities, and are given more freedom to try out new ideas and to tailor services in response to local need. It will aim to:

- ensure provision is more attuned to the needs of local employers so individuals gain the skills and attributes they need to access the particular jobs that employers need to fill
- play a significant role in increasing local employment rates, ensuring those most disadvantaged in the labour market can receive the help and guidance they need.

In doing so, we hope it will contribute to the government's long-term aims of increasing the number of people in work and tackling child poverty.

The strategy will test:

- how best to combine the work of government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors in a concerted local partnership (consortium) – to provide the support jobless people need to find and progress in work
- whether local stakeholders can deliver more by combining and aligning their efforts behind shared priorities, alongside more freedom to innovate, and tailor services in response to local needs.

<sup>iii</sup> National evaluation, page 41