

# tank

## Report

### West London Working

Final evaluation  
Personal Advice and  
Outreach Programme

February 2011

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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Programme background

West London Working (WLW) brings together the partners responsible for employment and skills to tackle the high and persistent number of West London residents not in employment. It is one of 15 City Strategy Pathfinders launched by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in April 2007. The Pathfinders cover cities across Britain, testing how best to build a partnership of government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors to help more jobless people to find and progress in work. The aim of the Pathfinder partnerships is to join up employment and skills provision and increase its effectiveness. In return, DWP provided dedicated funding and the opportunity for Pathfinders to flex national policies according to local needs.

WLW covers the following Boroughs:

- Brent
- Ealing
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Harrow
- Hillingdon
- Hounslow.

The WLW Personal Advice and Outreach programme addressed two of the nine WLW work packages – **outreach** that links frontline staff from other public and third sector services with employment and skills provision, and **personal advice** with customised support provided to the hardest to help and access to information, advice and guidance for all workless residents.

The individual projects began in June 2008 and were funded to run until March 2010<sup>1</sup>. The programme was funded through the DWP Deprived Area Fund, with additional match funding from the Local Authorities.

The WLW team were responsible for the management and administration of the programme. In addition to the overall management and administration of the programme, Tank were commissioned to act as a central resource, providing a package of support intended to coordinate project activities across borough boundaries, maximise learning and support staff.

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<sup>1</sup> WLW extended the project end dates for Brent and Hounslow to June 2010 with no increase in budget.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

The programme aims were to:

- Create 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 goals through accessing skills or employment services.

Each of the six personal advice and outreach projects worked with a wide variety of organisations and local networks and although there were clear overarching aims and objectives relating to each of the projects, each project is unique. A brief summary of each project is presented below.

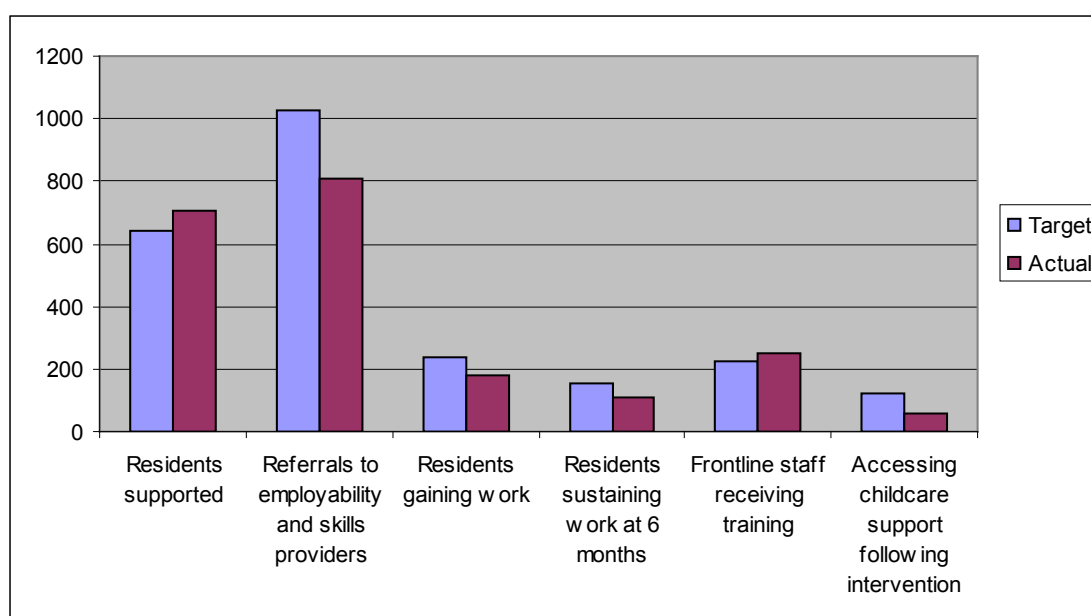
## 1.3 Project summaries

Borough	Project name	Target Group	Geographical focus	Project management
Brent	<i>energiZe</i>	Workless residents who accessed other South Kilburn Partnership projects	South Kilburn Partnership New Deal for Communities area	Project funded a Partnership Networking Manager within South Kilburn Partnership to encourage collaborative working between projects
Ealing	<i>Local Solutions</i>	Workless RSL and council tenants in Ealing. Emphasis on BAME tenants, including lone parents and those on sickness related benefits	South Acton, Norwood Green, Northolt Mandeville, Northolt West End, Southall Green, Southall Broadway	Ealing council sub-contracted delivery of the project to Catalyst Housing Group.
Hammersmith & Fulham	<i>Employment Ladder</i>	Workless residents in temporary accommodation. Emphasis on those with greater barriers to work.	LB Hammersmith and Fulham, focus on Wormholt and White City Shepherd's Bush Green wards	Job brokers directly employed by LB Hammersmith and Fulham, with wider team based within Housing Directorate
Harrow	<i>Xcite</i>	Workless parents, or those on low incomes with carer/parental responsibilities living in social housing or temporary accommodation	Harrow Weald and Crossways estate, Stanmore Park and Woodlands estate, Pinner Hill, Rayners Lane estate	The project was overseen by the Economic Development team at Harrow Council

Borough	Project name	Target Group	Geographical focus	Project management
Hillingdon	<i>Workmates</i>	Parents on low incomes with carer/parental responsibility who have recently started or who are about to start work	West Drayton and Yiewsley	An SLA existed between LB Hillingdon and A2Dominion (lead delivery organisation on behalf of Hillingdon's RSL Management Group)
Hounslow	<i>HOPE</i>	Workless residents and a focus on progressing learners into work	Estates in Oriel, Highfields, Beavers, Ivy Brigde, Butts Farm and Convent Way	Day to day project management split between HACE and Hounslow's Economic Development and Business Support Unit

#### 1.4 Project achievement

The programme had 12 outputs overall but the contribution of individual projects to this suite of outputs varied. All projects contributed to some outputs while for other outputs only one project may have contributed. Outlined below is the programme's actual performance against each of the targets for six of the main outputs, taking into account all of the projects that contributed to each respective output.



The programme has underperformed on most targets but overachieved on the 'residents supported' output and 'frontline staff receiving training' outputs.

Borough	No. of starts	No of starts into jobs	Percentage (%)
Brent	29	3	10
Ealing	89	18	20
Hammersmith and Fulham	157	59	38
Harrow	229	48	21
Hillingdon	35	-	-
Hounslow	165	52	32

The table above shows the conversion rate of project starts into jobs for each project. The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has the best conversion rate with 38% of starts moving into work, closely followed by Hounslow with 32%. Hillingdon does not have a conversion rate as the project was not aimed at assisting people into work.

## 1.5 Key findings

### *Project design:*

#### *Key opportunities and successes*

- Projects were designed to meet local needs and, where directly delivered by Local Authorities, there was a greater sense of ownership of the project.
- The programme has created a 'new thinking' at a local level for this type of project.
- As projects were delivered at a local level, existing networks and opportunities could be used, as well as the knowledge and experience of staff working in the area.
- The support offered by Tank was designed to be relevant to project needs and adapted throughout delivery to respond to specific concerns.

#### *Key barriers*

- Sub-contracting arrangements not managed effectively.
- Staffing issues for some local authorities, including lengthy recruitment processes or high turnover.
- Cross-borough working not as prominent as would have been hoped, given the emphasis that was on cross-borough learning
- Many frontline staff not clear on whether they had attended training delivered by projects.
- Tank support not seen as relevant by all projects as delivery models were viewed as significantly different from other projects.

#### *Key lessons learnt*

- The use of partners and sub-contractors to deliver projects should be carefully considered for projects of a similar nature in the future.
- Risk factors need to be assessed as part of project planning (i.e. high staff turnover or possible delays to project start up).

- Training of frontline staff needs to be managed more effectively through projects being more explicit with staff about the purpose of training sessions and through follow ups in the future.
- The suitability of delivery premises is essential when delivering one-to-one support. In addition to this access to IT and other necessary resources is important.

### *Project delivery:*

#### *Key opportunities and successes*

- A good use of outreach locations to try and engage local communities, including working closely with providers in similar sectors to assist outreach activity.
- The programme has helped encourage new partnerships for most projects
- Support available to clients was generally intensive and tailored to help meet their needs
- The value of work placements and volunteering has been recognised by most projects
- Training to frontline staff has helped raise awareness of support available in the local area

#### *Key barriers*

- Engaging clients was difficult for a number of projects, particularly with regards to outreach activities on local estates
- Referrals to projects were not always appropriate
- Evidencing indirect action (i.e. whether a referral was the result of outreach activity) was reported as being very difficult
- Providing suitable childcare support and / or ESOL provision for clients was viewed as a challenge
- Referring clients onto other providers was not always successful due to some projects being unhappy with the quality of provision available elsewhere

#### *Key lessons learnt*

- The value of work placements and volunteering opportunities should be considered at project design stage.
- Monitoring client referrals and translation rates from referral to attendance at first appointment is a good way to help review the regularity and appropriateness of referrals.
- Delivering personal advice from council premises proved more successful than alternative methods, possibly due to the anonymity factor
- Initial assessment activities need to be more robust in order to help identify the needs of clients and, in some cases, the need to refer a client on
- Providers need to maintain communication to ensure that duplication of provision is avoided where possible

## 1.6 Conclusion

The programme has been successful in identifying the benefits and the potential problems of a range of approaches to outreach activity, when considering ways to link frontline staff from public and third sector services with employment and skills provision. Where new outreach sources have been developed, some changes in practice have been adopted by the projects and this could lead to longer term, positive changes and integration of good employment practices within the local authorities. Through the outreach activity the programme has also made an impact on some local service provision through raising awareness about the support available with the respective local authorities. These changes are likely to impact positively on the overall aims of WLW in terms of employment and child poverty.

The programme has also helped increase the number of residents in West London who have been able to access suitable employment and support services in order to help them achieve their long term goals.

In terms of preventing the duplication of existing provision and an improvement in referral practice, the programme has had mixed success as there was still a resistance to refer clients on for a variety of reasons including competition, quality, eligibility criteria and perceptions of funding. It should be noted that where effective signposting has taken place, good outcomes have been achieved for these clients.

## 2 EVALUATION AND METHODOLOGY

Tank Consulting was commissioned to carry out the final evaluation of the programme. The final evaluation is designed to identify programme strengths and weaknesses to enable good practice to be carried forward into future programmes of a similar nature. The final evaluation will also identify the key lessons learnt from the programme.

The final evaluation was carried out using the following methodologies:

- Desk research of reports and monitoring returns
- Group interviews with Personal Advisers, Project Operational Managers and / or Local Authority Strategic Managers
- Telephone interviews with Project Operational Managers and / or Local Authority Strategic Managers
- Telephone interviews with staff from other frontline agencies that have been involved with the programme
- Telephone and face-to-face interviews with clients that have used the programme
- Meetings with the West London Working team

Outline below is a breakdown of the number of participants that were interviewed.

Group:	Numbers participating:
Personal Advisers	9
Project Operational Managers and Local Authority Strategic Managers	7
Frontline staff from other agencies	20 <sup>2</sup>
Clients	35 <sup>3</sup>
WLW team	2

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<sup>2</sup> Frontline staff were involved with the following projects: Brent – 0, Ealing – 3, Hammersmith and Fulham – 5, Harrow – 5, Hillingdon – 3 and Hounslow – 4.

<sup>3</sup> Clients were registered with the following projects: Brent – 3, Ealing – 5, Hammersmith and Fulham – 7, Harrow – 7, Hillingdon – 7 and Hounslow – 6.

### 3 PROGRAMME BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND RATIONAL

#### 3.1 Programme background

West London Working (WLW) brings together the partners responsible for employment and skills to tackle the high and persistent number of West London residents not in employment. It is one of 15 City Strategy Pathfinders launched by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in April 2007. The Pathfinders cover cities across Britain, testing how best to build a partnership of government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors to help more jobless people to find and progress in work. The aim of the Pathfinder partnerships is to join up employment and skills provision and increase its effectiveness. In return, DWP provided dedicated funding and the opportunity for Pathfinders to flex national policies according to local needs.

WLW covers the following Boroughs:

- Brent
- Ealing
- Hammersmith and Fulham
- Harrow
- Hillingdon
- Hounslow.

The vision of WLW 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 residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty.'*

The London Development Agency (LDA) is the accountable body for West London Working.

The WLW Personal Advice and Outreach programme addressed two of the nine WLW work packages – **outreach** that links frontline staff from other public and third sector services with employment and skills provision, and **personal advice** with customised support provided to the hardest to help and access to information, advice and guidance for all workless residents. It did this by testing approaches to increase the number of residents accessing employment services, targeting hardest to reach residents, improving 'right first time' referrals and increasing the number of residents who successfully achieve their goals.

The individual projects began in June 2008 and were funded to run until March 2010<sup>4</sup>. The programme was funded through the DWP Deprived Area Fund, with additional match funding from the Local Authorities.

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<sup>4</sup> WLW extended the project end dates for Brent and Hounslow to June 2010 with no increase in budget.

The funding for each project was as follows:

Borough	Grant award	Additional funding*	Total
Brent	£149,834	£500,000 <sup>1</sup>	<b>£649,834</b>
Ealing	£149,913	£19,500 <sup>2</sup>	<b>£169,413</b>
Hammersmith and Fulham	£143,250	£110,000 <sup>3</sup>	<b>£253,250</b>
Harrow	£150,000	£263,000 <sup>4</sup>	<b>£413,000</b>
Hillingdon	£150,000	£92,000 <sup>5</sup>	<b>£242,000</b>
Hounslow	£150,000	£40,000 <sup>6</sup>	<b>£190,000</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£892,997</b>	<b>£1,024,500</b>	<b>£1,917,497</b>

\*Additional funding was for some boroughs a projected figure.

<sup>1</sup> Total South Kilburn NDC funding for advice and guidance services which this project refers on to

<sup>2</sup> In kind funding from LB Ealing, ESL Forum and Jobcentre Plus

<sup>3</sup> Homelessness grant

<sup>4</sup> ESF and Section 106

<sup>5</sup> Section 106

<sup>6</sup> In kind funding from LB Hounslow

In addition to the above, a further contract for £80,100 was awarded to Tank Consulting to provide coordination, support and evaluation activity. It should be noted that the evaluation activity has been conducted by a different team to that which offered support and coordination throughout the project.

### 3.2 Commissioning arrangements

The WLW Implementation Group took the decision to give Local Authorities responsibility to determine the funding model for this work programme with options for a single grant operating across all six Local Authorities or six individual grants, one to each Local Authority. The Local Authority members of the Implementation Group made the decision to progress with six individual grants. Some analysis of this arrangement is shown at 3.1 above.

Some local authorities delivered projects directly and others sub contracted delivery to partner agencies. There was a varying degree of experience across the local authorities in terms of delivery of this type of project.

Commissioning took place over the spring and early summer of 2008 with the WLW programme team working closely with local authorities to develop output targets that were designed to meet both the needs of the WLW overall strategy and the needs of local areas.

It should be stressed that this project was always intended to test new delivery arrangements and methodologies.

## 4 PROGRAMME AND INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS' AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 4.1 Programme aims and objectives

The programme aims were to:

- Create 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 goals through accessing skills or employment services.

Each of the six personal advice and outreach projects worked with a wide variety of organisations and local networks and although there were clear overarching aims and objectives relating to each of the projects, each project is unique. A brief summary of each project is presented below.

### 4.2 Brent – *energize*

*energiZe* aimed to address worklessness by encouraging greater partnership working between South Kilburn Partnership (formerly South Kilburn New Deal for Communities) funded projects as well as other agencies locally and the voluntary sector. The project funded a Partnership Networking Manager within the South Kilburn Partnership to encourage this collaborative working between the projects, to build their capacity and identify and refer workless project beneficiaries to the local Brentin2Work employment provision (and other welfare to work services) through agreed referral protocols. Funding supported *energiZe* in the delivery of a series of externally facilitated networking and training events to better coordinate the projects, discuss key workless issues and how their service could impact on worklessness by establishing effective referral routes. As part of these a series of community leadership workshops were delivered to provide key people within the South Kilburn community with skills development opportunities and mentoring support to expand referral routes.

- Target Group: Workless residents who accessed the South Kilburn Partnership projects, in particular: lone parents, workless families, families on low incomes where one member is in work and incapacity benefit claimants.
- Geographical focus: South Kilburn Partnership New Deal for Communities area.
- Project Management: Funding was allocated to LB Brent who hold a service level agreement with South Kilburn Partnership (for whom LB Brent are the accountable body) and project managed by their Deputy Chief Executive.

### 4.3 Ealing – Local Solutions

*Local Solutions* aimed to reduce worklessness amongst Ealing's social housing tenants. The project aimed to assist the hardest to help residents and tenants into sustainable work. The project tested the effectiveness of a partnership approach to reducing worklessness amongst social housing tenants through the delivery of a programme of advice and employment support. A staff training programme was developed to help build capacity within the front line housing workforce to ensure that housing staff were better able to carry out basic signposting to local services and information sources.

An Employment & Training Advisor was funded to support the hardest to help residents that were referred by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) staff, into sustainable work. Funding also supported a marketing campaign to inform social housing tenants of local employment and skills provision.

- Target Group: Workless RSL and council tenants in Ealing. Emphasis was on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) tenants, including refugees, low income families and households, including lone parents, and those on sickness related benefits.
- Geographical focus: South Acton, Norwood Green, Northolt Mandeville, Northolt West End, Southall Green, Southall Broadway.
- Project Management: Ealing Council sub-contracted the full delivery of this project to Catalyst Housing Group. The Advisor was employed by Catalyst. The day-to-day management of the relationship was the responsibility of the Partnerships Officer at Ealing Council who reports to the Senior Economic Development Manager at Ealing Council.

### 4.4 Hammersmith and Fulham – Employment Ladder

The Hammersmith & Fulham *Employment Ladder* provided employment focused advice, guidance and practical support to workless residents in temporary accommodation. Job Opportunities Brokers funded by the project had a key role in facilitating access to other council provision that was aimed to help their clients overcome their barriers to work and test the concept of person centred services. The target group was accessed initially via the HELP<sup>5</sup> project database.

- Target Group: Workless residents in temporary accommodation. Emphasis was on those with greater barriers to work e.g. lone parents, people with mental health support needs and young people (16-17 year olds).

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<sup>5</sup> HELP is a project of the West London Housing Partnership aiming to integrating employment and training assistance for homeless people

- Geographical focus: London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, with a focus on Wormholt & White City Shepherd's Bush Green wards, and within these the White City and Edward Woods Estates.
- Project Management: The Job Opportunities Brokers were directly employed by LB Hammersmith & Fulham, with the team based within the Housing Directorate. The Head of Regeneration and the Assistant Director of Housing Options had overall responsibility for delivery of the project outcomes.

#### 4.5 Harrow – *Xcite*

*Xcite* provided a dedicated outreach, engagement, advice and support service delivered by a team of outreach workers. The team was based in a range of outreach locations including children's and community centres and provided one to one individual advice and on going coaching to help clients get back into work and vocational training. This project also benefited from additional LDA European Social Fund (ESF) funding.

- Target Group: Workless parents, or those on low incomes with carer/parental responsibilities living in social housing or in temporary accommodation. There was a particular emphasis on engaging with lone parents predominantly women, BAME residents, particularly Somalis and the disabled.
- Geographical focus: Particular focus was on the following super output areas: 151 & 139: Harrow Weald and adjacent (the Crossways estate), 227: Stanmore Park & the Woodlands Estate, 217: Rayners Lane Estate, 185: Pinner Hill (Pinner Farm Estate).
- Project Management: The project was overseen by the Economic Development team at Harrow Council.

#### 4.6 Hillingdon – *Workmates*

*Workmates* supported working parents on low incomes and their employers. Two Personal Advisors provided a range of individual and group based support to newly employed parents referred by a range of local referral partners, including Jobcentre Plus. The project was focused on providing in-work coping strategies to support parents on the transition into sustained employment. Support was available for up to 52 weeks from first starting employment. The service was contracted out to A2Dominion (a local registered social landlord), and advisors operated from the Honeywell Community Centre on their Trout Road estate.

- Target Group: Parents on low incomes with carer/parental responsibility, living in social housing and their employers. The project aimed to support parents about to start work and those recently started in work.

- Geographical focus: West Drayton and Yiewsley. As the project developed this was extended to include all of Hillingdon and later other West London boroughs.
- Project Management: Hillingdon Council's Economic Development Manager was Project Manager for the grant. A Service Level Agreement exists between LB Hillingdon and A2Dominion which is the lead delivery organisation on behalf of Hillingdon's RSL Management Group. The project reported into Hillingdon's sustainable economic taskforce (Local Strategic Partnership Economic Subgroup).

#### 4.7 Hounslow – *Hounslow Outreach Project for Employment (HOPE)*

The *HOPE* project extended participation in employment and skills services in Hounslow and aimed to ensure that all participants were offered a coherent route to work, accessing all relevant services including training, job search, benefits and money advice and job brokerage. One full time and one part time Personal Advisor was funded and integrated within Hounslow Adult & Community Education's (HACE) estate based 'widening participation' scheme. The service targeted estates in the borough with the highest proportion of workless residents. Personal Advisors aimed to work in partnership with key agents in particular, Welfare and Participation Officers (HACE) and Tenant Participation Officers (Hounslow Homes and other RSLs).

- Target Group: Workless residents, and a focus on progressing learners into work.
- Geographical focus: The following estates were targeted: Oriol, Highfields, Beavers, Ivy Bridge, Haverfield, Butts Farm, and Convent Way.
- Project Management: Day to day project management was split between HACE and Hounslow's Economic Development and Business Support Unit.

## 5 PROGRAMME AND PROJECTS' OUTPUTS AND SPEND

### 5.1 Programme outputs

The programme has a number of key outputs and the contribution to the suite of outputs varied:

Output	Providers
Residents supported	All providers
Referrals into employability and skills providers	All providers
Residents gaining work	All providers apart from Hillingdon
Residents sustaining work at 6 months	All providers
Frontline staff receiving training	All providers apart from Hillingdon
Accessing work placements / volunteering	Brent
Accessing childcare support following intervention	Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hillingdon
Sustaining work at 3 months	Hillingdon
Residents into sustained work at 6 months of <16 hours	Hounslow
Number of projects supported	Brent
Number of networking events	Brent and Hounslow
Number of project employment training sessions	Brent

As a result of the original commissioning arrangements, each project had its own list of outputs. Some of these directly matched the programme outputs but some were different. However, each of the individual projects' outputs mapped across to the overall list of programme outputs in some way. This resulted in some projects contributing to the overall outputs from more than one individual project output, e.g. Ealing (Local Solutions) contributes to the overall outputs of referrals to employability and skills providers through three different individual project outputs: referrals and signposts to other services, tenants receiving basic skills or ESOL training and tenants receiving other skills training.

Each individual project also had a clear set of output definitions; some of these were generic across all projects and others were specific to the individual projects.

This arrangement of outputs came about through the contracting process; while WLW had clear aims and objectives for this project, there was a wish to remain flexible on outputs to ensure they met the needs of individual local authorities.

## 5.2 Project spend

Outlined below is a breakdown of individual project spend throughout the lifetime of the programme (claimed from the grant award only). It should be noted that £23,355 of the London Borough of Hounslow's spend and £4,665 of the London Borough of Brent's spend was for quarter one of 2010/11 and has yet to be audited.

Borough	Grant award	Final spend	Over spend / under spend
Brent	£149,834	£143,708	-£6,126
Ealing	£149,913	£148,124	-£1,789
Hammersmith and Fulham	£143,250	£143,250	£0
Harrow	£150,000	£146,896	-£3,104
Hillingdon	£150,000	£150,000	£0
Hounslow	£150,000	£141,660	-£8,340
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£892,997</b>	<b>£873,638</b>	<b>-£19,359</b>

The programme under spent by £19,359. The London Boroughs of Brent and Hounslow under spent by the most with £6,126 and £8,340 respectively.

## 6 MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT CONTRACT

### 6.1 Commissioning

As explained in section 3.2, the commissioning arrangements for this project were complex. The WLW team had to negotiate separately with six local authorities, with different levels of delivery experience. This included negotiating a wide range of outputs for each project.

Delivery was commenced in most cases in June 2008 and therefore the WLW team ensured that all projects were able to receive a grant award letter from the LDA in order to commence delivery. It can take some weeks to reach the point of signing a grant agreement for programmes of this type and therefore the grant award letter in most cases gave sufficient comfort for local authorities to proceed. Some delays did occur in starting delivery and these are identified below.

With regards to the commissioning and design of the individual projects, the findings since the interim evaluation have remained the same. The local nature of commissioning has resulted in a wide range of diverse projects; while all the local authorities stated that this has helped them meet needs at a local level, it has resulted in a complex set of management arrangements for the programme as a whole. The following benefits of the contracts being held directly with the local authorities were identified:

- Ability to meet local needs  
All projects were designed to meet local needs. Some were designed to address very specific geographical issues (e.g. projects were targeted to work with specific estates) and others were more thematic in nature (e.g. targeting people in temporary accommodation). Managers felt that their projects were contributing to previously identified targets and priorities.

It is clear that we would expect local authorities to have a clear and detailed understanding of local needs. This led to the development of projects that were able to meet these identified needs. While projects met the overall aims of the programme, there was some variation in the extent of this. This outcome was inevitable when consideration is given to the fact that there are likely to be a degree of competing priorities between a sub-regional programme and a local programme.

- Provision of new local services  
While all the projects being delivered under this programme were new, some local authorities had very little track record of delivery in this area. The WLW funding has therefore developed completely new programmes of support and in some cases has started to create “new thinking” at a local level for this type of service.

For example, in London Borough of Harrow the funding enabled the local authority to develop its own programme from scratch. Prior to the project

this type of activity was not seen as a priority as the local economy was very buoyant. However, the project was set up just as the recession began to take effect and unemployment doubled. Now the project is taken seriously at a local level and is starting to influence recruitment practice across the borough. The London Borough of Hounslow also felt that it was important to demonstrate to local residents that the council was still doing something positive, even during the recession.

- Good integration of projects with other local services  
Managing the projects at a local level has enabled good integration with other statutory and non-statutory services. This was often because the local authority staff were known locally – but also because they could take advantage of existing networks and opportunities.

For example, in London Borough of Hounslow the project was co-located within the adult and community education service. This enabled a relatively seamless integration with the service whereby the project could meet a previously identified gap (i.e. for one to one employability support for Adult Education learners). Also, with some projects being part of the council, trustworthy relationships were developed with partners and local residents. Specifically for the London Borough of Harrow, this enabled their project to negotiate numerous work placements for clients within the private, public and voluntary sectors.

- Providing an enabling role for the local authority  
Many local authorities identified that the WLW project had enabled them to strengthen their role as a local enabler. The very nature of many of the projects, requiring them to work across a range of agencies, provided local authorities with an excellent opportunity to act as a catalyst for service development at a local level.

For example, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the London Borough of Ealing offered not only employability support but also housing support which is often seen as a key barrier to employment.

- Match funding  
The provision of match funding, mostly through local authorities, not only provided more resources to the projects, but also increased the sense of “ownership” of the project within the local authority. In some instances this has helped promote sustainability for projects.

Alongside the benefits of commissioning locally, we also identified some disadvantages which included:

- Local authority recruitment processes  
Where staff were to be directly employed by the local authority, managers had to follow local authority recruitment processes. In most cases these proved to be extremely lengthy and cumbersome leading to staff not being in place for up to six months; this had a significant effect on the ability of projects to meet targets, especially in the early stages of the programme.

- **Sub-contracting arrangements**  
Not all contracts were to be delivered directly and sub contracting took place. However, there is some evidence that the management arrangements for sub contracting were not as effective as they might have been. 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 starting the contract.

In some cases the sub-contracting arrangements also appear to have distanced the local authority from a real engagement with the project; this can have the effect of neutralising some of the benefits of working through the local authority in the first place.

- **Low levels of cross borough working**  
Although the emphasis was on cross borough learning and sharing good practice, we would also have expected this to have led to further cross borough working. However, there have been few instances of this. All local authorities involved in the project have tended to concentrate on local activity and partnerships rather than working across borough boundaries. This is inevitable where local funding may be involved (e.g. section 106 funding). The main forum for cross borough exchange has been the regular support workshops for Personal Advisers, facilitated by Tank. However, attendance at these events was low on occasions and as a result there have been limited outcomes from this exchange of information and practice.

Some projects have also felt that they are very different to the other projects and therefore cross borough working would have not been as beneficial as it could have been.

- **Track record as provider**  
Local authorities had a varied track record as a provider of services in this way. Where these projects were completely new, there was an unanticipated lead in time to become known and trusted at a local level. This has affected the ability of projects to meet their targets.
- **Underestimating the benefit of work placements / volunteering**  
Only the London Borough of Brent profiled in their original business case for work placements and volunteering outputs as part of its key delivery. However, Personal Advisors from all projects have recognised the need for work or volunteer placements and found them a valuable tool for long term unemployed clients, those with little or no work history and those with low confidence.

## 6.2 Project management and coordination

### *WLW programme management*

Clearly from the perspective of the WLW team, managing and coordinating six projects has been time consuming. In the future, the time needed to manage programmes of a similar nature should not be underestimated.

However, as indicated in the interim evaluation, managers predominantly felt that the WLW team provided good support through both the project development and delivery stages. One manager said that ‘the advice and guidance we have received on various issues has really helped us run things smoothly’. Another manager said ‘Sarah has been very supportive. She has been very good at keeping us up to speed on developments’. Some managers felt that the monitoring requirements could be intimidating at times but that the WLW team had been ‘reasonable and fair’.

Some project staff also felt that access to the general WLW website was useful; it is likely that this refers to use of the WLW directory of employment services [<http://directory.westlondonworking.org.uk/>]. One manager said that the ‘WLW website was great – a very good source of information’.

### *Staffing*

Most projects reported that the experience of the Personal Advisors was crucial in the delivery of the projects. In some instances local knowledge about estates or client groups was pre-existing but in other instances the Personal Advisors spent time researching the regional job market and the impact of the recession in order to benefit project delivery. As identified in section 6.1, some staff also had connections with other organisations or council departments that were utilised to benefit the project in some way.

Staff turnover at its subcontractor, Catalyst Housing Group, was a problem for the London Borough of Ealing and this significantly impacted on delivery. Three key members of staff left the organisation at different stages due to a variety of reasons and as a result, project delivery was disrupted. The project also had problems when trying to recruit additional staff as many of the applications that they received were of poor quality. This resulted in a review of the job descriptions and less emphasis being placed on level three or four Information, Advice and Guidance qualifications and more emphasis being placed on experience. It should be noted that this project was eventually able to recruit a new Employment and Training Manager who helped get the project back on track.

### *Monitoring and reporting*

As reported in the interim evaluation, at a local project level all projects were required to report fully on outputs and follow the LDA’s claims process. For many, this was seen as being quite a burden for a relatively small (£150,000 over two years) project.

In terms of monitoring and reporting on other aspects of project delivery, the following was identified:

- Effectiveness of referrals and outreach activities  
Most projects reported that the source and appropriateness of referrals was recorded, often on an internal database. One prime example was, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, who had dedicated staff time and IT resources to carefully monitor their client referrals and the

translation rate from referral to attendance at first appointment. By doing this, the project was able to review the training it delivered to frontline Housing Options staff (who identify suitable clients and refer them on to *Employment Ladder*) and feedback on the success of client referrals. The success of the training was borne out by the very high number of referrals made to the project; from January to March 2010, 50 clients (on average) were referred each month. Other projects learnt from this practice and sought advice from the project on how they could develop similar monitoring systems in the future.

Other benefits of the monitoring systems included enabling the projects to identify the source of inappropriate referrals and address the situation accordingly. For example, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham provided the line managers of the referring organisation with feedback every fortnight on the number and quality of referrals.

It should be noted that the frontline staff who participated in the final evaluation (across all projects) provided mixed responses in terms of receiving feedback on the quality of the referrals that they had made. Some frontline staff stated that they received consistent feedback not only on the quality of the referral but also on the client journey following referral. These staff members felt that the feedback process was useful as it helped them learn from mistakes and correct inappropriate referrals. Other frontline staff said that feedback was not always given or that it needed to be chased. Whilst some of these staff members felt that no feedback was a sign that referrals were appropriate, the majority did state that feedback on some level would be useful and would encourage further referrals.

- Impact of training / events

For those projects delivering networking events or training to frontline staff as part of their output suite, there were rarely formal systems in place to determine the effectiveness of the sessions that were delivered. Some projects did gather feedback on the training or events through informal discussions (London Borough of Harrow) or through distributed feedback forms (London Borough of Brent). However, the London Borough of Brent did report that they were able to identify several examples of where the events that they had delivered had turned into partnership developments.

Not all of the frontline staff that were interviewed were clear whether they had attended an official 'training' session delivered by the project that they were working with. Some could not recall the training as it may have taken place in the early stages of the programme, whilst others felt that the sessions were more like a project briefing and not so much in the format of a training session. In some instances projects had records of frontline staff attending training sessions but the staff members were not certain that they had attended these sessions. This confusion may have been down to the understanding of the frontline staff themselves in what constituted 'training'.

### 6.3 Support contract

Tank were commissioned to act as a central resource, providing a package of support intended to coordinate project activities across borough boundaries, maximise learning and support staff. Tank delivered a range of support activities aimed at trying to counteract the potential negative aspects of having six individual projects and to also bring some cohesiveness to the programme. Outlined below is an example of some of the support offered by Tank:

- Regular networking sessions
- Training needs analysis exercise to identify individual project needs.
- Sessions focussed on specific issues that were identified in the early stages of delivery including sessions on good practice when referring clients, on SMART action planning and on confidentiality and disclosure.
- Inclusion of guest speakers at the workshops who were able to offer specific expertise.
- The production of six thematic newsletters in response to identified project needs and emerging policy. The newsletters included links to a range of organisations that may have been relevant for the projects.
- Guidance to some projects on marketing and sustainability options
- Other various support to Personal Advisors around delivery (e.g. output definitions, shadowing exercises etc.).

Tank was asked to work with the WLW team and the projects to develop clear definitions for each of the contracted outputs with each project. Reaching common definitions across the local projects was difficult in some cases and resulted in some complexity. Tank was asked to try and align the output definitions for each of the six projects where possible, but this did not always suit the nature of the local project, and led to some complex definitions that were not always helpful. Although the requirements were not over and above the norm, some projects perceived this as leading to complex administrative requirements. As explained in the interim evaluation, Personal Advisors were often frustrated by output definitions. One Personal Advisor said 'understanding the signposting output was a challenge and we could not get our heads around the output – it took time to understand the evidence requirements'. Another project felt that supporting a client for one hour was 'easy' but the additional time taken to support clients was not credited within the output definitions. The WLW team did try and introduce flexibility with regards to the output definitions in order to help projects meet their individual targets. However, the WLW team also emphasised that the one hour was a minimum and the ultimate aim was sustained employment.

In terms of the other support offered by Tank, the key findings from the interim evaluation still hold true. Both managers and Personal Advisors had a mixed response to the support from Tank. Some managers were less operational and therefore received little support as it was aimed mainly at frontline delivery staff. However, those managers that did receive support were complimentary, particularly around the support provided with output definitions and quality assurance. Personal Advisors also differed with regards to their opinion on various aspects of support. For example, the monthly meetings were seen as a good opportunity to discuss issues, initiate introductions and gain insight into

new practices by some Personal Advisors but others saw these meetings as a drain on valuable time when they were under time pressure to achieve their contracted targets. In addition to this, whilst managers saw the benefit in the training needs analysis and 'shadowing' exercises (sitting in on the Personal Advisors practice and offering informal feedback at the end), some staff were resistant to the process, expressing concerns about how the information would be used and feeling that the 'shadowing' exercise represented a lack of trust. Other Personal Advisors found this process helpful and constructive.

Despite some of the mixed feedback on certain activities, most projects agreed that Tank were responsive and attempted to offer as much support as possible. In particular, one project felt that their relationship with Tank developed throughout the lifetime of the programme as during the early phases of delivery they were unsure of Tank's role but from the middle to latter stages, the benefit of the support available was appreciated. The Personal Advisor from this project said 'when they say they're going to do something, they do it. They are very supportive'. Another Personal Advisor from a different project said 'they offered support to our new staff – this was especially helpful given the staffing issues that we had'.

The London Boroughs of Brent and A2Dominion did not value the support in the same way as some of the other projects. Whilst both projects said that there had been support available and that the Tank support staff had been responsive, the feeling was that the *energiZe* and *Workmates* projects were quite different to the other project models and therefore the support was not as beneficial. Specifically, A2Dominion felt that, other than monthly meetings, one-to-one support with the Personal Advisors would have been more useful. The London Borough of Hillingdon, along with A2Dominion, also felt that the support was too generic and would have preferred more strategic support.

As part of the support contract, Tank attempted to facilitate the sharing of good practice between projects. A monthly reporting framework was completed by the Personal Advisors from each project in an attempt to share good practice. However, it was reported in the interim evaluation by Tank support staff that project staff had not provided examples of good practice and as a result two good practice sessions were delivered with the aim of identifying and defining good practice and showcasing good practice examples. As well as this, Tank support staff worked with the London Boroughs of Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow in order to develop case studies that enabled good practice examples to be shared with stakeholders on the WLW website.

Since the interim evaluation, most project staff reported being confident that any examples of good practice had been captured and shared with other projects. The London Borough of Ealing felt that one of the most important aspects of project delivery that had been shared but needed to be reinforced in the future was communicating the positive outcome of delivery to frontline referral staff. The aim of this would be to let the frontline referral staff see the benefit for clients and to encourage additional referrals.

However, one Personal Advisor did feel that it was difficult for the six projects to share good practice when all of the projects were so different. This Personal Advisor also felt that all of the projects could 'link up' better, for example, referring clients that had found work onto the *Workmates* project.

## 6.4 Summary

### *Key opportunities and successes*

- Projects were designed to meet local needs and attempted to meet previously identified local authority targets, as well as the overall programme targets.
- The programme has created a 'new thinking' at a local level for this type of service delivery.
- As projects were delivered at a local level, existing networks and opportunities could be used allowing integration with other statutory and non statutory services.
- Several local authorities have been able to use the programme to allow them to strengthen their role as a local enabler as they have been able to work across a range of agencies (e.g. employment and housing).
- Match funding increased the sense of ownership of the project local authorities.
- Staff experience and knowledge was crucial for delivery, particularly where some staff were able to use existing connections with council departments or other organisations to benefit delivery.
- The support available to projects from the WLW team and the general WLW website has helped the projects throughout delivery.
- The Tank support staff were available and responsive to all projects to try and support delivery. Support was designed to be relevant for project needs and was adapted throughout delivery in order to respond to project concerns (e.g. reduction in frequency of meetings, sharing good practice support).

### *Key barriers*

- Staffing issues for some local authorities. This included both lengthy staff recruitment processes and unexpected staff turnover.
- Sub-contracting arrangements were not managed as effectively as expected and in some cases may have distanced the local authority from direct engagement with the project.
- Cross borough working and learning was not as prominent as would have been hoped, mainly due to local funding and some projects feeling that they were very different to the other project models.
- For some local authorities with less experience in this type of delivery, there was an unanticipated lead in time to become known and trusted at local level.
- For many projects, the requirement to follow the LDA's claims process was seen as burden for a relatively small project.
- Despite internal databases being used by the projects to record the source and appropriateness of referrals, some frontline staff said that they did not always receive feedback and that this would have been useful.
- Many frontline staff were not clear on whether they had attended training sessions, possibly due to the delivery format and the fact that training, in

some instances, took place nearly two years ago. This makes it hard to determine the full extent of the training benefit.

- Tank support was not seen as relevant by all projects as some felt that their project models were significantly different from other projects within the programme. This may have impacted on some projects' willingness to share best practice.
- At project design stage, the role of work placements and volunteering was underestimated by most local authorities.

## 7 PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

In this analysis of outputs against targets, we have summarised information provided by WLW to show how the programme has performed as a whole against each programme output. The performance of Brent and Hillingdon has been presented separately as the focus on activities by these projects was different to that of the other projects. In addition to this, both Brent and Hillingdon significantly underperformed on some of the outputs in comparison with the other projects.

In the context of wanting to test new approaches to outreach and personal advice this range of outputs is very useful as it has enabled projects to focus on what is important to them in piloting new methodologies. However, in some cases the differences make it hard to compare 'like with like' performance across all projects which creates difficulties in evaluating the relevant value of each approach. The WLW team have a very good understanding of the targets and how they relate to each other and the wider programme; this has helped enormously in gaining understanding at both project and programme level.

WLW revised targets profiled at the end of 2008-09 due to the programme falling behind with its achievement on a number of outputs; the overall targets remained the same for most outputs, but delivery of outputs was pushed further towards the latter part of the programme. The overall targets were increased for the following outputs:

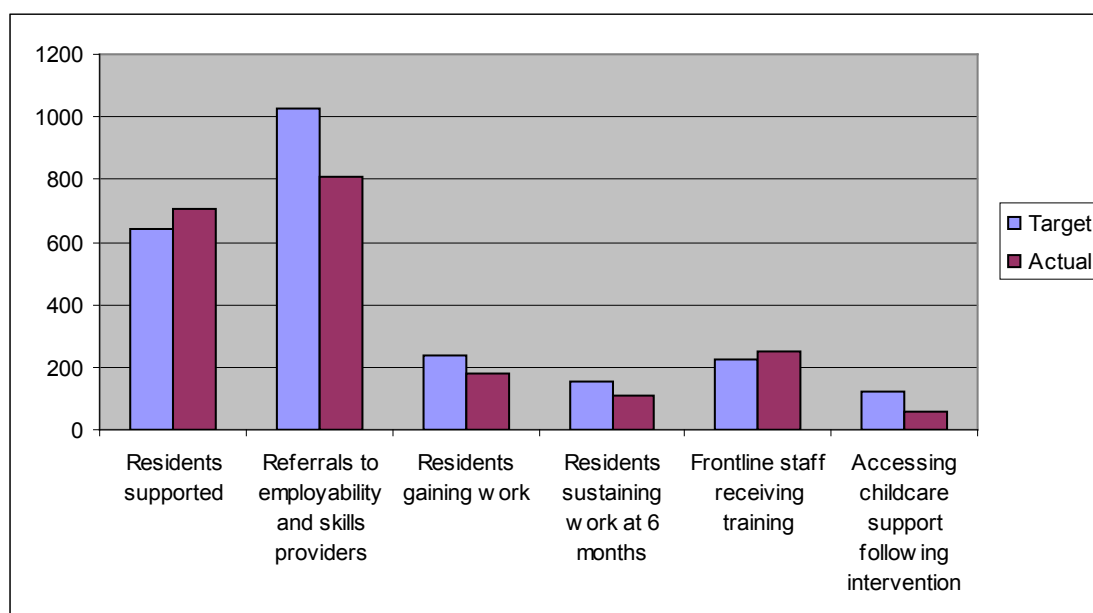
- Front-line staff receiving training
- Residents into sustained work at 6 months of <16 hours

All projects completed at the end of 2009-10, however some local authorities delivered some outputs in 2010-11. Brent and Hounslow were contracted to deliver outputs in the first quarter of 2010-11 and Hammersmith and Fulham and Hillingdon also continued to deliver some outputs.

Also presented in this section is the equalities data. Two of the main outputs for all providers were used to calculate these figures; residents supported and residents gaining work. A breakdown of individual provider performance is shown in appendix 1.

7.1 Overall programme performance – all projects

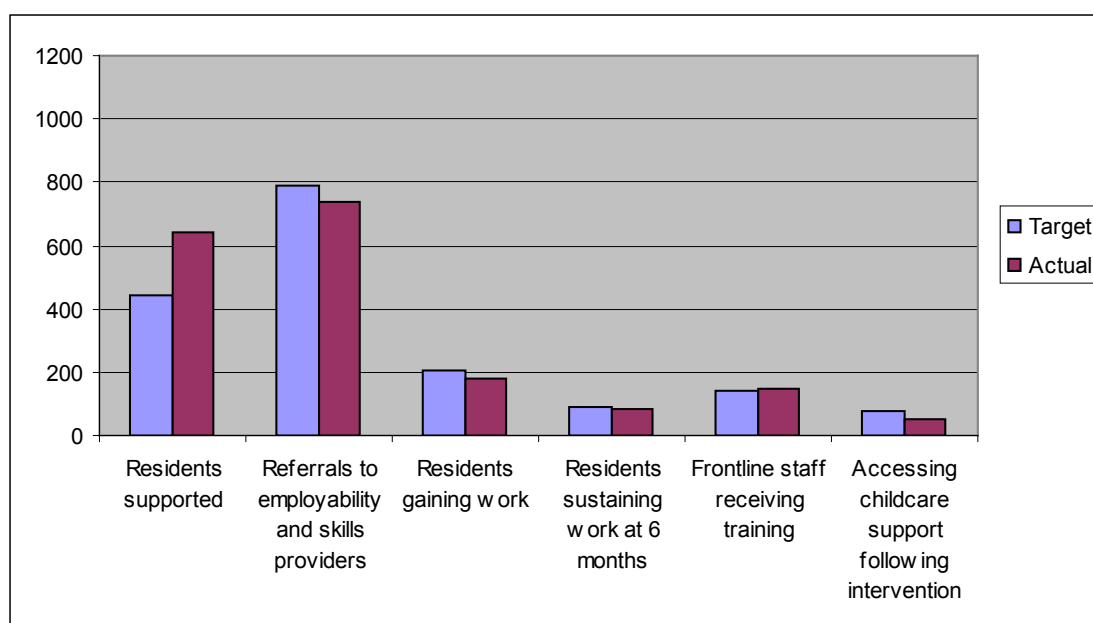
Output	Target	Actual	Variance (%)
Residents supported	644	704	+9
Referrals to employability and skills providers	1024	806	-21
Residents gaining work	235	180	-23
Residents sustaining work at 6 months	155	111	-28
Frontline staff receiving training	223	252	+13
Accessing childcare support following intervention	122	56	-54



Accounting for the all of the projects that contributed to their respective outputs, the programme overachieved for the ‘residents supported’ (+9%) and ‘frontline staff receiving training’ (+13%) outputs. The project underperformed on all other targets, with the ‘accessing childcare support following intervention’ output finishing at -54%. See section 8 of the report for a breakdown of the reasons for the project performance.

7.2 Overall programme performance – Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow

Output	Target	Actual	Variance (%)
Residents supported	440	640	45
Referrals to employability and skills providers	791	735	-7
Residents gaining work	208	177	-15
Residents sustaining work at 6 months	93	86	-8
Frontline staff receiving training	143	149	4
Accessing childcare support following intervention	77	49	-36



When looking at only the London Boroughs of Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow the final performance figures are improved. The combined projects overachieved on the ‘residents supported’ (+45%) and ‘frontline staff receiving training’ (+4%) outputs. However, whilst the combined projects still underperformed on all other targets, the margin between target and actual performance was significantly reduced when compared to the performance of all of the projects. The greatest improvements can be seen in the ‘referrals to employability and skills providers’ and ‘residents sustaining work at six months’ outputs. See section 8 of the report for a breakdown of the reasons for the project performance.

### 7.3 Overall programme performance – Brent and Hillingdon<sup>6</sup>

Output	Target	Actual	Variance (%)
Residents supported	204	64	-69
Referrals to employability and skills providers	233	71	-70
Residents gaining work	27	3	-89
Residents sustaining work at 6 months	62	25	-60
Frontline staff receiving training	80	103	29
Accessing childcare support following intervention	45	7	-84

When isolating the performances of the London Boroughs of Brent and Hillingdon, the final performance figures are short of the profiled target for all outputs apart from ‘frontline staff receiving training’ (+29%). The worst performing outputs were ‘residents gaining work’ (-89%) and ‘accessing childcare support following intervention’ (-84%). See section 8 of the report for a breakdown of the reasons for the project performance.

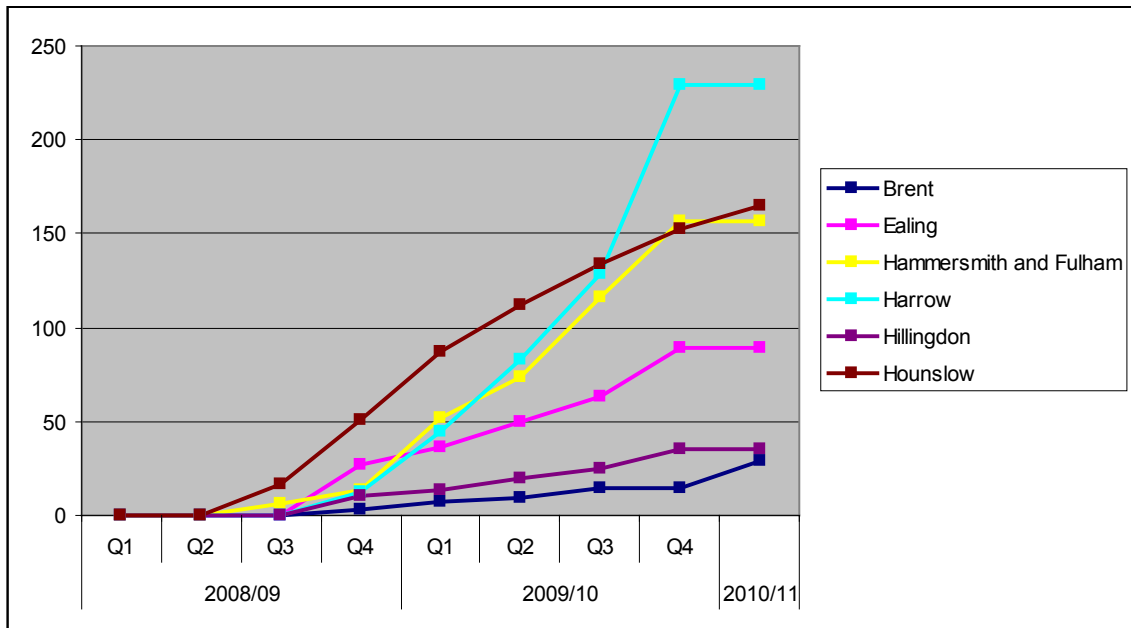
### 7.4 Conversion of starts moving into work

Borough	No. of starts	No of starts into jobs	Percentage (%)
Brent	29	3	10
Ealing	89	18	20
Hammersmith and Fulham	157	59	38
Harrow	229	48	21
Hillingdon	35	-	-
Hounslow	165	52	32

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has the best conversion rate with 38% of starts moving into work, closely followed by Hounslow with 32%. Hillingdon does not have a conversion rate as the project was not aimed at assisting people into work.

<sup>6</sup> The ‘residents gaining work’ and ‘frontline staff receiving training’ outputs are only applicable for the London Borough of Brent, whilst the ‘accessing childcare support following intervention’ output is only applicable for the London Borough of Hillingdon

7.5 Recruitment over programme lifetime



The graph above represents the cumulative number of starts that each project achieved in each quarter of programme delivery. It is clear to see how all of the projects suffered slow starts in terms of client recruitment. No projects recruited any clients until the second or third quarters of 2008/09. Some of the reasons for this included late project start-ups and staffing problems (see section 8 of the report for more detail).

The London Borough of Harrow managed to recruit greater numbers of clients throughout in each quarter of delivery, whilst the London Borough of Brent boosted their number of starts in the final quarter of 2009/10.

The London Boroughs of Brent and Hounslow were the only two boroughs contracted to continue delivery for the first two quarters of 2010/11 and therefore only their figures increased for this period.

## 7.6 Equalities targets and performance

		Residents Supported			Residents Gaining Work	
		Target (%)	Actual (%)	Variance	Actual (%)	Variance
<b>Brent</b>	BAME	70	93	<b>+23</b>	100	<b>+30</b>
	Disabled	10	7	<b>-3</b>	0	<b>-10</b>
	Women	50	38	<b>-12</b>	33	<b>-17</b>
<b>Ealing</b>	BAME	70	83	<b>+13</b>	72	<b>+2</b>
	Disabled	10	19	<b>+9</b>	11	<b>+1</b>
	Women	50	63	<b>+13</b>	44	<b>-6</b>
<b>Hammersmith and Fulham</b>	BAME	70	74	<b>+4</b>	56	<b>-14</b>
	Disabled	10	4	<b>-6</b>	2	<b>-8</b>
	Women	50	62	<b>+12</b>	49	<b>-1</b>
<b>Harrow</b>	BAME	70	71	<b>+1</b>	92	<b>+22</b>
	Disabled	10	1	<b>-9</b>	2	<b>-8</b>
	Women	50	81	<b>+31</b>	40	<b>-10</b>
<b>Hillingdon</b>	BAME	70	63	<b>-7</b>	-	-
	Disabled	10	11	<b>+1</b>	-	-
	Women	50	94	<b>+44</b>	-	-
<b>Hounslow</b>	BAME	70	72	<b>+2</b>	71	<b>+1</b>
	Disabled	10	8	<b>-2</b>	0	<b>-10</b>
	Women	50	67	<b>+17</b>	37	<b>-13</b>

In terms of targeting BAME clients, the programme has done reasonably well on both the 'residents supported' and 'residents gaining work outputs' as most projects exceeded the BAME target of 70%. Hammersmith and Fulham also fell 14 percentage points short of the BAME target for 'residents gaining work'.

There was mixed performances from the projects with regards to targeting disabled clients. For 'residents supported' only Ealing and Hillingdon achieved the 10% target (by 9 and 1 percentage points respectively). Brent,

Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow all fell short of the disabled target by 3, 6, 9 and 2 percentage points respectively. The disabled client figures for 'residents gaining work' was not as high as intended, with all projects apart from Ealing, falling short of the 10% target. Brent and Hounslow did not place any disabled clients into work. It should be noted that projects of this nature can experience difficulties in encouraging clients to disclose a disability.

With respect to women targets, for the 'residents supported' output, the programme performed very well as all projects apart from Brent exceeded the 50%. Harrow and Hillingdon performed particularly well by exceeding the target by 31 and 44 percentage points respectively. In both these cases the primary target group was parents. However, the projects did not fair as well at helping women into work as all projects fell short of the target, although Hammersmith and Fulham were only one 1 percentage point short.

## 8 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AGAINST PROGRAMME AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 8.1 Development of outreach models

The overall aim for the outreach element was to “create innovative approaches to outreach that link frontline staff delivering other public and third sector services, with employment and skills provision”.

It was reported in the interim evaluation that most of the projects took a broadly similar approach to outreach work in terms of working with a range of external agencies. However, it is clear that there were key differences in these approaches, for example: some projects worked closely with staff who were internal to the local authority (e.g. in Hounslow they worked closely with the Widening Participation Officers within the Hounslow Adult and Community Education (HACE) team for referring people on to the project) while others worked with agencies external to the project (e.g. in Brent they worked with a range of community agencies, with a wide range of primary aims and objectives that linked to the needs of local residents but not necessarily linked to employment).

The six projects varied in the method of outreach used. Some projects took a fairly formal approach to outreach by running training sessions with frontline staff or conducting team meetings / briefings. Other projects took a more informal approach to the outreach element, based around developing personal relationships with other agencies to generate referrals.

Many of the successes and challenges of the outreach work remain the same as those highlighted in the interim evaluation. Outlined below are some of the key successes identified by the projects:

- **Good outreach locations**  
Several projects felt that their use of new outreach locations was innovative. Outreach locations have varied from local libraries, community centres, housing estates, housing offices and partner locations (i.e. on the premises of a partner). The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham reported that outreach locations were working very effectively and that it had been a positive challenge in trying to keep up with the number of referrals.
- **Similar sectors**  
Many projects found that where they were working in similar sectors or disciplines then the outreach element was often more successful. Both the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham worked very closely with their immediate ‘peers’ for referral and this has helped them achieve quick recognition and mutual understanding of service delivery areas and their remit.

- **Flexible practice**  
 The London Borough of Harrow were required to adapt their working practices in the early stages of delivery due to several unexpected problems of trying to engage clients. Therefore staff were flexible in the locations in which they were able to work and the project changed delivery times in order to fit in with the local Somali community group in order to help increase referrals. The London Borough of Hounslow also reported reducing their emphasis on outreach activities once clients became comfortable in attending the local Civic Centre.
- **Development of new partnerships**  
 Most projects reported that, from the outreach activities, they had developed new partnerships with organisations that they would hope would be maintained in the future. For example, in the London Boroughs of Ealing and Harrow, new relationships with Children’s Centres have been developed. A2Dominion also forged a partnership with the local Housing Benefits Team in the latter stages of the project in order to help improve referrals.
- **Project awareness**  
 Some projects felt that as a result of the outreach activities local awareness of the project had been raised. The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham felt that they were recognised as a good authority and that this programme was important in achieving that aim.
- **Use of incentives**  
 Most projects were able to offer some form of incentive to clients at various stages of service delivery. For example, several projects were able to provide clients with funds for new clothing for interviews or transport costs in order to attend interviews. Some projects were even able to offer financial incentives for clients to take up the service or attend specific training sessions.

However, there were also some challenges faced by the projects during the outreach work:

- **Delays in project starting**  
 Many projects started delivery later than expected and this impacted on their ability to meet targets, particularly in year one of the programme. Along with delays in recruiting staff, some projects underestimated the time for project start-up. A2Dominion reported that delays to the start of their project impacted on their ability to form partnerships.
- **Client engagement**  
 Most projects reported some degree of difficulty in terms of engaging with clients. This was particularly the case when setting up outreach locations in residential areas or estates. In one example from the London Borough of Hounslow, it was reported that clients were reluctant to attend workshops or use computer facilities despite being based in the same block of flats as where they lived. The London Borough of Brent also said

that attempting to get clients to travel a short distance to Wembley to attend language courses was very difficult.

- **Appropriateness of referrals**

As reported in the interim evaluation, some projects maintained that they were still receiving inappropriate referrals (i.e. not meeting specific eligibility criteria). This has resulted in these projects providing external agencies with additional feedback but in some cases this has not always helped matters.
- **Working with Jobcentre Plus**

The manager of one project that voiced their concerns of working with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) in the interim evaluation, continued to feel that their relationship had not developed in the manner that they would have hoped. This same manager expressed similar concerns at the final evaluation stage, stating that JCP were expected to be their main source of referrals but this was not the case. However, the WLW team felt that a two-pronged approach was needed to develop this relationship and that the failure in the development of the relationship could have been caused by other management issues within the delivery partnership.
- **Accessibility**

A2Dominion ran their project from new premises which were inviting, smart and very well resourced. However, the building was built in the heart of a new estate in West Drayton and is not well signposted, mainly due to local residents resisting new signs to be put up. The project did not have a strong community presence from which to promote its activities and this may help explain part of the reason why the project struggled to gain referrals.
- **Working with employed people**

The A2Dominion maintained their feelings from the interim evaluation in terms of a reduced market for employed clients. As a result of the recession, some training providers have achieved fewer job outputs and as a result, there is a smaller market for the *Workmates* project to target. It may also have been harder to get a referral at a time when a client had just started work or was about to start work and this may have impacted on the project's ability to meet certain targets.
- **Unforeseen occurrences**

The London Borough of Brent experienced problems with delivery as a result of the closure of Brentin2Work in January 2010 due to funding issues. Their closure was announced in October 2009 and therefore this impacted on both the outreach and personal advice aspects of delivery for the *energiZe* project. For example, after holding a series of workshops in the South Kilburn estate in January, potential clients could not be referred to Brentin2Work as they were about to close. The same project also experienced problems in the early stages of delivery when some organisations, after agreeing to work in partnership, secured their own funding and no longer worked in partnership.

- **Historic lack of partnership working**  
As identified in the interim evaluation, in the London Borough of Brent (South Kilburn area) there is a reported historic lack of partnership working. The *energiZe* project underestimated the time and resources that were required to address this and this initially impacted on the generation of client referrals to its project partner Brentin2Work. However, it was reported by the manager in the final evaluation that there has been a big improvement in the culture of partnership working in the area and that this would be carried on as part of the *energiZe* legacy.
- **Evidencing indirect action**  
One project maintained their view that evidencing whether referrals to the project were a result of project outreach activity was very difficult.

## 8.2 Development of new personal advice models

The original vision for the personal advice element was to pilot innovative methods of personal support to increase the number of people that successfully achieve their goal through accessing skills or employment services. This often involved Personal Advisers not holding on to all their referrals but to 'signpost' clients to other agencies as necessary.

The majority of projects felt that the original aim for personal advice delivery had been met. All managers and Personal Advisers felt that the support offered to clients was of good quality and tailored to their individual needs. One Personal Advisor said 'we have been working with people furthest from the labour market but they get the support from us and this is so beneficial for them'. One manager stated 'the Personal Advisers achieved expectations and there has been good feedback from clients'.

As reported in the interim evaluation, there were no radically innovative approaches to delivering personal advice although some projects did feel that certain aspects of delivery were original. For example, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham felt that their approach was unique as the project's position within the council enabled housing barriers to be addressed in unison with employment needs. If this is seen as innovative, it should also be noted that the London Borough of Ealing also benefited from delivering their project through Catalyst Communities Housing Association, as their clients were also able to receive housing support. Another example is the London Borough of Harrow, who reported that clients were encouraged to act immediately when finding job opportunities and that this approach also helped change the Personal Advisor mindset about meeting employment targets. However, despite some of this feedback, it has been difficult to extrapolate real examples of innovation as some of the projects were inexperienced in this form of delivery and therefore the examples provided reflect a change in personal advice delivery at a local level.

Some projects did feel that they had not been able to meet all of the original aims of the Personal Advice delivery, sometimes due to circumstances that were out of their control. For example, the London Borough of Brent felt that

they were on their way to meeting the aims of Personal Advice delivery in October 2009 but once Brentin2Work announced its closure, this became a real challenge. Brent's manager also said that the development of formalised referral processes had not been as successful as they would have hoped.

One aim of the personal advice element of the programme was to refrain from duplicating provision and to refer clients onto other services. However, many projects did not meet this aim in the early stages of the programme and whilst some projects started to work across agencies as the programme progressed, this aspect of delivery has not developed as it may have done. In the interim evaluation, some Personal Advisors were negative about the quality of agencies that they referred onto and felt that the services were not suitable for their clients. This sentiment was echoed again by some Personal Advisors and managers when interviewed for the final evaluation. One Personal Advisor said 'there is a reluctance to refer a client to something when we are not confident in the service being offered – I think that this is important as it shows a concern for the client'. Whilst this view is understandable, the reluctance of some projects to refer clients on impacted on their ability to manage client caseloads and new referrals in the second year of the programme. However, one exception to this was from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. One Personal Advisor resigned from the *Employment Ladder* project at a very busy time and in order to meet the demands of the new workload, the existing Personal Advisor referred clients onto a number of local skills and employment providers. This resulted in some positive outcomes, including a job outcome for one client.

The London Borough of Harrow offer another example of where working across agencies has been utilised. The project negotiated with the wider local authority to advertise all vacancies across the employability network with the possibility of a work trial for clients.

Many of the successes and challenges of the personal advice work remain the same as those highlighted in the interim evaluation. Outlined below are some of the key successes identified by the projects:

- **Quality of advisors**  
Although this may be an obvious point, it is important to mention that the quality of any service of this nature will lay with the individuals delivering the service. The London Borough of Hounslow offered SO2/PO1 salary grades (around £30,000 per annum, including outer London Weighting) to try and ensure good quality advisors were recruited.
- **Intensive personal care**  
The ability to work intensively with clients on their pastoral needs was mentioned by both Personal Advisors and managers. This takes time as well as skill and this should be recognised. Client feedback also supported the fact that this care had been provided in most instances (see section 9).
- **Work placements and volunteering**

Despite only the London Borough of Brent profiling for work placements and volunteering, three other projects secured placements for some of their clients. The London Borough of Harrow managed to generate over 20 work placements within the public, private and voluntary sectors by creating and maintaining good links with council officers and partners. Another good example is from the London Borough of Ealing, where its sub-contractor (Catalyst) has been able to offer clients work experience within its own organisation in a range of areas including marketing and customer services. Some of these clients have even been offered permanent positions within the organisation.

- Integrating appropriate departments

Having advisors integrated with relevant teams was felt to be important. In the London Borough of Hounslow, there is clear integration between the Economic Development team and the Adult and Community Education team for the first time and this was felt to really improve delivery and contacts with other departments.
- Development of new tools or processes

Many of the boroughs have developed new tools, systems and processes in order to manage and deliver their projects. For example, the London Borough of Hounslow developed a new first contact questionnaire in order to help obtain important information on the job readiness of new clients. Another good example is from the London Borough of Ealing where Catalyst developed a group text campaign to notify residents of forthcoming events. The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham have developed Twitter into a useful communication tool to promote the project and to provide clients with links and information on job applications, new vacancies and training opportunities.

The key barriers to this aspect of delivery were:

- Hard to reach clients

Several projects reported that meeting some targets were hard as their projects had targeted those clients furthest from employment. One project felt that some clients had unrealistic expectations and that these clients could be difficult to work with. A2Dominion, who were the one project to target clients in employment, reported that client availability was a problem when delivering personal advice because many were working part-time or full-time. The project tried to be flexible to address this problem and had evening contact with those clients who were working.
- Availability of childcare and other support

As in the interim evaluation, several projects reported that meeting clients' childcare needs was very hard as access to childcare facilities was not always possible. This is a significant barrier that can ultimately prevent some clients moving into work. One project described the childcare issue as 'challenging and expensive' whilst another project said that it had been very hard to try and meet the demands of childcare needs. However, the

A2Dominion was able to offer access to crèche facilities when attending meetings, training or events.

Support in other areas was also lacking for some projects. For example, in the London Borough of Ealing, it was reported that finding the right ESOL provision for clients was a challenge and that one key provider of training for ESOL and basic skills ran out of money and could no longer accept referrals.

- **Competition from other providers**  
As in the interim evaluation, some projects felt that employment services have always been (and still are) very competitive. This may have resulted in a lack of trust across agencies, which in turn could have affected the onward referral of clients. Despite flexibility from WLW there was still concern from some about output counting.
- **Eligibility rules from other providers**  
It was noted from some projects that their eligibility rules did not always coincide with those of the provider they were trying to refer on to. In the complex world of public funding this is inevitable but creates obvious and practical difficulties for some projects.
- **Working processes of other provider**  
Some projects felt that referrals to other providers were not always a suitable option for clients. The main reasons for this were because of the repetitive nature of some provision (i.e. clients were being asked to do the same things again) the quality of the provision available elsewhere and the failure of some providers to offer feedback on the referral. Another reason mentioned by one project was the lack of flexibility from some providers as to when they could meet with clients.
- **Recession**  
Most of the projects felt that the recession has had a significant impact on their ability to meet targets as these were set prior to the effects of the recession being felt. The recession may also have impacted on other providers which could have reduced referrals to and from these providers.

The managers and Personal Advisors from all projects were also asked about the best method for Personal Advice delivery. Some of the key ideas are outlined below:

- **Flexible working**  
All of the projects tended to agree that a flexible approach was crucial to effective personal advice models. This included being able to adapt processes to clients' needs and also modifying processes depending on how successful they are. An example of this was shown by the London Borough of Harrow, where some clients were not self-disclosing criminal convictions, debts and rent arrears all of which could have impacted on job offers (and in some instances did). The project built 'space' into their one to one appointments in order to give clients time to reflect on previous

information that they had given and change any of this information as necessary.

- Progression route between services  
One project felt that personal advice delivery should enable a progress route for clients between services – one of the key aims of this programme. However, this project did not feel that this was always possible as provision could be repetitive and clients could be put off by the process. The London Borough of Hounslow provided a good example of what they described as ‘triangulation’, where a client was referred between their project and HACE seamlessly, in order to receive the support they needed without repetition of activities.

Some of the other suggestions by projects for successful personal advice delivery included:

- Effective initial diagnostic processes to help identify barriers
- A consistent contact for clients, who is proactive in providing assistance
- A range of workshops or activities to help engage and support clients
- Delivery of a service at a ‘grassroots level’ in a community setting

### 8.3 Feedback from frontline staff

One of the outputs for some projects was to deliver training to frontline staff who would be responsible for providing the project with referrals. The aims of this output were to help raise awareness amongst other providers in the boroughs about what services are available for local residents also to help improve links between these organisations.

As explained in section 6.2, many of the frontline staff that were interviewed for the final evaluation were not sure if they had attended training sessions or not and some felt that these sessions were more like ‘briefings’ or ‘meetings’. However, most of the frontline staff stated that the sessions offered a range of information including what skills employment services were available in the local areas, what support was available from certain providers and crucially, the eligibility criteria for the respective PAOP projects in order to encourage referral.

The frontline staff were asked to rate the information that they had received on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. Responses were positive suggesting that the sessions covered content that was useful. These are shown below:

	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Information received enabling you to understand the service provided by the project	0%	0%	25%	60%	15%	0%
Information received about the PAOP project's client eligibility criteria	0%	0%	10%	40%	40%	10%
Information received about other local services and resources that could help clients	0%	5%	5%	40%	20%	30%

The frontline staff were also asked about whether this training impacted on their approach to referring clients to other services and whether there had been any changes in their processes. Responses were generally quite positive with several staff saying that the training had helped raise awareness about what was available. One staff member said 'its opened up ways to work with other key organisations who are not necessarily work related' and another said 'although we deal mostly with housing, employment is now at the forefront of my mind – its been really beneficial and helped open up discussions with clients.

The majority of the frontline staff were also very positive about their relationship with the respective projects with many saying that the services offered were complementary. One staff member said 'we work closely together and it really ties in with what we are trying to achieve – there is a holistic approach including addressing housing, welfare and employment'. Although not all frontline staff received feedback on the referrals that they made to the respective projects, most were happy with the flow of information between their own service and the project. In terms of improvements, some suggestions included increased marketing of the projects in order to publicise the benefits. Some frontline staff suggested that more case studies were developed in order to help with marketing. Those staff that did not receive feedback on the referrals that were made felt that this would have been beneficial.

The staff were also asked whether the training was likely to change their behaviour in the future when thinking about employability and training. Several staff felt that the training would encourage them to work in partnerships in the future and to try and stay informed about other local services. One staff member felt that the training approach would be beneficial for future projects as a was of organising projects and sharing information. However, most of the staff interviewed recognised that funding and time constraints could prevent these new approaches from being utilised in the future.

## 8.4 Summary

### *Key opportunities and successes*

- There has been a good use of a range of outreach locations across the projects in order to try and engage with local communities
- Some projects that worked closely with other providers in similar sectors found that the outreach element was more successful
- Some local authorities were able to adapt their working practices in order to try and help the outreach activity
- Most projects were able to develop new and lasting partnerships with a range of agencies and organisations
- Incentives were used successfully by some projects in order to encourage take-up of the service or attendance to specific training sessions
- The quality of the advisors has been very good for most projects, ensuring that service delivery is of a high standard
- Clients have generally been offered intensive, tailored support in order to help meet their needs
- The value of work placements and volunteering has been recognised by most projects
- The training offered to frontline staff appears to have helped raise local awareness of the variety of support that is available and in some cases is likely to influence positive changes in behaviour in the future.

### *Key barriers*

- Delays in starting projects impacted on the ability of some projects to meet targets and develop early partnerships
- Engaging clients was difficult for a number of projects, particularly with regards to outreach activities on local estates
- Referrals were not always appropriate, despite the effort of some projects to provide feedback to the referring provider
- Evidencing indirect action (e.g. whether a referral was a result of outreach activity) was reported as being very difficult
- Most projects were working with hard to reach clients and therefore the time taken to achieve some contracted outputs was longer than perhaps anticipated
- Most projects felt that providing childcare support for clients was very challenging and that finding suitable ESOL provision was not always straightforward
- Competition between providers was still reported as problematic by some projects and there were still concerns from some about output counting
- Eligibility rules of some providers prevented client referrals in some instances
- Some projects were unhappy with the quality of provision from other agencies and therefore refrained from making referrals
- The recession has impacted on all projects in terms of their ability to meet some targets

## 9 CLIENT FEEDBACK

Tank developed a client interview framework based on the WLW performance rating client satisfaction questionnaire template. This framework was aimed at obtaining key information about clients' experiences of the projects and the progress that they were making.

Client feedback was gained predominantly through telephone interviews, although where possible, some face to face interviews were conducted with clients at project events.

### 9.1 Demographics

5% of clients who started the programme participated in the survey; this included three from Brent, five from Ealing, seven from Hammersmith and Fulham, seven from Harrow, seven from Hillingdon and six from Hounslow. It was easier to target clients in some boroughs as client events were held, making it easier to conduct interviews.

Of these clients 35% were male and 65% were female. At the time of the interviews 45% of clients were out of work and actively seeking work and 46% were employed in full-time or part-time work. Employed clients were working in a range of jobs, including customer services, marketing and technicians.

3% of clients were self-employed, 3% of clients were still at college and preparing themselves for work and 3% of clients were using their local service in order to build confidence for their return to work once their children were older.

74% of clients said that they were still using the project on a regular basis and 9% said that whilst they had found employment, they still maintained a degree of contact with their advisor when they needed advice or support. 17% of clients said that they were no longer using the services of their project.

Clients were also asked how long they had been using their project (or how long they had used it until they stopped). Responses ranged from two weeks to over twelve months. However, 49% of clients interviewed had been using the service for over 6 months. This is a long engagement period and possibly reflects the complexities and barriers faced in supporting these clients. However, this may also reflect the reluctance of some providers to refer onto other local provision as discussed in section 8.2.

### 9.2 Engagement

Not including those clients using the *Workmates* project in the London Borough of Hillingdon, where support was offered to clients who were already in employment or who were just starting employment, most of the clients interviewed were workless (82%) before they started using their project. Some of the clients who were workless before starting also said that they were

homeless or having housing problems. 18% were at college or studying and starting their job-search preparations.

There were a variety of responses from clients with regards to how they heard about their respective project and who referred them. Many of the respondents said that they had heard about their project through positive word of mouth and as a result had self-referred. Referral agencies ranged but there were some consistencies from clients that were registered with specific projects. For example, several of the clients that were registered with *Xcite* said that they had heard about the project through visits from Personal Advisors to Stanmore College (participating in WLW’s Building Employability Pathways programme, which aimed to support residents move from learning into sustainable employment) and several clients who were registered with HOPE had been referred by advisors from HACE. Several of the clients that were using the *Local Solutions* or *Employment Ladder* projects said that they had been referred to their projects by a housing officer or other council staff that recognised their need for employment support as well as housing support. However, some of the clients did say that they felt lucky to have come across the service and that more marketing was needed to promote the project(s).

When asked what attracted them to their projects, the most common response from clients was the support available to help them find work. About what attracted them, one client said ‘the dedication of the staff to actually help me and make a difference – they were serious about helping’. Some clients from the *Local Solutions* and *Employment Ladder* projects also felt that the support they could receive around housing was very important. One client said – ‘my housing situation was stressful before and it was so hard to find work with no support’. One of the clients that was receiving support from the *Workmates* project said ‘I realised with their support I could stay in work – I was very nervous and unsure of myself at the start’. Across all of the projects some of the other attractions included support with CV development, assistance when completing job applications or the availability of voluntary work to increase experience.

### 9.3 Quality of service delivery

Clients were asked to rate how close they were to achieving their goals since joining the project on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being ‘a long way off’ and 10 being ‘achieved’. The responses are outlined below

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-	-	3%	-	6%	17%	11%	32%	17%	14%

Clients were generally positive about the affect of the project helping them achieve their goals. One client that rated themselves a seven, said ‘I’m getting there – I was a one at the start!’ whilst another client said ‘I have gained more experience and I have a better chance of getting a new job’. Some of the

clients were also thankful that their housing needs had also been (or were being addressed).

Clients were also asked to rate various aspects of service delivery on a scale of 1 to 5, with one being poor and five being excellent. The responses are outlined below:

	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
Information given before starting	-	-	6%	17%	77%	-
Identifying your welfare / support needs	3%	-	9%	17%	71%	-
Supporting you with your needs	3%	-	3%	14%	80%	-
Increasing your motivation	3%	-	6%	14%	74%	3%
Increasing your self-confidence	3%	-	9%	9%	76%	3%
Developing new skills (basic or work related)	3%	-	3%	14%	74%	6%
Helping you progress to the next level	-	3%	6%	17%	74%	-
Staff	-	-	-	6%	94%	-
Location	6%	6%	3%	14%	71%	-
Facilities	-	3%	3%	17%	74%	3%
Materials and resources	-	3%	3%	14%	63%	17%

As indicated above, clients' feedback about all of the projects was generally positive. Most clients were very happy with the information that they received about the projects prior to registering with them. One client said 'communication is the key and the information that we were given was great'.

In terms of identifying and supporting needs, again, most clients were happy with the support that they had received. One client was very positive saying 'they really find out about you and what's important to help you succeed'. Some clients also noted the importance of the financial support that they had received for things like travel expenses and interview clothing.

A large number of the clients that were interviewed said that the projects had increased their motivation and confidence. This was reflected by the comments of one client who said 'their help made me work even harder to find work but I was motivated already'. The value of work placements and volunteering was also evident with one client saying 'doing the work placement was great - it really helped me and then I got offered a job'. Work placements and volunteering were also important for some clients that said they had learnt

new skills such as working with people face-to-face, telephone skills and how to be more professional at work. Several clients also paid testament to the quality of training or courses delivered by the project that they had attended.

Most of the clients interviewed were very complimentary about the staff that had supported them and there were numerous positive comments from clients about individual Personal Advisors. One client said 'they were brilliant – I cannot emphasise this enough' whilst another said 'they are stars – they are so motivated to help'. The value of the Personal Advisors in developing positive working relationships with clients should not be underestimated and this degree of positive feedback is highly commendable.

Most clients were happy with the location, facilities and materials and resources. However, some clients from the *Workmates* project said that the centre was difficult to find or not that easy to get to, as they lived some distance away. It should be noted though that all of the clients who used the *Workmates* service were very positive about the facilities at the centre, particularly the crèche, which allowed them to attend events and personal advice sessions without being restricted by childcare issues. One client from the *energiZe* project also found that the location was not ideal for them.

For those clients that had experienced similar employment support services in the past, all but one was confident that their respective projects were much better than other services. One client said 'other services have offered advice but here there is actual practical support – the support isn't vague, it's specific to what I need'. Another client said 'I have been to no other services where somebody actually listens to you and understands your position'. However, one client was very negative about their experience, particularly with regards to the limitations of the project's inability to refer to them onto other more appropriate services. However, the majority of clients did feel that the service had either matched (29%) or exceeded (66%) their original expectations and only 5% said that the service received had fallen short of their original expectations.

Whilst most clients felt that they could not suggest improvements to their projects, some suggestions included:

- improved marketing
- generating more links with employers to increase access to jobs
- increased resources such as computers and meeting rooms.

One client that was unhappy with their experience of their project felt that the service should be tailored towards the needs of the local community and not follow a national or borough format.

When considering their overall experiences and the value of their respective projects, all clients interviewed did state that they would recommend the service to a neighbour. This is very positive and this attitude is reflected in the large number of clients that originally heard about the service through friends or family.

## 10 STRATEGIC ADDED VALUE

West London Working's 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 residents in employment and a reduction in child poverty." West London Working brings together the agencies responsible for employment and skills to reduce the high number of residents not in employment. The sub-region has a strong track record of economic success but too many local people have been identified as out of work. There are high numbers of children living in benefit dependent households and living below the poverty line and there is a strong correlation between areas of social housing and concentrations of workless residents.

West London Working identified a number of challenges that the sub-region faces, including a lack of coordination in the provision and planning of services, multiple and confused points of contact for residents and for employers and lack of personalised customer focused provision with few referrals between providers. West London Working has therefore developed and managed nine projects to address the identified challenges.

The PAOP programme was developed to increase the number of residents accessing services, support the hardest to reach and improve right first time referrals and reduce drop outs. The programme sought to pilot outreach approaches that link front line staff from other public and third sector services with employment and skills provision and provide personal advice with customised support to the hardest to help and access information, advice and guidance for all workless residents.

The PAOP programme as part of the wider West London Working programme aimed at reducing the number of West London residents on benefits by May 2009, increasing the number of West London residents in sustainable employment and to improve the conditions for children both by 2012.

The PAOP programme has contributed towards these strategic aims, particularly in terms of reducing those on benefits and increasing those in employment. The programme exceeded its target for providing support to clients and also helped a large number into employment. Even those that were unable to gain employment during the lifetime of the programme will hopefully have received support that will go some way to helping them in the future and will have also taken the first steps towards entering the labour market.

The programme has also helped provide some practical examples of how to try and build partnerships between a range of agencies and providers, local authorities and the private and voluntary sectors in order to try and help more jobless people find progress into work. The programme has also provided important information on the practicalities of building these partnerships between providers in order to improve 'right first time' referrals.

In addition to this the programme has contributed towards the Mayor's Economic Development Strategy objectives. In particular the project has been able to help tackle barriers to employment for some hard to reach groups (e.g. lone parents and BAME residents), that can find it hard to engage in the working environment.

The contracting arrangements enabled the six local authorities to remain focussed on the needs of the local areas, as well as the overall aims of the programme. Therefore, whilst contributing to the wider strategic aims of London, the individual projects have been able to continue to work towards local objectives.

For some boroughs this was the first time that they had delivered projects of this nature. Therefore it is likely that the experience gained in working as part of this programme would help increase their role as local enablers.

Finally, this programme was a pilot and the intention was to test new approaches to outreach and personal advice delivery. In addition to this, the pilot programme was also aimed at establishing the best ways to support project delivery. Throughout all of the project activities, many lessons have been learnt that can be carried forward into the development and delivery of future programmes. As well as highlight what works, this programme has also enabled conclusions to be drawn about what doesn't work and this is important for future programmes of this nature.

## 11 VALUE FOR MONEY

This section provides information on the value for money of the programme as a whole and also for the individual projects. The value for money for the 'residents supported' and 'residents into work' outputs has been calculated. It should be noted that the final spend figure for Hounslow is still subject to audit for the 2010/11 delivery period and therefore may change in the future.

Due to the high 'cost per resident' calculations for Brent and Hillingdon, the costs for Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow have been presented separately. It should be noted that Brent did deliver a large number of 'frontline staff receiving training' outputs which are not accounted for in the value for money calculation.

### *Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow*

Borough	Final spend	Cost per resident supported	Cost per resident into work
Ealing	£148,124	£1,664	£8,229
Hammersmith and Fulham	£143,250	£912	£2,428
Harrow	£146,896	£641	£3,060
Hounslow	£141,660	£859	£2,724
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£579,930</b>	<b>£906</b>	<b>£3,276</b>

### *Brent and Hillingdon*

Borough	Final spend	Cost per resident supported	Cost per resident into work
Brent	£143,708	£4,955	£47,902
Hillingdon	£150,000	£4,286	n/a

### *All projects*

Borough	Final spend	Cost per resident supported	Cost per resident into work
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>£873,638</b>	<b>£1,241</b>	<b>£4,854</b>

For the overall programme, the average cost per resident supported is £1,241 and the average cost per resident into work is £4,854. As with the outputs, if the combined performance of Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow are considered, the average cost per resident supported is £906 and the average cost per resident into work is £3,276

## 12 EXIT STRATEGIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

The programme has provided some valuable information in terms of understanding the benefits and challenges of a range of delivery methods for helping hard to reach residents access employment services. In addition to this some insight has been gained into how links between different agencies and providers can be better utilised to ensure that 'right first time' referrals are improved and more residents are able to move into or closer to employment.

The lessons learnt from the programme as a whole and from the individual projects can be used to help design new programmes of a similar nature in the future. These lessons should help to ensure that good practice is carried forward and that the difficulties faced in this programme are addressed in the future at the programme design stage.

In terms of the individual local authorities, plans for exit strategies and sustainability are outlined below:

### 12.1 Brent – *energize*

The intention is for this local authority is to carry the ethos of the programme into the future in terms of its work with South Kilburn Partnership. This work is currently funded by New Deal for Communities. Future delivery will involve the Employment and Skills Group that was developed as a part of the *energize* project. The Employment and Skills Group involves some of the key agencies and organisations in the area including Jobcentre Plus, Adult Education College and Children's Centres and therefore encourages communication and close partnership working.

### 12.2 Ealing – *Local Solutions*

Although funding has not been secured to continue the project as it stands, key elements are being taken forward in new West London employability projects, delivered again by Catalyst. This includes New Pathways to Work in West London, an ESF Trans-national project, which is exploring ways of improving employment and training signposting and support by frontline services for out of work residents and/or tenants. Catalyst is delivering activities for this in a number of the west London boroughs. They are also a sub-contractor in Harrow for the Reach West London Project which is supporting residents who have been out of work for over 12 months. Any clients still requiring support following the closure of the project will be signposted onto the alternative provision as appropriate.

### 12.3 Hammersmith and Fulham – *Employment Ladder*

Contracts for the Project Manager and some staff members have been extended having secured additional funding from the Homeless Directorate Fund. It is likely that the project will only be able to keep one job broker going forward but they are currently working to get funding to ensure the service continues in its current form, as it is working well.

The London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have put forward a proposal for the manager to set up and manage the same project for them. If this goes ahead, it is likely to fund 50% of the Project Manager's post. This interest from a neighbouring borough is testament to the excellent results the project has been achieving.

The local authority is also exploring the possibility of Hammersmith & Fulham Homes funding a post. Therefore given the various options it is likely that *Employment Ladder* will exist in some format now that WLW funding has ceased.

#### 12.4 Harrow – Xcite

Xcite will be delivering under CAP 09 (Childcare Affordability Programme) funding for potentially a further two years. This funding only allows the project to work with parents with school age children (0-14years). Therefore there will be a caseload of around 50-60 clients who will be ineligible under CAP 09 with whom the project will be working to find alternative employment support if they require it.

The continuation of this project was seen as positive by the Project Manager as the team has been developed over the past two years and because the lessons learnt from this programme can be used to plan future delivery.

#### 12.5 Hillingdon – Workmates

As an exit strategy A2 Dominion were asked for their recommendations in terms of:

- clear, simplified eligibility criteria and sustainable support for beneficiaries
- widening referral sources and broadening delivery across West London
- aligning Workmates with other A2Dominion employability programmes (both delivery and project financial/reporting systems)
- strengthening working relationship with Jobcentre Plus

Given current funding constraints LB Hillingdon has prioritised funding to ensure that partnership options are used whenever they can and that activity is not duplicated. The learning from the Workmates pilot has now been integrated within mainstream employability programmes rather than as a stand-alone service.

#### 12.6 Hounslow - HOPE

Section 106 funding had been set aside to fund HOPE2 for a further two years. July 2010 - 2012. As there is no longer an IAG team based at the Council, the HOPE2 advisors will be placing more emphasis on community outreach to secure referrals and linking into the Hounslow provider network.

## 13 LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 13.1 Project design

- Project delivery through a sub-contracting arrangement needs to be carefully assessed by a local authority at project design stage. Local authorities' procurement processes need to carefully assess a potential sub-contractor's record of delivery, previous experience of delivering a similar contract (and in the target geographical area) and capacity to deliver the contract.
- Rather than WLW contract with one delivery partner local authorities were keen to manage their own projects and this approach worked better when projects were not sub-contracted out to other providers but delivered in-house complementing existing council department services. For example, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow projects are well placed in local authority departments (e.g. temporary accommodation, adult & community learning) and link well and add value to other services from the same or different departments. In-house delivery also increased the ownership of the project in comparison to where delivery was sub-contracted.
- Late project start up affected a number of projects and in the future, this risk would need to be managed carefully by ensuring an appropriate start-up process was in place.
- The project design focused heavily on the various targets and these were monitored carefully and consistently by the management team. This focus assisted in driving the projects forwards and keeping them focused. In some cases it is felt that projects may have 'drifted' without this focus.
- *energiZe* has worked with South Kilburn Partnership projects and local organisations in order to capacity build, create partnership links and encourage the referral of workless residents to *energiZe*'s key delivery partner Brentin2Work. *energiZe*'s programme of support and events have been very well attended and these have been effective in creating new project links and developing individuals' understanding of worklessness issues. Referring identified residents onto employment and skills support has proved a greater challenge for *energiZe* to address. Brentin2Work underwent staffing changes during the programme and eventually closed and whilst this obviously impacted significantly on the original design of the project, even prior to this closure the project was suffering from a lack of referrals. Therefore, in the design of future projects similar to this, the use of partners to deliver outputs should not necessarily be avoided but should certainly be carefully considered. It is also important for organisations without an employment focus to be engaged and to be encouraged to signpost effectively.

- The role of work placements and volunteering was underestimated by Local Authorities at project design stage, with only one project (*energiZe*) profiling work placement and volunteering outputs as part of its key delivery. Personal Advisors across several projects quickly recognised the need for and value of these activities for long term unemployed clients, those with little or no work history and clients with confidence issues. As a result, three projects integrated these activities within their service. Tank developed health and safety guidelines to assist these projects in setting up and monitoring work placement opportunities. Future projects should consider the benefit of work placement and volunteering opportunities for hard to reach clients.
- Estate based outreach activities have proved more challenging than projects originally expected. Some of the estates were relatively isolated through being situated on the edges of a borough and / or had comparatively poor transport links. Residents were difficult to target and engage in activities. Also, community centres were not widely used by clients and some felt that they appeared conspicuous when 'open for business'. Anecdotal evidence suggested that residents felt self-conscious when taking up a service from these premises. Despite these problems, it is important that future projects continue to try and engage with residents from targeted estates and that the value of partnership working is recognised (e.g. RSLs for employment events and delivering training activities on the estates to raise resident awareness and encourage participation).
- Delivering the personal advice service from council premises proved more successful than in other locations. Again, anecdotal evidence suggested that the centrally located Harrow and Hounslow civic centres were more 'trusted' by clients. The centres have good transport links and provide the anonymity that clients may well want when taking up a one to one support service. Projects also report that clients who make the effort to attend appointments at the council premises demonstrate a commitment to progressing their lives. Some of the benefits noted from working at civic centres should be considered when designing outreach activities in future projects. For example, using locations that allow clients confidentiality when attending would be an important factor.

## 13.2 Staff

- Staff knowledge of the area and key providers in the borough was essential for effective project delivery. Where this knowledge is lacking it is essential that Personal Advisors have close contact with and / or supervision from staff with good knowledge. The Personal Advice and Outreach support contractors, Tank, coordinated a range of guest speakers at Personal Advisor meetings to help develop knowledge further, links were also provided to information on skills and employment support provision in bi-monthly newsletters.
- A Training Needs Analysis (TNA) exercise was undertaken by Tank in April 2009. Tank identified key skill areas related to the role of Personal

Advisor and requested that each Personal Advisor complete the framework rating their knowledge, experience and competency against the key areas. A menu of training workshops (to be delivered by Tank and specialist providers) was developed in response to the TNA exercise and this was circulated to the project teams to sign-up to. Personal Advisors were slow to respond to the offer because many were concerned about the time required to attend the training. Take-up of the options was therefore disappointing. As a result, Tank integrated workshop elements into the Personal Advisor bi-monthly meetings.

- Three projects experienced problems with staff turnover. Long lead times for filling Local Authority vacancies or difficulties in finding good quality staff has meant short term temporary staff have had to be recruited quickly to fill vacancies and take-over client caseloads. *Local Solutions* reviewed its job descriptions and tried to encourage better quality job applicants. Whilst it would have been difficult for these projects to have predicted staffing issues (particularly given the effects of a recession), it is necessary for projects to factor in and assess this risk (coupled with late project start-up) as part of project planning in the future.
- The turnover of frontline referral staff was also an issue for some projects. Catalyst Communities Housing Association (*Local Solutions*) experiences relatively high turnover of its frontline staff but ensures all new recruits are introduced to the skills and employment provision as part of the standard staff induction processes. In future, ensuring that projects continue to promote their activities, even once links have been established, is crucial to ensure that 'right first time' referrals are maintained.

### 13.3 Referral links into the project

- Projects that did not have established partner / referral links in place at the beginning of project delivery experienced more difficulty in establishing client referrals to their respective projects. In the future, project managers need to develop referral strategies (and SMART action plans) at project start-up stage that are linked to project risk assessment strategies. These plans need to clearly identify key agencies, contact details and activities to encourage partnership working and referral outcomes. These plans would then need to be linked to quantitative and qualitative monthly reporting to support monitoring.
- *Employment Ladder* had dedicated staff time and IT resources to carefully monitor its client referrals and the translation rate from referral to attendance at first appointment. Therefore the project was able to review the training being given to frontline referral staff and as a result, referral rates improved. A similar approach would benefit future projects in order to help ensure the regularity and appropriateness of referrals.
- *Local Solutions* saw a rise in referrals from its frontline staff as a result of referred clients being placed within Catalyst Communities Housing Association for work placement experience. Frontline staff reported that they had been motivated when seeing this client progression and were

encouraged to refer more clients on to the project. Although this may not always be possible, using existing clients as a way of promoting the service is crucial and should be utilised where possible.

#### 13.4 Location and resources

- Space in local authorities was an issue for two projects for seeing clients needing to see clients in a confidential / suitable setting, locating staff or finding suitable meeting space. Facilities and resources need to be carefully considered when designing projects of a similar nature, particularly when considering confidential settings for client meetings.
- Linked to the above point, suitable access to IT resources (for job search, application form filling, training course research etc.) was necessary for clients to progress their situation. Projects delivered within local authority buildings often did not have access to IT resources for clients and local libraries only offered one hour IT access at any given appointment. Resources need to be planned at project design stage.
- The *Workmates* project was run from newly built premises in the heart of a new estate in West Drayton. The centre was inviting, smart and very well resourced and it also had space to run an on-site crèche for children of working parents to attend evening workshops delivered by the project. Despite the good facilities the centre was very poorly signposted and this issue remained throughout the lifetime of the project with no resolution. The project did not have a strong community presence (e.g. a shop front) from which to promote its activities and struggled to gain referrals. Whilst the signage issue is not the sole reason for the project not gaining referrals it has not helped. The location of a service is an important factor as it is not only about access for clients but also about 'making itself known' in the area to help ensure referrals.

#### 13.5 Signposting and referring clients

- All projects acknowledged the need to offer holistic, flexible one-to-one support to clients but few recognised the role of initial assessment processes to facilitate the onward referral of appropriate clients to suitable skills and employment provision. This issue was picked up as part of the TNA exercise and included in the training and workshop activities unfortunately very few Personal Advisers signed up to this activity and it has not run. In order to ensure appropriate referrals, not only is it important for projects to develop a wide range of links with different agencies and organisations, it is also necessary for appropriate initial assessment activities to take place that help identify the needs of clients.
- One of the aims of the programme was not to duplicate existing provision but instead to refer clients on. However, many Personal Advisers were reluctant to refer clients on. Although some of the concerns around quality and flexibility of other services are reasonable, it is important that different providers maintain communication and determine appropriate courses of

actions for clients without duplication. Through this, clients can receive the most suitable support in order to help them achieve their goals.

- Some projects were quick to respond to new council initiatives. *Employment Ladder* was quick to spot the council Apprenticeship scheme and worked intensively with clients supporting them in their application and preparation for eight Hammersmith & Fulham Apprenticeship places. *Xcite Construction* (a sister project funded through Section 106 funding) created six Apprenticeships and these were filled by *Xcite* clients. *Xcite* also worked in partnership with Harrow in Business (HiB) to deliver business start-up seminars for *Xcite* clients and other residents. These examples highlight the importance for projects to react to local initiatives and try and make the most of opportunities that can benefit service delivery.
- Some projects delivered by the Local Authority made good use of other Local Authority services to address the range of clients' welfare needs. Signposting or referring clients to housing, welfare or family information was seen as being straightforward for the client as well as the Personal Advisor. The ability for projects to take a holistic approach when addressing a client's needs is very important and where possible, this should be considered in project design.
- Personal Advisor knowledge of key welfare and support services was identified as a support need in the Training Needs Analysis exercise. This knowledge developed over the lifetime of the programme and was in-part assisted by the support contractor delivering a facilitated session on identifying good, quality ancillary support and providing a range of additional information in bi-monthly newsletters. Future projects should consider this training need at an earlier stage of delivery if possible in order to help ensure that Personal Advisors are able to offer support in these areas.
- *Employment Ladder* was particularly pro-active in making links with a wide range of ancillary support providers. The project team mapped-out trends in identified client needs and then researched the range of provision. *Employment Ladder* established a referral database to pick and choose complementary support services to meet clients' needs. This is very good practice and similar processes would benefit future projects.

### 13.6 Performance issues

- The slow start to project delivery (due to Local Authorities' slow recruitment processes and the lead time required to develop referral links) contributed to significant under-performance against project outputs in year one. The need for projects to re-profile their outputs across the second year meant Personal Advisors needed to gain more referrals and juggle higher caseloads. This issue was further compounded by projects 'holding on' to clients and not referring them on to other skills and employment providers. As a way of managing client case loads more effectively, *Employment Ladder* started to develop a traffic light system to

ascertain when a client was job ready. The project team was increased and re-configured so that new referrals could be seen within three days of referral and more intense working could be provided by the employment specialist member of staff. It is important that future projects develop ways to manage caseloads and encourage referrals to other provision in order to ensure that high quality service delivery is maintained. Also, as part of project start-up it is essential that projects' schedule regular case meetings to discuss client progress and Personal Advisor caseloads.

### 13.7 WLW reporting framework

- A monthly reporting framework was completed by the Personal Advisors and submitted to Tank to collate into an overarching monthly report. The report was used by WLW and Tank to establish key delivery activities for the month, associated risks and issues and identify project support needs. This reporting framework was the main mechanism from which support issues were identified and acted upon by Tank. The quality of the reporting varied and Tank needed to clarify information with Personal Advisors before circulating the overarching report back to WLW and project teams. The qualitative nature of the report format made it difficult for Tank to assess project progress. Where projects reported against recovery plans it was easier to establish where progress has been made. Therefore to ensure that it is beneficial for projects to provide updates such as this when part of a larger programme, it is important that projects are able to report on both a quantitative and qualitative level.

## 14 CONCLUSION

The programme has been successful in identifying the benefits and the potential problems of a range of approaches to outreach activity, when considering ways to link frontline staff from public and third sector services with employment and skills provision. Where new outreach sources have been developed, some changes in practice have been adopted by the projects and this could lead to longer term, positive changes and integration of good employment practices within the local authorities. Through the outreach activity the programme has also made an impact on some local service provision through raising awareness about the support available with the respective local authorities. These changes are likely to impact positively on the overall aims of WLW in terms of employment and child poverty.

The programme has also helped increase the number of residents in West London who have been able to access suitable employment and support services in order to help them achieve their long term goals. Although there were only a few examples of truly innovative approaches, clients were able to receive a high standard of support.

In terms of preventing the duplication of existing provision and an improvement in referral practice, the programme has had mixed success. Whilst all of the projects managed to develop new partnership links, many of which are likely to be sustained, there was still a resistance to refer clients on for a variety of reasons including competition, quality, eligibility criteria and perceptions of funding. It should be noted that where effective signposting has taken place, good outcomes have been achieved for these clients.

Overall, this programme has provided some important information for future programme design and new approaches to working have been adopted by some of the local authorities, which can benefit their work in future projects. Across all of the six projects, many lessons have been learnt that can be carried forward to help improve future provision of this nature.

15 APPENDIX 1

*Residents supported (people access support – at least 1 hour of contact time)*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Ealing</b>	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	29	89	157	229	35	165	704
Target	80	80	80	200	124	80	644
% variance	-64	+11	+96	+15	-72	+106	+9

*Referrals to employability and skills providers*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Ealing</b>	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	55	271	147	212	16	105	806
Target	191	280	125	186	42	200	1,024
% variance	-71	-3	+18	+14	-62	-48	-21

*Residents gaining work*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Ealing</b>	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	3	18	59	48	52	180
Target	27	24	53	59	72	235
% variance	-89	-25	+11	-19	-28	-23

*Residents sustaining work at 6 months*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Ealing</b>	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	0	4	28	12	25	42	111
Target	10	8	22	35	52	28	155
% variance	-100	-50	+27	-66	-52	+50	-28

*Frontline staff receiving training*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Ealing</b>	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	103	54	66	18	11	252
Target	80	60	60	14	9	223
% variance	+29	-10	+10	+29	+22	+13%

*Accessing childcare support following intervention*

	<b>Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b>	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	19	30	7	56
Target	30	47	45	122
% variance	-37	-36	-84	-54

*Accessing work placements / volunteering*

	<b>Brent</b>
Actual	2
Target	20
% variance	-90

*Sustaining work for 3 months*

	<b>Hillingdon</b>
Actual	29
Target	80
% variance	-64

*Residents into sustained work for 6 months at <16 hours*

	<b>Hounslow</b>
Actual	33
Target	30
% variance	+10

*Number of projects supported*

	<b>Brent</b>
Actual	53
Target	30
% variance	+77

*Number of networking events*

	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Hounslow</b>	<b>Total</b>
Actual	7	67	74
Target	4	42	46
% variance	+75	+60	+41

*Number of project employment training sessions*

	<b>Brent</b>
Actual	2
Target	4
% variance	-50