



SHARED INTELLIGENCE

MUIRHOUSE AREA FOCUS PILOT

Case Study Evaluation Report – October 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

- 1.1 Government policy is giving increasing emphasis to tackling worklessness to boost economic competitiveness and reduce poverty. Particular concerns are around those localities where substantial levels of worklessness exist due to individuals being trapped in a continuing cycle of poverty and deprivation, and in relation to high numbers of Incapacity Benefit (IB) claimants, where rates have not been showing the decreases exhibited by JSA claimant trends in recent years.
- 1.2 The City Strategy initiative, first set out in the 2006 Welfare Reform Green Paper¹, set out to address these issues of localised worklessness and poverty by empowering local partnerships to develop local solutions. The initiative also represented a desire from Government to reform the welfare system and in doing so devolve more power to the local level.
- 1.3 City Strategy aims to test:
 - how best to combine the work of government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors in a concerted local partnership (consortium) – to provide the support jobless people need to find and progress in work
 - whether local stakeholders can deliver more by combining and aligning their efforts behind shared priorities, alongside more freedom to innovate, and tailor services in response to local needs.
- 1.4 Local areas were encouraged to form partnerships to bid to become City Strategy Pathfinders (CSPs), 15 areas including Edinburgh were selected to become CSPs and were required to develop a business plan setting out how they would ensure employability provision is more aligned to local needs and how partners would work together at the local level to achieve both national and local targets around reducing worklessness and poverty.
- 1.5 As the City Strategy initiative is a previously untried and tested approach to delivering the welfare to work agenda evaluation of CSP activity is very important in order to ensure lessons learned inform and shape future provision. Each CSP is required to commission a local evaluation of their activities which is being supplemented by an overarching national evaluation. As part of the national evaluation programme Shared Intelligence (Si) is acting as Area Evaluation Advisors (AEAs) on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support and advise the Edinburgh City Strategy Pathfinder in its local evaluation.
- 1.6 Edinburgh CSP has commissioned Cambridge Policy Consultants to carry out a local evaluation that is focusing on the governance and partnership aspects of the CSP. The CSP will also be collecting monitoring data from providers on project/service outputs and client outcomes.

¹ A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work, DWP, January 2006

- 1.7 In order to complement these two streams of evaluation activity Si are undertaking a case study mini-evaluation of one of the Edinburgh CSP projects – the Muirhouse Community Renewal Area Focus Pilot (the Muirhouse Pilot). This is a two year Pilot being implemented in the Muirhouse area in North Edinburgh (one of the areas in the City with the highest concentration of worklessness), which aims to provide an intensive client engagement and employment access service. The project commenced in April 2008.

Case Study Methodology

- 1.8 This case study of the Muirhouse pilot will allow for more detailed investigation of the effectiveness of new and more targeted provision on the 'harder to reach clients' in one of the priority target areas identified by the CSP. It will assist the CSP and the national evaluators in understanding the link between the partnership developments and the impact targets (via provision and target clients) and provide the qualitative insight to interpret the statistical monitoring data on provision/clients to 'tell a story'.
- 1.9 The methodology used includes a range of methods:
- Analysis of project documentation including initial tender, progress and monitoring reports;
 - attendance at meetings of Muirhouse pilot steering group;
 - interviews with providers and other stakeholders to understand current provision and joined up working and how they see this CSP approach and the provision within it being different from what has gone before;
 - working sessions with Muirhouse pilot manager and staff; and
 - group discussions with clients about their previous experience of being without work/employability services and their experience of the Muirhouse pilot provision.
- 1.10 A sample cohort of 6 clients was also identified to track through their programme of support. The clients selected have a variety of barriers to employment ranging from low skills, physical disability, mental health issues and problems with substance abuse. Interviews are being used to explore their experience of being without work, and where relevant of employability services, the barriers they are facing and their views on support they are receiving from the Muirhouse pilot. Tracked individuals were interviewed on 3 occasions and their consent to review their case notes at various intervals requested.
- 1.11 This sets out:
- the rationale, aims and targets of the project;
 - findings, targets and outputs achieved so far; and
 - learning points to inform the pilot moving forward, the development of similar models elsewhere in the CSP area, and the CSP approach generally.

2. PROJECT APPROACH, TARGETS AND OUTPUTS

Project Rationale

- 2.1 Despite economic improvements in Edinburgh the city currently faces a number of key labour market challenges. While it has a relatively low unemployment rate high levels of economic inactivity exist among particular groups of individuals and within particular geographic areas. These 'hard to reach' groups include lone parents, BME groups, people with health problems and with chaotic lifestyles (including prison leavers and those with alcohol and drug abuse problems).
- 2.2 Many of the economically inactive or "workless" in Edinburgh reside in particular geographic areas where barriers to employment exist due to structural economic changes and adverse personal circumstances. Poor housing and environment; poor connectivity to areas of growth and labour market opportunity; poor health; high levels of crime; low aspirations; and poor performance and delivery of public services and support have become concentrated and reinforcing. As these factors inter-relate they have resulted in a spiral of deprivation or decline which requires significant, targeted intervention to turn around.
- 2.3 Therefore, a holistic approach is required to tackle worklessness in the City; this is what the Edinburgh CSP is aiming to do. It aims to address the labour market challenges outlined by increasing the rate and speed at which disadvantaged people in the City will move into sustained employment and ensuring that employment and skills provision meets the changing demands of employers. It also seeks to improve joined up working in the delivery of employability services.
- 2.4 A key part of this approach is thus on developing joined up provision in a way that better meet the needs of some of the most marginalised people who are furthest from the labour market and face particular challenges to improving their employability.
- 2.5 To investigate new methods of tackling the pockets of long term worklessness and inactivity in the city the CSP commissioned an intensive client engagement/outreach and employment access/support service pilot in the Muirhouse area of North Edinburgh. Muirhouse is one of the most deprived areas in the city. From the mid-1980s Muirhouse has undergone significant renewal, with many of council-owned blocks being replaced by private housing. However, many of the problems remain; the area still suffers from high levels of deprivation, poor housing, problems of drug abuse and alcohol dependency, concentrations of long term workless and low skilled residents. The high level statistics in the table below, which demonstrate the position in Muirhouse in terms of claimant numbers at the time of the projects inception, highlight the concentration of deprivation in the area:

Benefit claimants (May 2008) and Index of Multiple Deprivation (2006)								
	IB/DLA		JSA		Health Domain	Housing Domain	Crime Domain	Education, Skills and Training Domain
	Num	% of working age population	Num	% of working age population	rank (out of 6,025)	rank (out of 6,025)	rank (out of 6,025)	rank (out of 6,025)
<i>Datazone</i>								
S01002281	80	16.9%	25	5.3%	363	705	795	239
S01002282	105	17.3%	35	5.8%	195	421	56	11
S01002291	170	26.2%	80	12.3%	55	719	382	63
Muirhouse total	355	20.5%	140	8.1%				
Edinburgh	21,770	6.8%	5,370	1.7%				
Scotland	291,740	9.0%	71,850	2.2%				

Project Aims, Targets and Outputs

- 2.6 The Muirhouse pilot aims to assist in tackling these issues by developing an intensive client engagement and employment access service in order to increase the employment rate within the area and reduce benefit dependency.
- 2.7 The project's key output targets include:
- Carry out 1000+ door to door Listening Surveys in the identified data zones of Muirhouse (plus with multiple returns)
 - Identify and engage more intensively with 400 residents of Muirhouse, in particular, people who have not recently engaged with existing services, young people, disabled people, people with health problems and people with criminal records
 - Support 100 people into work and 35 people into education and training (of whom 75% will be non-JSA)
 - Increase the employment rate of Muirhouse by 12% over 2 years
 - Increase the income coming into the community (partly through career progression and job retention)
 - Begin the process of sustainability and mainstreaming of the methodology by embedding it within Muirhouse through involving local partners and equipping residents themselves with the appropriate skills through volunteering and job opportunities
- 2.8 The key target groups are covered by the project are:
- People who are not currently engaging with employability services
 - People experiencing ill health including mental ill health
 - Young people including school leavers
 - People recovering from addictions
 - People with criminal records
- 2.9 The original contract was extended for a further 15 months to June 2010 and additional targets identified for this subsequent period of activity. These targets and performance against them are outlined in Section 3.

The Community Renewal Approach

- 2.10 Community Renewal focuses on engaging those individuals who tend not to engage with mainstream employability services. Their approach is centred on developing a community base and presence and involves the use of small teams of community animators to undertake outreach work to engage individuals. The Community animators will reach people via a combination of home visits and community work. Community Renewal staff/animators use an open ended listening process (*'listening survey methodology'*) to establish a rapport with people in the community and to identify where individuals would like to make a change in their own lives and in their community.
- 2.11 Initial conversations with individuals with focus on the community and how they feel about living there, only once an individual has been engaged and trust has been established will the Community Renewal staff work with the client to identify whether they have 'latent desire for work. A database record is held of all the contacts made, people's views, their desires and barriers.
- 2.12 Community Renewal uses a case management approach to support individuals with whom they have engaged which once trust has been established, focuses on the development of a personal plan between Community Renewal and the individual, which identifies barriers to employment and the support required to address these, including support from other agencies where relevant. However, unlike more traditional employment support programmes Community Renewal will not refer the individual to other services but will "broker" these supports in on behalf of the client and will mentor them throughout acting as a constant source of contact and support.
- 2.13 For those individuals for whom poor health is a major barrier to employment specialist support is provided by Community Renewal via a holistic assessment technique- this is an intensive assessment which looks deeper into the barriers that are holding a person back A health case manager conducts the assessment and then works with the individual to uncover the underlying causes of the health problems and assist them to address these. This provides a bridge between the health and employability agendas. Community Renewal also looks to establish direct links with NHS services.
- 2.14 As outlined above central to the Community Renewal approach is having a local presence and base which is visible and accessible on foot for its target population. The aim of this is to create a space in the community which is easily accessible and where people feel free and welcome to drop in. Facilities such as computers, internet access, coffee and tea, jobs papers etc. are made available for residents. Community Renewal Muirhouse is based at Pennywell Court, a shopping centre in Muirhouse.
- 2.15 Community Renewal also seeks to establish links and partnerships with other agencies in order to build a culture of multi-disciplinary working in the neighbourhood setting; to ensure that they can provide the full range of services that individual clients may require to address barriers to employment; and to influence where possible the way that mainstream services are planned and delivered. Another strand of the Community Renewal approach is to grow the skills and confidence of local residents to become engaged in their community and to link with local regeneration efforts.
- 2.16 The project is staffed by a Project Manager, three full time equivalent Community Animators, one part-time Administrator, one Health Case Manager (who works 20 hours per week) and one part-time Volunteer. The project is steered by a group of partners and relevant link agencies which is chaired and serviced by the CSP.

3. SUCCESS OF THE PILOT

- 3.1 To date evaluation activity has included analysis of project monitoring and update reports; review of steering group papers and minutes; interviews with Community Renewal staff; two site visits to the project; and consultation with and review of case notes of the tracked cohort of individuals.
- 3.2 We have also undertaken a number of interviews with partner organisations and local stakeholders. We have now met with the tracked cohort twice where possible and intend to meet with them again in July/August. A beneficiary focus group(s); further staff interviews and one more site visit will also be undertaken in late July/early August. This additional fieldwork together with analysis of monitoring data will inform the final report, scheduled for mid August 2009. Therefore, only interim findings are outlined below.

Impact on headline benefit claimant data

- 3.3 It is difficult to assess the success of the project through analysis of official benefit claimant data. A key problem arises through the time lag of data sources, but more significantly, the area focus pilot is running at a time when claimant levels are rising across the country as the recession continues to worsen. In addition Muirhouse is undergoing significant regeneration, with many residents being relocated outside of the datazones as houses are demolished for redevelopment.
- 3.4 That said the real difficulty is not in the collation of data which demonstrates how employment and skills rates are changing and how the gap may be narrowing – rather the real challenge is showing whether this is as a result of the pilot intervention, particularly given that the project is being delivered alongside a lot of other regeneration activity and mainstream skills and employment provision.
- 3.5 Nevertheless, it is still of interest to look at movements in the number of claimants in the area since the projects official start date. The table below shows the total number of JSA benefit claimants over the last year. The number of JSA claimants in Muirhouse has increased at a much slower rate than the average for the city as a whole. From May 2008 to September 2009² the number of claimants rose by 24% compared to a massive 86% increase across the city as a whole. Further, one datazone actually experienced a fall in the number of claimants by around 50%.

² Please note that data is not seasonally adjusted therefore some changes may be the result of seasonal variation in claimant count data.

JSA CLAIMANTS			Change May 08- Sep 09	
	May 2008	September 2009	Num	%
SO1002281	27	43	16	59%
SO1002282	35	43	8	23%
SO1002291	83	43	-40	-48%
Muirhouse	145	180	35	24%
Edinburgh	5,371	9,995	4,624	86%
Scotland	72,385	129,569	57,184	79%
Great Britain	807,191	1,537,620	730,429	90%

Source: Department of Work and Pensions

- 3.6 There is more of a time lag with other DWP benefit data – for example, the most recent data for other claimant groups such as Lone Parents and Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefits from February 2009. Table 2 presents information on benefit claimants by the main claimant groups for Muirhouse (3 SOAs), Edinburgh and Great Britain.
- 3.7 Comparisons of the most recent set of data with May 2008 reveals Muirhouse has performed better than city wide and national comparators. Overall the number of out-of-work benefit claimants fell by 4% over the period in contrast to a rise in Edinburgh and GB. Reductions were seen across all claimant groups – in particular the number of ESA/IB claimants declined in Muirhouse in contrast to an increase in the number of claimants across Edinburgh as a whole. However, some of this may be accounted for by demolition/decanting programme which has seen many individuals move out of the Muirhouse area.

Main Claimant Groups May 2008 to February 2009									
	job seeker	ESA and IB	lone parent	carer	Others on income related	disabled	out-of-work benefits	total	
Muirhouse									
May-08	135	360	105	25	25	20	625	670	
Feb-09	155	345	90	20	10	20	600	645	
Change 08-09	20	-15	-15	-5	-15	0	-25	-25	
Change 08-09 (%)	15%	-4%	-14%	-20%	-60%	0%	-4%	-4%	
Edinburgh									
May-08	5,370	21,770	4,620	2,080	1,180	2,390	32,950	38,090	
Feb-09	9,010	21,920	4,410	2,140	1,060	2,510	36,400	41,680	
Change 08-09	3,640	150	-210	60	-120	120	3,450	3,590	
Change 08-09 (%)	68%	1%	-5%	3%	-10%	5%	10%	9%	
Great Britain									
May-08	787,770	2,584,240	738,580	387,430	173,300	355,990	4,283,890	5,124,110	
Feb-09	1,421,390	2,592,110	735,990	399,970	181,840	363,260	4,931,330	5,784,320	
Change 08-09	633,620	7,870	-2,590	12,540	8,540	7,270	647,440	660,210	
Change 08-09 (%)	80%	0%	0%	3%	5%	2%	15%	13%	

Source: Department of Work and Pensions

Reaching the target group and headline outputs

- 3.8 The project has been successful in gaining the trust of local residents, demonstrated by the large numbers of self-referrals to the project through word of mouth recommendation from others in the community. Having a local base has also assisted with this – Community Renewal have secured a central location within the Muirhouse area which has helped to maximise the number of individuals who drop-in to access services.
- 3.9 However, initially this led to Community Renewal being accessed by individuals who were from outside the target datazones. While Community Renewal were not

formally contracted to assist these individuals they did not turn anyone away and aimed to assist where they could, which put some pressure on staff resources. However, once links and relationships were established with other services Community Renewal was better able to signpost these individuals to other supports thus reducing pressure on resources.

- 3.10 The commitment of Community Renewal to source staff where possible from the local community has also assisted it in establishing trust and breaking down the barriers which are faced by many mainstream agencies. This is something that is highlighted as being of particular value by clients.

"Because x works here and people in Muirhouse know him, people connect with this place. If he wasn't working here it wouldn't get the respect..." – client interview

"... it is really quite busy... people seem to trust them (Community Renewal Staff)" – stakeholder comment

- 3.11 Conversations with staff, stakeholders and analysis of monitoring data, reveal that the project has also been successful in engaging with the specified target groups – to April 2009 the proportion of clients gaining job outcomes who were in receipt of JSA was within the 25% limit established. Although this has risen in recent months the proportion of JSA clients has remained small considering the increased numbers of individuals in receipt of this type of benefit due to the recession.
- 3.12 Evidence from Community Renewal staff and from discussions with clients suggests that many of those who are on Community Renewal's caseload are those who would tend not to engage with mainstream services. Significant numbers of the individual clients face multiple barriers to employment, particularly health and emotional barriers such as: mental health difficulties; physical health concerns; domestic violence, abusive relationships and past abuse. This is demonstrated via the high numbers receiving support from the health case worker.
- 3.13 Examples of other barriers include: self-esteem and confidence issues; lack of skills and experience; debt; and addiction. In particular Community Renewal staff report that they have encountered a lot of clients with drug/alcohol problems, however, surprisingly they note that alcohol appears to be much more of a problem in the area than recognised due in part to its social respectability which makes it less immediately noticeable than drug addiction.
- 3.14 The Community Renewal engagement method has proved very successful in contacting local residents. Community Renewal is perceived by clients as offering a more relaxed, less threatening and more welcoming environment than exists within some of the mainstream service. Other agencies that are working with Community Renewal also recognise that they are managing to engage people that they would otherwise not have (without the Community Renewal link).
- 3.15 Several stakeholders commented on the success of the engagement approach which allows for links to be made with the individual, their family and the wider community. Given the client group that Community Renewal are dealing with a number of stakeholder consultations indicated surprise at the willingness of individuals to work with the project and to make positive steps towards employment.

"Everyone is really friendly here, they're like pals. They don't just wait for me to come in and see them, they phone me up when they see jobs that they think I might be interested in" – client interview

"Other places, like JobCentre, look down their noses at you - here they treat you like a person." – client interview

"Other projects it is about numbers on a sheet not people, at Community Renewal you are just not a statistic" – client interview

"It is reaching out to individuals that many of the agencies wouldn't normally manage to engage with" – stakeholder comment

"It took a while to kick off but now it is really busy... The Community hub approach makes a big difference, people are more likely to trust other (mainstream) services who come here" – stakeholder comment

- 3.16 Performance to April 2009 shows that 682 Muirhouse residents have been contacted by Community Renewal, which is above the target for 2008/09 of 600. Of that total 160 have been engaged and are actively working with/registered Community Renewal, above the target of 120 for the year.

	Target 2008/09	Actual Jul-08	Actual Oct-08	Actual Dec-08	Actual Mar-09
Minimum residents contacted	600	122	380	591	682
Actively working with/registered	120	44	109	156	160
No of holistic assessments	35	3	9	16	35
No of people receiving health interventions	25	3	12	18	27
No of 16-19 years olds in NEET group engaged	15	8	18	25	43
Job outcomes	40	2	11	18	43
Training and Education Outcomes	15	0	1	2	11
Pre Vocational Outcomes	10	0	1	2	11
Volunteering Outcomes	10	1	2	3	10
Local community activity outcomes	20	2	10	10	20
Maximum % of clients gaining job outcomes to be on JSA	25%	1 is on JSA	3/12 on JSA	4/17 on JSA	10/40 on JSA

- 3.17 The project has also met its targets for the number of clients receiving holistic assessments and has exceeded its target with respect to the number of NEETs engaged. After an initial slow start the project has also gained momentum in terms of the number of job and vocational, education and training outcomes. There have been 40 verified job outcomes to date, in line with the target of 2008/09. Of the 40 job entrants, 32 are currently still in work – at 80% this is above the 70% rate of sustainable job outcomes which was specified in the original tender proposal.
- 3.18 Community Renewal Muirhouse has been extended for another year and Table 4 below details project targets for the first half of 2009/10. Community Renewal has already made good progress towards targets for this year. The project has already exceeded the target with respect to the number of additional people registered with the project. There have been 28 verified job outcomes for the first half of the year so the project appears to be on track to achieve the target for the full year of 70. The project is also well on its way to achieving education and training outcomes and has already exceeded the target for pre-vocational training outcomes.

	Target 2009/10	Actual Jun-30	Actual Sep-15	Actual Dec-31	Actual Mar-31	Actual Jun-30
Additional people actively working with/registered	80	100	116			
No of holistic assessments	35	7	14			
No of people receiving health interventions	35	9	15			
No of 16-19 years olds in NEET group engaged	15	9	15			
Job outcomes (50 from datazones and 20 non-datazones)	70	19	28			
Training and Education Outcomes	30	5	18			
Pre Vocational Outcomes	10	14	15			
Volunteering Outcomes	10	2	3			
Local community activity outcomes	20	11	14			
Maximum % of clients gaining job outcomes to be on JSA	25%	37%	32%			

- 3.19 The economic climate has changed since the project commenced with the economy now in recession. However, this does not appear to be having a huge effect in terms of the number of vacancies that are coming forward to Community Renewal. Staff feel that the main impact has been on increased competition for training courses e.g. a recent retail training academy course had only 16 places but 160 applicants, when other applicants are nearer the labour market it can be difficult for Muirhouse clients to be selected.
- 3.20 The project is also seeing more people come in for support after being made redundant and there is now much more competition for entry level jobs, making it more difficult for those who are further from the labour market. That said despite a small increase in the number of JSA claimants on their register Community Renewal is maintaining its focus on the "harder to help" and has to date resisted the temptation to focus only on those who are easiest to help and thus easier to secure a job outcome for.
- 3.21 Feedback on the project from client interviews has been very positive. All of individuals within the tracked cohort mentioned the quality of the support given by the staff, the fact that they don't feel pressured and pushed into anything, and the convenience of the services on offer. The hands on approach of the staff is welcomed as is the time and space that they give to clients. Individuals mention in particular the value of not being referred on "passed from pillar to post" and the fact that the Community Renewal staff are a continued source of contact and support.

"Community Renewal is better than the other projects I have been on, staff are more friendly and willing to help, you don't get passed from pillar to post" – client interviews

"here they look at my needs and barriers and work with me hand in hand" – Client interviews

"the staff are incredibly committed and work above and beyond the call of duty... They spend a lot of time trying to understand individuals' problems and meet their needs." – stakeholder interview.

- 3.22 In addition to the specified output targets the project is also generating significant positive outcomes for the individual clients it is working with. Increased confidence and motivation is stated by clients as a key positive. Clients also indicated that the project has helped them by giving them the skills to better deal with day to day life situations.
- 3.23 A number of the tracked cohort are individuals for whom work would never have been a consideration prior to engagement with Community Renewal, however, the flexible unpressured approach of the project has allowed them to start to consider this as an option – the majority of the cohort have had volunteering opportunities

identified to them as a route back to the labour market which is considered as helpful in familiarising them with the world of work without the pressure that would be associated with a paid job.

- 3.24 Volunteering as a route back to work, especially for those who have been out of the labour market for some time and who experience multiple barriers to employment, is a key element of the Community Renewal approach. In the early stages of the project however, it appeared that some individuals were being referred for volunteering who were not yet suitable for this as an option. In response to this Community Renewal have been working with the Volunteer Centre to develop a case conferencing approach to support referrals to volunteering and are also looking at approaches to pre-volunteering/preparing people for volunteering.

"Before coming here I was really shy and wouldn't speak to anyone, now I am confident and able to speak to people" – Client interviews

"Community Renewal has really helped, especially with confidence building, also I can now use a computer couldn't use one before at all" - Client interviews

"they have helped me to recognise my good points" – Client interviews

"... confidence building has been one of the biggest things, they have introduced me to working with people, it has been totally different than other volunteering projects" - Client interviews

- 3.25 Given the large numbers of individuals engaging with the project who have health issues the health case manager and interventions are a welcome aspect of the project which adds real value to existing provision. The provision of funding to provide this type of support directly within an employability project is rare but valued and does appear to be assisting some of the clients in making positive changes. The project has developed strong working arrangements with the Keepwell initiative and is also seeking to engage more with mainstream health services.
- 3.26 While the approach is generating strong outputs and outcomes and is viewed positively by clients it is necessary to consider that for many individuals that Community Renewal is working with (and for those with whom it has yet to engage) work is a long way off. Therefore, getting to the point where employment is a real option is a long haul given the extensive and multiple barriers many are facing.
- 3.27 A large number of individuals engaged require intensive support over a long-term period; drop out rates can be high and conversion rates from engagement to support to employment lower than would be expected as ideal by the mainstream. The need for this type of support also translates to a high demand for the health case manager support, which it can be difficult to meet due to the constraint of a 20 hour per week post.
- 3.28 It is also the case, as demonstrated with the tracked cohort, that each client is different, with a different set of issues and barriers to be addressed, therefore, a standardised approach would not work – the flexibility of the pilot approach appears to be essential.
- 3.29 A lot of effort is also being made by Community Renewal staff to keep clients engaged; a few of the tracked cohort made initial progress toward their employability goals but then have been set back due to issues around personal barriers. A real

challenge is for the staff to keep them engaged on their journey towards employment without risking disengagement, especially given that in a lot of cases staff have to respond to crisis situations facing the individual. It is also the case that even when individuals progress to a positive outcome they are still requiring support from Community Renewal, the project staff work to provide this despite the fact that they are not specifically funded to provide aftercare services.

3.30 Some case studies are outlined at Appendix A.

Establishing Community Links

3.31 One of the project's target outputs was to establish 4/5 community groups. Significant progress has been made on this with a total of 4 groups established to date:

- A young persons group
- A female group
- A male group
- A short-term action group focused on addressing environmental issues with regard to Pennywell Gardens and Bus Stop.

3.32 Around 6-8 NEET individuals were identified at start of the project. Community Renewal set up a pizza night, and got them to come to the office. The staff spent time asking them what they liked, didn't like about the area, what they enjoyed doing, got them to think about how their behaviour was perceived by other people in the area. Initially they managed to move four/five of the group towards a positive outcome (college/work) and are continuing to work with others. The project has also established links with the Muirhouse Youth Development Group (MYDG).

3.33 The project also worked with a group of residents to sort out environmental issues with regard to Pennywell Gardens and bus stop, which was an issue identified by a number of people via the listening survey. The project also set up two more community groups – one male one female – taking them on social activities to help people develop a social network and build confidence people skills etc. The majority of individuals in these groups were on the health case manager's caseload and therefore had significant health/mental health barriers. The two groups recently helped set-up and run a fun day to raise money for a free local paper which was under threat of closure. The women's group has been a particular success and is now self-sustaining with around 6 women continuing to be involved who are organising meetings and activities themselves.

3.34 In addition to establishing these groups the project has also established itself well within the community. It was mentioned early on in the project that staff would like to identify and agree a mechanism whereby they could feed community views - particularly around regeneration of the area – to the local authority and other relevant stakeholders. This is a key issue as the regeneration of Muirhouse is a concern for many of the individuals that the project is working with and for some worries around this can impact on their progress towards employment. Some success in establishing such a mechanism is demonstrated via the links with Edinburgh City Council Housing Service, who now offer a weekly drop in at the Community Renewal base in Muirhouse.

"I now have one eye on the job front while the last time I saw you I had two, this is because of a combination of knock backs and personal stress about my house (being demolished) ..." – client interview

"... wanted her to come in and see housing officer as she was scared she would not find anything" – Community Renewal staff interview

"A lot of people are worried about the regeneration in Muirhouse, concerned about their house being knocked down and being the last one left in the block" – stakeholder comment

3.35 Despite successes, there were, however, some initial difficulties and barriers for the project in establishing community links and a particular wariness from existing community groups around the role and value the project could provide. This has been noted in a number of stakeholder consultations. In part this scepticism was attributed to the fact that many people working in Muirhouse have seen lots of projects come and go of varying quality etc and also due to frustrations over cuts in funding which have made some elements of partnership working at a local level quite difficult. What is also recognised by some stakeholders, however, was the willingness of Community Renewal to address these issues head on.

"There are a lot of community activists in Muirhouse who are very distrustful of new organisations... there was a lot jealousy initially" – stakeholder comment

"It is hard for a new project to come into the area and be accepted by other agencies, it is quite cliquy, and this has not been helped by considerable cuts in funding which has made it more difficult for collaborative working" – stakeholder comment

"People in other projects that have been long established in the area see new projects coming in and there is an air of resentment" – stakeholder comment

Building Partnerships

3.36 The project has made substantial inroads into building partnerships with existing agencies after an initial slow start. A number of agencies currently work out of the centre allowing people to access a range of supports from one venue and increasing the effectiveness and streamlining of the referral process. The following agencies and individuals are based at the project:

- Working Links (once a week) provides help with CVs, applications and job search advice
- Housing officer (once a week) supporting for people living in private or public rented accommodation with help and advice on housing issues applying for crisis loans, filling in housing benefit forms and so on
- Money Advisor (twice a week) provides in work benefit calculations, helps deal with personal debt issues, provides budgeting and financial advice

- Keepwell (once a month) provides mini health screening for people aged 45-64 years old, BMI check, Blood Sugar check, with referrals on for a full health screening with a GP
 - Alternative Therapy (every fortnight) provides therapy to the people allocated as needing health interventions
- 3.37 Some of these linkages were easier to build than others, for example, debt issues were recognised as a major barrier to accessing employment opportunities from very early on in the project and there is a high demand for money advice. However, due to resource constraints on money advice services it took some time (around 9 months into the project) for this support to become available within the Community Renewal base. During the intervening period individuals were still being referred to this support by Community Renewal but few were accessing.
- 3.38 Due to the current economic climate and increased pressure on staffing and resources JCP's has reduced its outreach activity so it has not been possible for them to offer services from the community hub. Community Renewal see developing the relationship with JCP as important as it would help breakdown barriers that people feel toward mainstream provision while also extending JCP's reach to more hard to reach clients. It will also assist in the sustainability and mainstreaming of community based support that is available to individuals in Muirhouse.
- 3.39 Community Renewal has also built up relationships with a number of other agencies who come to the community hub to work with clients and deal with referrals on an ad hoc basis. These agencies include Working Families and the Volunteer Centre. They have also recently Careers Scotland advisor to come out to the CR offices – but they only have remit for 16-19 year olds so quite small – however, if someone is interested they can't make the referral directly through the Careers Advice persons and has to do it through the main switch board number.
- 3.40 There are also a number of other supports where the project is having to referring individuals out rather than the agency being based in the Community Renewal office. Less referrals are being experienced by those agencies that do not have such a direct link.
- 3.41 A number of those projects who offer their services from the Community Renewal base comment that the linkages and referrals are better than in Muirhouse than in other areas in which they are working. Many of the projects that are working with Community Renewal also comment that they feel very much part of the team and are working in a climate of mutual support and collaboration. However, a number of stakeholders also comment on the fact that these linkages and joint working relationships exist because of relationships on the ground rather than the fact that this collaboration is embedded in the strategic objectives of host organisations. This lack of strategic commitment is a key issue with regard to sustainability and mainstreaming of the project moving forward.
- 3.42 Links between the project and employers appear to be more limited – the project has engaged with employers around large scale local recruitments e.g. Morrisons. Project staff are also proactive in seeking feedback from employers with regard to client applications. However, further investigations are required to establish the extent to which the project is dealing with demand side issues and how it is linking with other agencies to identify employer needs, access vacancies and to join up the client and employer supports and offer e.g. JCP on LEP etc.

4. LEARNING POINTS

Success Factors

- 4.1 As outlined above, Community Renewal Muirhouse has been successful in engaging people who would not have otherwise taken up employability support. The project seems to have been particularly effective in making contact with and engaging with individuals amongst people in the 'hidden unemployed' – those not currently engaged with employability services. They have also been successful in establishing joint working relationships with a number of related and wider support services.
- 4.2 Key success factors of the project include:
- Visible and welcoming base in the local community from which individuals can access not only Community Renewal support but support from other agencies.
 - Use of staff who have links to the community has been key to breaking down barriers and establishing trust and respect among the local community.
 - Listening survey proving as a useful, non-threatening method of identifying individuals for support which is resulting in high levels of engagement with the project.
 - Having the opportunity and funding arrangements to focus on engagement of the harder to reach as the primary objective with less pressures around the need to achieve high job outcome targets within a short period of time.
 - The dedication, commitment and open attitude of the manager and staff has been noted by clients and providers/stakeholders and has enabled the project to build strong links with other agencies and also with the local community.
 - Flexible support model and funding for non-traditional supports is valuable given the wide range of personal barriers experienced in different ways by individual clients – this is allowing the project to develop an individualised package of support tailored to very specific individual needs which often the mainstream is unable to provide.
 - The project while not funded to do so is providing aftercare support for individuals once they enter employment – this is identified as a very valuable and often essential support.
 - Health case worker is a valuable addition to the staff team given the extent of health barriers experienced by individuals within the Muirhouse community – this allows for a very direct linkage of health and employability support.
 - Establishment of links with other providers are starting to bridge the gap between employability and wider services e.g. health, housing, financial advice and opportunities are being pursued to enhance and formalise these links within the mainstream.
 - Streamlining of referral process through bringing other agencies into the project rather than referring individuals out is resulting in increased accessing of other services and improved joint working between services.

Key Challenges

4.3 Areas where there have been more challenges and/or which require further development/investigation include:

- Geographic constraint of project, self-referrals come in from other areas outside the funded datazones which created initial resource issues for the project, although the project was specifically tendered to deal with this small geographic area.
- Stakeholder interviews have highlighted initial difficulties with the referral process with some inappropriate referrals occurring in the early stages of the project - however, progress is being made on this issue with refinements and streamlining of referral processes taking place – this is an area that the project should continue to develop with partners.
- Difficulty and length of time it has taken to build successful relationships with some of the other agencies/providers due in part to resource constraints of these agencies/providers and the fact that the need for the collaboration with the project is not built into the strategic objectives of the host organisations.
- Some initial difficulties in engaging with other community based organisations due to scepticism around the value of the project and some tensions related to a reduced funding climate – while the project has made progress in overcoming these difficulties continued effort is required to maintain community relationships.
- The range of barriers, often multiple, experienced by the target client groups means that there are no easy fixes, the journey toward employment is a long one, individuals will have set backs but it is key for the project to have the ability to stay engaged with the individual and work with them on a long-term basis – this raises issues:
 - for funders as maximum job outcomes may take some time to arise
 - for the project in terms of finding a balance between keeping the focus on journey towards employment and recognising the need to work at a pace which is comfortable for the individual and which prevents disengagement
 - recognition for all that conversion rates from engagement to support to employment will be lower than some mainstream funders would expect, at least initially

This also raises issues around short-term funding – Muirhouse and its residents have seen many support projects come and go, people are engaged, make progress then funding is withdrawn – this can leave the individuals stuck part way through their employability journey and can also act as a disincentive to further engagement. It is important for funders and mainstream agencies therefore, to consider how support to individuals is sustained over the medium to longer term.

- Engagement with and impact on mainstream services – the extent to which the project is fully influencing the way mainstream services are planned and delivered is limited at present and requires further work, especially in terms of with mainstream employment services (JCP), the local authority regeneration agenda and NHS.
- Employer and demand side linkages are limited and could be enhanced further.

Moving Forward

- 4.4 CSP partners are already using the Community Renewal approach in Muirhouse to inform the development of other projects. A similar area focus pilot is now operating in the Craigmillar area of Edinburgh – however, in developing this project Community Renewal drew on some of the lessons from Muirhouse and adapted the service accordingly. For example there is now more capacity for supporting those with health barriers with additional health case manager posts being provided.
- 4.5 Success has also been made with regard to establishing links with the health agenda with the Keepwell initiative indicating that they are keen to utilise a similar outreach approach to Community Renewal. Community Renewal have also agreed via the Community Health Partnership to work alongside NHS funded counsellors via a co-location model in Craigmillar.
- 4.6 The success of the Community Renewal approach has also led to a local housing association making a successful application for funding to extend the programme to a larger number of datazones.
- 4.7 Where these approaches have been implemented they have significantly added value and maximised resource. Savings have been made in terms of the management and administration savings secured by the fact that an existing approach by an existing provider has been extended rather than implementing a brand new approach. Value has also been gained in terms of discretionary local funding complementing and “wrapping around” rather than working against services of other mainstream agencies.
- 4.8 However, this is one example of where success in influencing and securing additional support and alignment of mainstream services has been made; there are still areas where progress is needed. Moving forward the lessons from the Muirhouse Pilot – both positive and negative - need to be informing the CSP approach and in particular the future planning and commissioning of employability provision and wider supports both discretionary and mainstream. This would see real returns in terms of the sustainability of the enhanced engagement/outreach and support/case management model that has been piloted via Community Renewal.
- 4.9 Such sustainability and mainstreaming of cannot be taken forward by a single partner - the lessons learned need to be informing a programme wide approach driven by the CSP but embraced by all partners both strategically and operationally. This would see attention focused on joining up services and funding ensuring resources are maximised in support of the employability agenda and that local resources are used to “wraparound” and complement mainstream provision. This could be guaranteed via improved strategic planning and commissioning of services by all CSP partners involving for example (*although not an exhaustive list*):
 - A single strategy and commissioning process for all locally funded employability provision informed by best practice and developed in partnership to ensure maximum input of all partners and alignment of resources and provision thus resulting in elimination of duplication and fragmentation
 - Co-location of different services e.g. health, housing, employability, money advice in a single community based location
 - Neighbourhood teams with individuals from a number of different disciplines working together to support individuals towards and into employment, e.g. social work staff, health practitioners, counsellors, JCP staff etc

- 4.10 Moving forward CSP partners should also consider the extent to which they wish to become involved in influencing the commissioning of DWP programmes in line with the 3 levels of devolution set out in recent Government policy documentation. This would provide the opportunity to ensure that mainstream provision is informed by and takes account of the lessons of local best practice projects such as the Muirhouse Pilot.

Appendix A – Client Case Studies

Tracked Cohort Case Study - David

Background

David left school early with no qualifications, since then he has had periods when he has been in and out of employment. Therefore, David does have previous work experience and also has undertaken some basic college studies in building skills.

David had been unemployed for 6 months when he first came into contact with Community Renewal (CR). He was living in the Muirhouse area and was engaged via the listening survey approach. He was interested in seeking their support as he was keen to get back to work and also liked the idea of being able to access the service locally.

Support received from Community Renewal

Initial support from CR included help with job search, CV preparation and job applications. David retained a keen interest in working in the building industry but had lost his certificates for the building training course so was unable to demonstrate his skills in this area. His CR caseworker assisted him in getting replacement certificates and also assisted him in accessing and obtaining the Construction Skills Certification Scheme Passport to boost his existing qualification and to provide him with the necessary certification to work on building sites.

However, looking medium-longer term at his career aspirations David also wanted to undertake some training in IT and he had identified a relevant training course. Initially it had been communicated by the course provider that cost could be reimbursed to the provider once the participant gained employment. However, this was not the case with weekly payments towards the tuition being required. Therefore, because he was unable to find funding or another route for this training David was not able to do this.

David has been looking for work since with continued support from Community Renewal.

Current Status

David is currently still unemployed. However, he has moved out of the Muirhouse area. Despite this he continues to be assisted by CR as he feels they provide the best quality support. CR regularly notify David of suitable vacancies and assist him with applications, he also attends the CR base for a catch up/support visit around every 4 weeks.

Due to his move David now attends another JCP office and via his Personal Advisor has been referred another employability project for support. He advised JCP advisor that he was getting similar support from CR but they have stated that it is a condition of his benefit for him to attend the other project. He does not find this as useful as CR as the support is not as intensive or at same level of support and it less personal.

“Community Renewal is better than the other projects I have been on, staff are more friendly and willing to help, you don’t get passed from pillar to post”

David has been successful in a job application with a branch of Arnold Clark who have said he will secure the next vacancy that they have – he is waiting to hear about this. Plans moving forward are to secure this job, retain it and look to further training. David says he will still come to CR to touch base even when in work as they can help with so many other issues.

Tracked Cohort Case Study - Garry

Background

Garry previously had a troubled background and had been unemployed on leaving school. Garry has dyslexia, he had limited past work experience.

After a period of long-term unemployment Garry tried a number of courses, including his ECDL and a spell at Agricultural College before deciding to do a prep course for Media Design. Garry qualified to HND level in Creative Industries TV 2008 after a two year course. Garry has also attended the Scottish Screen/Edinburgh Film Focus Runners course.

Garry has also undertaken First Aid training and has his Health and Safety Passport.

Support from Community Renewal

Garry has been with Community Renewal from the start of the project. He came into contact with CR when it was first setting up and as well as accessing support from the advisors there he also helped with the engagement of young people for the NEET group (the first Community Group set up by CR).

Garry has been registered with CR for about a year and in that time has accessed a variety of support to help him further career in the film industry given his educational background in this area.

This included support to fill in application forms to gain financial support with his film making, read emails, and undertake proof reading for scripts he had developed.

Garry also received support from the health case manager to help him overcome additional personal barriers to employment/self-employment.

CR also provided advice and guidance about the type of support Garry could access from elsewhere. For example CR referred Garry to JCP to apply for Self Employment Test Trading which means that he was able to try out a business idea for up to 26 weeks (self-employment test-trading) with ongoing support and training from a self employment provider.

Current Status

Garry has now set up his own production company, Wideo Productions.

He is a talented young documentary maker and has produced a number of short films including Tolerance for the Scottish Prison Service and has recently won a MTV award for best short film. He has also been nominated for the BAFTA new talent award for first time director.

Garry is also committed to helping other young people.

Garry highly praises the support CR has given him and the positive impact it has made on the area and other Muirhouse residents.

Case Studies Anonymised

Individual A

Individual A has been living in Muirhouse for over 15 years and has been in receipt of Incapacity Benefit for some time for physical and mental health reasons. About a year and a half ago Individual A decided that they would like to think about returning to work. They originally sought support from JCP and were referred to one of their providers, however, they didn't like the service that was on offer – it was too much pressure so therefore, disengaged altogether.

Individual A then heard about Community Renewal via their work in the community, they came into the office and spoke to a member of staff – there was no pressure. The Community Renewal staff completed an assessment and identified that Individual A would benefit from being referred to the health case manager. Individual A has been coming to Community Renewal for about a year now – they have made progress but also suffered set backs along the way due to health and anxiety issues. However, individual A has found the support and in particular the health case management particularly beneficial as it has helped build confidence and address anxiety. Individual A has also been involved in one of the Community Groups that Community Renewal helped established and this has also been of benefit in terms of building confidence. Individual A is now looking at volunteering opportunities as a route back to work and is being supported by Community Renewal to do this.

Individual B

Having been in receipt of JSA for some time Individual B sought support from Community Renewal. Through Community Renewal they have been successful in securing a part-time job. However, Individual B has continued to seek support from Community Renewal even though in employment which has been particularly useful in dealing with both practical issues and issues related to depression and self-esteem. Individual B has also been receiving support from Keepwell following a referral from Community Renewal.

This has been very useful for Individual B who suffered a recent set back in terms of their mental health, Community Renewal was able to support and has set Individual B up with a volunteering opportunity in addition to their part-time job to give additional social access.

Individual C

Individual C has been unemployed for some time. They heard about Community Renewal via the outreach work that the staff were undertaking. Individual C felt that it would be beneficial to find out more about the support on offer and has now been coming to Community Renewal for support for about a year. A lack of recent work experience and qualifications has limited the opportunities available for Individual C making it difficult to find a job which they feel they could settle into and sustain. Individual C has taken a bit of time to identify longer term career aspirations around work but Community Renewal have been assisting in addressing this by motivating Individual C to try out opportunities.

Individual C with the support of Community Renewal has now identified some areas that they would be interested in working in and is looking to identify volunteering opportunities as a route into these. Individual C is aiming to be in sustainable employment very soon.