The EU Active Inclusion Strategy

In 2006 the European Commission recognised the need to integrate employment and social inclusion policy and developed the concept of active inclusion in order to help Member States mobilise those who can work, and to provide adequate support to those who cannot.

The EU Active Inclusion Strategy aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion for those furthest from the labour market by combining three elements: Adequate income support; inclusive labour markets; and access to quality services including housing, employment and health services.

The Cities for Active Inclusion project

The Cities for Active Inclusion project is a dynamic network of ten European Cities, including Birmingham, which examines how active inclusion matters are addressed at the local level. It is funded by the EU PROGRESS programme.



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For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/progress.
The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.





PREVENTION THROUGH ACTIVE INCLUSION Transforming Lives Through Housing Related Support

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Birmingham Supporting People recognised that members of the service user community were best placed to gather service user opinion of the customer experience.

The service user involvement team and a local specialist college developed and implemented a unique training course for current or ex-service users. Qualifications obtained through the open college network enable participants to expand on their "expert by experience status".

"The lay assessor volunteers have been intrinsically involved in our commissioning processes and meaningfully contribute to our reviews of service provider's competence"

Feedback from customers has been incredibly positive. People generally feel more at ease sharing their experiences of service delivery with someone who has experienced it themselves, as opposed to an officer from the local authority.

Feedback from lay assessors has informed us that the opportunity to undertake accredited training and conduct service reviews has been helpful in inspiring them and setting the platform for further education. This initiative has been instrumental in enabling a number of volunteers to secure employment.

The success of this initiative has exceeded all expectations. The lay assessors are involved in 100% of the quality assessment reviews. Their observations have a direct impact, and help service user views to be acknowledged.

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence need specialist services to help them deal with the immediate crisis, support them through their contacts with various agencies and help them move on with their lives. Recovering from abuse can be a long process, and specialist services for women and children are essential. Recovery involves enabling survivors to take back control over their own lives: to recognise that the abuse was not their fault, but the responsibility of the abuser.

*Birmingham and Solihull Womens Aid

Fern Brooke is a domestic abuse unit in Birmingham for homeless women,



young people and children affected by abuse. It is a short term accommodation based service which clients can access for around 6 months. Clients are supported to help build confidence, self esteem and the life skills in order to sustain a tenancy and break out of the cycle of abuse. Clients are offered practical advice around employment and educational opportunities and help them to become job ready.

Outcomes of the project 2011-2012

- Service users have achieved level 1 and 2 in ESOL
- Service users have attended and completed the Freedom programme
- Service users have attended and completed the Confidence Building Course
- Service users have attended and completed employment / skills development courses

People with learning disabilities find it a lot more difficult to learn and understand than people without learning disabilities. They may find it hard to use what they have learned in practical ways. Because of this, they are likely to need help and support with everyday living skills. Some people need high levels of help and support. Other people, with some help, are able to live quite independently.

Supporting adults with Learning Disabilities to access and participate in training and or employment is fundamental to their developmental and health needs. It is evident through experience that informing and/or assisting individuals with the array of opportunities available to them, and/or sustaining or developing their achievements, can clearly have a positive effect and impact on their life, whether economically or through improved health, whilst enabling them to build and develop their independence.

Supporting People commissions Lisieux trust who provide service users with opportunities to enjoy and achieve education and employment prospects. It is through utilising a key-worker system with individual service users that they access information and provide practical assistance into employment or work related training or personal skills development (including liaising with employers, employment agencies and Job Centre Plus).

This support is fundamental for the needs of this client group, as many adults with Learning Disabilities find it difficult to not only access what is available, but also to participate and or maintain their activity. Through the interactive Disability Resource Centre and specially adapted equipment, service users are able (with accessible literature and the use of specially adapted equipment) access opportunities within their local and wider community. This has clearly enabled them to improve their lifestyles and develop their skills and independence, thus reducing the need for social care intervention or other services.

Through experience and consultation with service users Lisieux Trust understand that many service users require practical assistance when accessing or applying to access education and/or employment opportunities. One of the many ways for supporting clients to do this is thorough the use of electronic devices such as computers, adapted equipment and Mincom.

After consulting with our service users and receiving their feedback, Lisieux Trust expanded their Disability Information Resource Centre (DIRC) IT facility.

This resource has been very beneficial in relation to optimising service user's advantages, as well as providing them with the satisfaction of their own success in achieving their own outcomes. This initiative has also given them the ability to take greater choice and control of their lives.



There is a strong association between homelessness and a lack of engagement with education, employment and training. The majority of homeless people living in hostels are unemployed.

For many people, access to education, employment and training are key to moving on from homelessness. However, there are many barriers homeless people face in taking this step.

In 2011 the Government's "Vision to end Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide" sets out its ambitions to tackle worklessness among homeless people.

*Homeless Link

The Venture Project recruits homeless people to become **Volunteer Trainee Support Workers**. After an application and interview, successful trainees are assigned to a homeless project and



an experienced support worker who will be their 'Buddy'. For 3-6 months, 2 days a week the trainee will work alongside their Buddy and follow the Midland Heart induction plan for Support Workers. There have been many benefits – homeless people have the extra support of working with someone who has themselves experienced homelessness; homeless services have extra staff capacity and the trainees gain valuable work experience, skills and qualifications.

"Someone who has experienced homelessness, or other related challenges will often have understanding and knowledge that can be of great help to other homeless people. It is on this principle that the Venture Project was established by Midland Heart as a means to enable homeless customers to help other homeless people, and potentially to develop a career opportunity"

Duane Derry the first Venture recruit to move into employment said

"In the past I've worked as a sheet metal worker and in demolition, but when the recession took hold I couldn't get work. Support work wasn't something I'd ever thought of until I signed up with Venture Project. The role is so different to anything I've ever done before but I really enjoy it and find it very rewarding. The team at Hanwood House where I did my work placement have been so supportive and made me feel part of the team immediately. I was thrilled to be offered the job at Snow Hill but I will miss the team here"



Existing data on youth homelessness has significant limitations; in particular it is only possible to count young people who are in contact with services. On this basis, it can be estimated that at least 75,000 young people experienced homelessness in the UK in 2006–07. This included 43,075 young people (aged 16–24) who were accepted as statutorily homeless in the UK and at least 31,000 non-statutorily homeless young people using Supporting People services during 2006–07

Young people experiencing disruption or trauma during childhood and/or from poor socio-economic backgrounds are at increased risk of homelessness. The main 'trigger' for youth homelessness is relationship breakdown (usually with parents or step-parents). For many, this is a consequence of long-term conflict within the home, and often involves violence. (*Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Youth Homelessness in the UK 2008)

Early intervention is important in the prevention of youth homelessness. STaMP is one of the ways St Basils engages with young people whilst they are still in school or education to raise their awareness of the causes of homelessness, to recognise the circumstances that can lead to homelessness and raise awareness of where to go for help before situations escalate.

Young people and staff members visit local schools in the Birmigham area as part of the STaMP programme to tell their stories in school assemblies about how they became homeless or were at risk of homelessness and where and how they got help. STaMP also offers a peer mentoring service for any student in need of extra support, advice and guidance.

Aims and objectives of the STaMP project

- To develop young people's skills and opportunities
- Prevent youth homelessness
- Provide Peer Education / Homelessness awareness sessions at schools and other organisations.
- Empower St Basils young people and place them in the leadership role as Peer Educators and Peer Mentors
- Train Peer Educators with our in-house training 'Professional Futures' program.
- Reduce School Exclusion and promote social inclusion.



More than one in ten young people aged 16–18 in England are NEET. This means that in 2008 almost 208,000 young people aged 16–18 struggled to make the transition from school to further education or the workplace.

Young people in the NEET group have a wide range of backgrounds and characteristics. For many, being NEET for a short period is a normal part of transition. But for others there are significant barriers to taking part in education or work—for example, having a behavioural or mental health problem, being a teenage parent, or lacking support from the home. Recent data suggests that by their eighteenth birthday, 4% of young people have been NEET for a year or more. It is this group that is of greatest concern.

(*DePaul UK – Getting back on track 2009)

A big challenge has always been engaging homeless young people or those at risk of being homeless in some form of sustainable learning. The assumption being that young people are more concerned with their housing situation whereas their education and learning options are of little or no interest and low priority.

The Life Skills Programme has enabled St Basils to tackle both of these issues. Focusing on core life skills that young people require to sustain their tenancy and make a success of their lives, delivered in an innovative and creative way, has had a very positive impact on the personal development and opportunities for young people.

The life skills programme provides an opportunity for young people to develop skills in up to 10 areas that will increase their confidence, skills and the ability to sustain their own tenancy. On completion, young people will be awarded with their Life Skills qualification. This qualification is recognised by further education bodies and landlords to show the young person's ability to sustain their own tenancy.

The Life Skills Programme is an accredited course, delivered in a "mini" NVQ format whereby young people build a portfolio of evidence to illustrate their development in core life skill areas.

The key results for young people living in St Basils accommodation are that they learn the key skills needed in order for them to sustain their own tenancy. This helps them to move towards independence. The key result for young people living in their own tenancy is to reduce the risk of repeat homelessness by equipping young people with the skills to sustain their tenancy.

The key results for all young people are to learn core skills for life that will increase confidence and also to learn and achieve a recognised accredited qualification that is a gateway into further learning.



Although the Life Skills Programme is a standard format, it provides a great opportunity for young people to be creative and learn the core life skills areas that they need. The course can be delivered in a group work setting or intensive one to one work making it a course that can fit every individual's need.

"A young person is required to spend at least 20 hours on the course that includes reviews with key workers to discuss progression. However, this is the bare minimum and St Basils have found that young people tend to spend around 40 – 50 hours on their portfolio and produce exceptional pieces of work"

At the first meeting with the Key Worker, the young person carries out a self-assessment on all 10 core areas of the programme. Numeracy & Literacy modules are compulsory with 3-4 options to also be completed. The idea is that the areas scored lowest in the self-assessment are then worked on throughout the programme. On completion, the young person will be able to show the positive development in these areas with the evidence provided in their folder.

St Basils provide young people with completion bonuses to spend on their tenancies as well as hosting a Graduation Celebration for those young people who have achieved their qualification.

- Life Skills Programme is instrumental for young people successfully sustaining their own tenancies and making the transition from dependence to independence.
- Life skills programme provides opportunities for young people to gain worthwhile qualifications that speed up their pathway to fulfilling their aspirations.
- Softer outcomes contribute to the organisation's bigger outcomes of young people successfully sustaining their tenancies. Not only do young people learn the key life skills required, they learn how to sustain independence.