

# WAKEFIELD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## INTERIM WORK AND SKILLS PLAN

MARCH 2010

### INTRODUCTION

The preparation of an Interim Work and Skills Plan (WASP) by 31 March 2010 is a requirement for those local authorities in receipt of Future Jobs Fund (FJF) contracts with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

The interim WASP will:

- Detail that an effective legacy plan is in place for the FJF programme that demonstrates the longer-term benefits for the investment to the local community and economy.
- Provide Central Government departments, via Government Office Yorkshire and The Humber with evidence to inform the future of devolved Worklessness funding.
- Explain how we will engage with the IDeA consultation on Work and Skills Plans Guidance.
- Detail the evidence to be gathered during 2010–11 in order to inform the development of a Worklessness Assessment and to tackle deep-rooted worklessness, that will be the focus of the full WASP in March 2011.
  - On the supply side, engaging workless people in actively seeking employment.
  - On the demand side, creating and sustaining enterprise to drive demand for skills and working with private and public employers to identify needs.
- Confirm that the interim WASP will inform the development of a full Work and Skills Plan in March 2011 which will address Worklessness Assessment for Wakefield District which will be prepared by September 2010.

### BACKGROUND

In response to the Government's Future Jobs Fund initiative a Wakefield Partnership bid, led by the Council but encompassing more than 30 local employers in the public and voluntary sectors, was submitted in July 2009. An ambitious target of employing 700 people was set, 467 of whom were to be young unemployed people (18-24) and 233 'hot-spot' residents ie long-term benefit claimants in areas of highest unemployment.

This recognised the worsening picture of youth unemployment in Wakefield where, at the time of bid completion, numbers exceeded 3,000, 35% of the District's total JSA count.

However the bid also acknowledged that entrenched worklessness was an issue in Wakefield and our bid addressed this through targeting a third of the new, additional jobs in eligible 'hot-spot' areas where JSA rates are at least 1.5% above the national average.

Expressed at ward level eligible areas are:

- Castleford Ferry Fryston
- Castleford Whitwood
- Knottingley
- Wakefield Central
- Wakefield East

However we have successfully argued with JCP and DWP that we should set 'hot spot' areas at Lower Super Output Area level. This has meant that 63 LSOAs in Wakefield District can be classed as 'hot spots'. These areas have a more appropriate geographical spread across the District in particular areas of the south east of the District that suffer high levels of worklessness. Success of our bid was notified on 14 September with a target to recruit individuals into FJF vacancies in November 2009.

## **FUTURE JOBS FUND START UP**

In order to meet recruitment targets, staff within the Skills, Enterprise and Work Team of Wakefield Council:

- Agreed a vacancy template to be used to advertise the vacancies within JobCentre Plus (these act as mini-job descriptions with details of hours to be worked, rates of pay, key duties etc).
- Worked with Council managers and partners to prioritise vacancies for filling.
- Completed vacancy templates for first three month's jobs.
- Worked with DWP in agreeing an interim contract to provide 320 jobs between November 2009 and April 2010.
- Worked with colleagues in HR, Corporate Finance and Legal Services to enable a prompt start.

The key partner locally, other than our partner employers, is JobCentre Plus who are very active in the supply of eligible individuals for all vacancies

- JCP staff are the referral agent. All applications must be routed via JCP, as they have the responsibility to check eligibility.

- JCP staff work with individuals in determining suitability for jobs, completing and returning application forms.
- JCP work with unsuccessful candidates, monitor the experience of successful candidates and liaise with the Council on interview schedules and any issues arising.

## **FUTURE JOBS FUND – EARLY PERFORMANCE**

Wakefield, like the rest of the country, has encountered challenges to recruitment due to:

- Initial contract delays
- Supply side issues
- Demand

### **Initial Contract Delays**

The initial six month contract with DWP was not signed until mid-October 2009. Given the time needed to advertise, interview and appoint, the earliest start date possible was 30 November 2009.

The knock-on-effect and the impact of the year-end and holidays meant that we were advertising four month's worth of vacancies within eight weeks.

### **Supply Side Issues**

JobCentre Plus have worked hard to establish a system to maximise referrals to the FJF. However we have all had to work within very tight timescales as FJF moved from blueprint to actual recruitment in just six months.

As a result some initial challenges were to familiarise both Advisor and young unemployed people with FJF and the opportunities becoming available. We also faced some procedural challenges in the notification of 'hot spot' vacancies, recognising that JCP need to match individuals to vacancies and confirm eligibility against the reality that some providers are working with eligible customers who do not have regular contact with JobCentre Plus.

### **Demand Side Issues**

Demand side challenges have related to:

- Unrealistic expectations of managers and partners resulting in unattractive job descriptions and lack of applicants or, a failure to appoint from the pool of applicants.
- Multiple applicants have resulted in some managers interviewing towards the end of the schedule having no-one to select as they have accepted other offers.

- Some jobs with lesser hours per week (25-30) have not received sufficient applicants as some in-work benefits cannot apply.
- Where successful candidates need an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check delays of up to eight weeks have been encountered prior to someone being able to start a job.

## **In Summary**

- The willingness of the Council and JobCentre Plus to forge ahead and recruit before procedures were tested and finalised has resulted in around 150 job starts up to March 2009.
- An excellent working relationship is being established between project teams in JobCentre Plus and Wakefield Council.
- Month on month improvements in recruitment against profiles have been recorded which will result in our reaching around 70% of proposed job entries by April 2010 which will stand comparison with most FJF contracts nationally.
- Council managers and partners are becoming more familiar with the initiative, the challenges they face in recruiting young unemployed people and other long-term benefit claimants. Furthermore they are now thinking about the benefits to the community that could accrue from additional FJF posts.
- New job entrants are now really benefitting from their employment and are beginning to form good reputations in the work environment.

## **WRAPAROUND JOB BROKERAGE, RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT SERVICE**

We have identified a need within our Geographic Programme Employability Project for a Wraparound Job Brokerage, Retention and Advancement Service which will:

- Engage with workless individuals and families
- Refer to providers of employability skills projects based on the needs of the individuals
- Support people into work
- Act as mediator and mentor to enhance job retention
- Encourage individual development to meet employer needs and enable progression in the workplace

It was envisaged that FJF would be the first vehicle where this approach could be implemented, yet the timescales did not match as single pot RDA funding would not be available until 2010/2011. Therefore we successfully applied for the awarding of LAA funding to launch the initiative in advance of the Employability Project to support the first six months of FJF activity.

A commissioning exercise ran in conjunction with contracting with DWP resulting in the award of a contract to the Wakefield Homebuilder Partnership. Once further

funding through the Employability Project is secured this contract can be extended up to March 2013.

## **FUTURE JOBS FUND APRIL 2010-2011**

### **Actions**

- Agree with JobCentre Plus on a mechanism to allow us to work with unsuccessful FJF applicants to either:
  - - Enable success in a forthcoming vacancy in the short term
    - Identify alternative provision that will move individuals closer to the labour market.
- Agree contract extension, with revised profile of job entries, with DWP. Initial proposal was to offer opportunities up to September 2010 commencement. Revised profiling will see starts up to December 2010 with the potential to recruit up to March 2011 in order to meet targets.
- Work with managers and partners to identify further employment opportunities both to ensure contract delivery but also to extend the 700 jobs target if possible, to contribute to the additional targets set nationally.
- Monitor entries and performance across Council Directorates and Partners including work opportunities accessed beyond the six month FJF period.
- Look to engage with Train to Gain for all FJF recruits, where possible.
- Ensure that all FJF employees receive
  - Induction
  - Exit interviews
  - References that capture attendance, performance and skills learned
- Conclude grant negotiations with Coalfields Regeneration Trust to enable contract extensions from six to twelve months for 30 employees based with voluntary sector partners.
- Apply for further LAA Reward funds to extend a proportion of Council jobs from 26 weeks to 50 weeks.
- Include in the LAA Reward application the intention to offer apprenticeship opportunities for a number of Council job holders, ensuring that some Council apprenticeships are offered to young people from non-traditional backgrounds.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Wraparound Job Brokerage, Retention and Advancement Service particularly with regard to:
  - Access to skills training opportunities
  - Identification of work opportunities within FJF employer partnership

- Identification of work opportunities within the open labour market
- Evaluation of the benefits to local communities brought about by FJF involvement, in terms of:
  - Building capacity of third sector organisations
  - Enhancing service provision in public sector organisations
- Evaluation of the benefits to individuals, particularly with regard to retention of work beyond the FJF six month period.
- Work with strategic partners, including JobCentre Plus to ensure that FJF opportunities can be accessed by particularly disadvantaged groups including:
  - Mental Health Service users
  - People with learning disabilities
  - NEET young people
  - Young people leaving care
  - Lone parents
  - Older people
  - Residents of our most employment-deprived communities (as defined in our LAA Target NI 153)

## **FUTURE JOBS FUND LEGACY**

We aim to ensure that all FJF employees develop skills that will be attractive to employers looking to recruit locally and will enable people to apply for jobs with confidence that they have the relevant skills and experience, at least in part, to do the job.

The main emphasis will be to develop generic employability skills that employers have identified as crucial, including

- Reliability
- Punctuality
- Team working
- Attitude
- Flexibility

We will capture these 'softer' skills in the exit reference that all FJF employees will receive.

In addition we will factor in job search skills through our Wraparound Job Brokerage, Retention and Advancement Service at times appropriate for individuals and tailored to their employment aspirations. This could include:

- CV preparation
- Application form completion
- Interview Skills
- On-line application and recruitment

The Wraparound Service, with Council colleagues, will also look to identify any opportunities to extend the employment experience for FJF employees:

- Exploring the opportunity for casual/seasonal work with the Council and employer partners.
- For Council employees utilising the Redeployment Scheme to identify any entry level opportunities that could be suitable for FJF employees.
- Work with employers outside the FJF Partnership to promote recruitment from the pool of talent leaving FJF positions.

As detailed earlier we hope to extend some jobs through an agreement with Coalfields Regeneration Trust and through the LAA Reward Grant. Where extensions are identified and funded we will strengthen the skills element of support to include a full NVQ Level 2 or equivalent in the chosen vocational area.

Other skills training we will make available will incorporate CV enhancing skills, accreditation in such areas as Health and Safety, First Aid, Food Hygiene and other provision such as Skills for Life development, ICT skills and personal development skills.

Some of our FJF opportunities will require some specific vocational skills development and we will make such provision available to an extent which suits both the individual and the length of placement.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF FULL WORK AND SKILLS PLAN APRIL 2011**

A full Work and Skills Plan will be required in 2011. The Plan will form part of the Local Economic Assessment and Worklessness Assessment that will be prepared during the same timescales.

The Skills, Enterprise and Work Team will

- Be part of the Task and Finish Group determining the presentation of the Local Economic Assessment.
- Provide a lead within this group on the Worklessness Assessment for Wakefield
- Take part in the IDeA consultation on Work and Skills Plan in order to advise on:
  - The production of a full Work and Skills Plan for Wakefield by April 2011.
  - How the WASP will fit with the Local Economic Assessment, Worklessness Assessment and with local strategies such as Wakefield's Regeneration Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessment.

- How local WASPs will link with/influence the Sub-Regional, City Regional and Local Skills and Work architecture.
- Engage and consult with stakeholders via the Local strategic Partnership and Wakefield Worklessness Provider Group.

## EVIDENCE GATHERING

Wakefield currently gathers and shares Worklessness and Skills data via:

- Monthly unemployment bulletins, looking at claimant count unemployment in Wakefield District, broken down to ward level with regional and national comparisons. Bulletins also place the claimant count information into the general Worklessness picture in Wakefield.
- Bi-annual Worklessness briefings which look at the overall worklessness situation in Wakefield and where worklessness impacts in particular geographic areas and on particular disadvantaged groups.
- Quarterly monitoring of worklessness targets within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) ie
  - NI 152 Reducing the proportion of people on 'Out of Work' benefits
  - NI 153 Narrowing the gap between the most employment deprived neighbourhoods and the District Average

We will continue to gather the evidence detailed but will also refine evidence and data collection and share in order to prepare a robust WASP.

## SUPPLY SIDE EVIDENCE

Wakefield is well placed to gather evidence relating to the engagement of workless people locally in actively seeking work.

The Wakefield Worklessness Provider Group, which has been in existence for two years, brings together strategic partners and the providers of worklessness support in the District. Providers around the table represent all major provision regardless of funders and include:

A4E	(Pathways to Work, Job Support)
BEST	(New Deal, New Start, Skills for Jobs)
Wakefield Adult and Community Education Service	(Access to Employment, Mainstream Provision)
Wakefield Homebuilder Partnership	(Skills for Jobs, Wraparound Job Brokerage, Retention and Advancement Service)
Working Links	(First Steps)
Direct Training	(Employability Skills Project)
Wakefield College	(Six Months Unemployed Offer, Mainstream)



Provision)

Strategic Partners include:

JobCentre Plus (Chair)  
Wakefield Council  
Voluntary Action Wakefield District  
Wakefield and District Housing  
Wakefield and District NHS  
Careers Yorkshire and The Humber

This group has been tasked with the monitoring and review of LAA target NI 153, which has resulted in 12 local area plans being developed that cover our priority areas.

We need to work with JobCentre Plus/DWP/ Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service to agree data sharing that will give a comprehensive picture of how projects are impacting in Wakefield and how that relates to both Wakefield's geography and across particular disadvantaged groups:

- Young unemployed people
- People with mental health needs
- People with learning disabilities
- Young people leaving care
- Long term claimants, in particular IB/JSA claimants
- Lone parents
- Older workers
- People with disabilities

We will also work with Yorkshire Forward to add value to the data collected, for example through the worklessness information gathered through the Axiom lifestyle data.

## **DEMAND SIDE EVIDENCE**

A number of mechanisms exist to gather evidence relating to:

- Enterprise development
- Employer take-up of skills funding opportunities
- Employer skills needs

### **Enterprise Development**

We do receive information from Business Link and from the Annual Business Survey; however we also need to have more information that is local, pertinent to Wakefield's business start-up and growth rather than data aggregated at a sub-regional or regional level. Making use of the recently introduced Business Link Local

Development Plans and the quarterly meetings with the Council will enhance data collection regarding Wakefield's businesses.

We also need to better capture the breadth of activity encouraging enterprise amongst young people, for example through the 'Make your Mark' initiative and through work with schools, capturing the information contained in schools' enterprise plans. In addition we will engage with Young People's Enterprise Forum re enterprise activity from young people.

### **Employer Take-Up of Skills Funding Opportunities**

We are able to get information on Train to Gain and Train to Gain Enhanced Fund uptake from Wakefield businesses.

We hope to be able to use the Local Economic Assessment as a tool to survey Wakefield businesses and their skills needs, both current and future, and how they use skills/training infrastructure currently and how relevant they find provision to be.

### **Employer Skills Needs**

We have recently established a Wakefield Employer Forum, which will form part of the reporting structure to the Local Strategic Partnership – Wakefield Together.

The Forum has a skills focus in that we will get direct information from members on:

- Skills needs of new recruits
- Skills training provided in-house
- Skills opportunities accessed through local delivery structure
- Skills shortages identified
- Future skills needs and timescales

In addition we hope that one employer will represent Wakefield on the City Regional Employment and Skills Board, both feeding in Wakefield issues and reporting back on emerging issues at a City Region level.

## WAKEFIELD INTERIM WORK AND SKILLS PLAN APRIL 2010 – MARCH 2011

	THEME	ACTION	BY WHOM	WHEN
1.	<b>Future Jobs Fund Delivery 2010 – 11</b>	Work with managers/partners to identify further employment opportunities	SEW Team	Up to December 2010
		Evaluate effectiveness of Job Brokerage, Retention and Advancement Service during delivery period to provide a better service for employees and employers	SEW Team	Up to December 2010
		Ensure that FJF Opportunities are made available to particular disadvantaged groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEET Young People</li> <li>• People with Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• Young People Leaving Care</li> <li>• Lone Parents</li> <li>• Hot Spot Residents Enduring Long-Term Unemployment</li> </ul>	SEW/Family Services/NHS Wakefield District/SWYMHFT/JobCentre Plus	December 2010
		Work with unsuccessful FJF applicants, via the Wraparound Service, to promote future jobs success or signposting to other employability skills provision.	SEW/Wraparound Service/JobCentre Plus	December 2010
		Investigate access to Train to Gain provision for FJF employees.	SEW/Wraparound Service/SFA	December 2010
2.	<b>Future Jobs Fund Legacy</b>	All FJF employees to develop generic employability skills to boost future employment prospects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Wraparound Service/Managers/Partner Employers	June 2010

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuality</li> <li>• Team Working</li> <li>• Positive Attitude</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul>		
		<p>All FJF Employees to be given job search skills support according to their needs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV Preparation</li> <li>• Application Form Completion</li> <li>• Interview Skills</li> <li>• On-Line Recruitment</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Wraparound Service/Learning and Development/Managers/Partner Employers	June 2011
		<p>Further work opportunities for FJF employees beyond six months to be developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend to 52 weeks for opportunities in third sector organisations to be funded through Coalfields Regeneration Trust Jobs Pool project.</li> <li>• Apply for LAA Reward Grant to extend some Council Opportunities to 50 weeks.</li> <li>• All Council FJF employees to be referred to Redeployment Pool at week 18 of employment to ascertain if any appropriate vacancies exist within Council establishment.</li> <li>• Apply for LAA Reward Grant to offer ring-fenced apprenticeship opportunities for FJF employee pool.</li> </ul>	<p>SEW Team/Coalfields Regeneration Trust</p> <p>SEW Team/Local Strategic Partnership SEW Team/HR/Wraparound Service</p> <p>SEW Team/Local Strategic Partnership/Learning and Development</p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>April 2011</p> <p>April 2011</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wraparound Service to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ further work opportunities in current role.</li> <li>○ Alternative work opportunities with current employer.</li> <li>○ Alternative work opportunities with FJF employer partnership.</li> <li>○ Alternative work opportunities in the open labour market.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Wraparound Service/SEW Team	June 2011
		Any casual/seasonal temporary or relief opportunities with Wakefield Council to be made available to FJF employees if appropriate.	SEW Team/Council Manager	June 2011
		Utilise West Yorkshire Employability Project (RDA/ERDF Funding) to extend Wraparound service for lifetime of FJF and beyond to offer service in most employment-deprived neighbourhoods.	SEW Team/Yorkshire Forward	September 2010
		All FJF Employees to have access to skills training pertinent to their needs and aspirations. Wraparound Service to prepare Individual Learning Plan with individual and employer. ILP to be portable document for individuals as they progress in employment	SEW Team/Wraparound Service/Managers/Employer Partners	January 2011
		FJF evaluation to capture community benefits over lifetime of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third sector provision and capacity building.</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Council Managers/Employer Partners	September 2011

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing public sector services to citizens.</li> </ul>		
<b>3.</b>	<b>Development of Full Work and Skills Plan 2011</b>	Establish Task and Finish Group to develop Wakefield's Local Economic Assessment, Worklessness Assessment and Full Work and Skills Plan.	Strategic Housing and Economic Development/Council Managers	September 2010
		SEW Team to lead on development of Worklessness Assessment and full Work and Skills Plan	SEW	September 2010 – March 2011
		Ensure WASP aligns with other strategies and plans in Wakefield – Regeneration Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessment among them.	SEW	March 2011
		Ensure that stakeholders are engaged and contribute to the development of the full Work and Skills Plan.	SEW Team/Local Strategic Partnership (Employer Forum and Worklessness Provider Group)	December 2010
<b>4.</b>	<b>Evidence Gathering – Supply Side</b>	Continue preparation of monthly unemployment bulletins, updated in line with Claimant Count notification.	SEW Team/JobCentre Plus	On-going
		Prepare Worklessness briefings twice per year, one in line with production of Worklessness Assessment but to ensure regular reviews take place.	SEW Team/JobCentre Plus/Local Strategic Partnership	September 2010 onwards
		Use LAA Worklessness targets as a driver for evidence for development of full Work and Skills plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI 152 Proportion of working age population on out of work benefits.</li> <li>NI 153 Proportion of working age</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Partnerships and Performance/ Worklessness Provider Group	On-going

		population on out of work benefits in worst performing neighbourhoods.		
		Enhance quality of evidence collected through data acquired from Wakefield Worklessness Provider Group	SEW Team/Wakefield Worklessness Provider Group	April 2010 onwards
		Improve data sharing with JCP/DWP/SFA/National Apprenticeship Service to get real evidence of project penetration in Wakefield District and NI 153 areas. Data to indicate performance in relation to particular disadvantaged groups such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEET Young People</li> <li>• Young People Leaving Care</li> <li>• People with Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• Long Term Claimants</li> <li>• Mental Health Service Users</li> </ul>	SEW Team/JCP/DWP/SFA /Family Services/Providers	September 2010 onwards
		Work with JCP/DWP to obtain more 'real time' worklessness figures, particularly with regard to IB/ESA statistics and Lone Parent numbers. Furthermore to develop a picture of how new benefit regimes will affect flow between benefits.	SEW Team/JCP/DWP	September 2010 onwards
		Work with JobCentre Plus to determine potential to combine monthly unemployment bulletin and JCP's Economic Downturn briefing as economy recovers.	SEW Team/JCP	January 2011 onwards
		Work with Yorkshire Forward to gather worklessness data from Axiom lifestyle	SEW/YF	December 2010

		data and any other relevant information.		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Evidence Gathering – Demand Side Enterprise Development</b>	Obtain up-to-date information on business start-ups in Wakefield, including take up of JCP self-employment options.	SEW Team/Business Link/JCP	September 2010
		Obtain data from business support organisations on take-up of support opportunities and levels of sustainable enterprise in Wakefield District.	SEW Team/Business Link/Wakefield First	September 2010
		Establish enterprise activity in local schools and the impact of enterprise initiatives such as ‘Make Your Mark’. If appropriate distribute evidence of good practice.	SEW Team/Family Services/Business Link/Compact/Make Your Mark	September 2010
		Ascertain enterprise activity from young people in Wakefield.	SEW/Young People’s Enterprise Forum	September 2010
<b>6.</b>	<b>Employer Take-Up of Skills Opportunities</b>	Establish Wakefield Employers take-up of Train to Gain and Train to Gain Enhancement Fund opportunities for employees.	SEW Team/Yorkshire Forward	September 2010
		Review local infrastructure of skills training for employers and local demand and take-up of apprenticeships and intern opportunities with Wakefield employers.	SEW Team/Learning Providers/Wakefield College/NAS	September 2010
		Use Local Economic Assessment to survey employer opinions on current provision and its relevance to their needs.	SEW Team/Task and Finish Group	September 2010
<b>7.</b>	<b>Employer Skills Needs</b>	Utilise Wakefield Employer Forum to ascertain employer views on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills needs of new recruits</li> <li>• Skills training provided by</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Wakefield First	September 2010



		<p>employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills opportunities accessed through local delivery structure</li> <li>• Skills shortages</li> <li>• Future Skills needs</li> </ul>		
		<p>Encourage Wakefield employer representation of City Region Employment and Skills Board to both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed in local employer perspectives to the City Region</li> <li>• Feed back City Region priorities into Wakefield structure</li> </ul>	SEW Team/Local Strategic Partnership	September 2010