

## HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS - SCOTLAND

### General details

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### Details of activity

<p>Background to the case study</p>	<p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p> <p>This is an exciting strategic partnership approach within the Highlands and Islands region of Scotland that empowers people receiving Incapacity Benefit to recognise their own strengths and maximise their potential.</p> <p>The aims are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the partnership approach across the Highlands</li> <li>• maximise the resources available to achieve partnership objectives; and</li> <li>• establish contact with 10% of people receiving Incapacity Benefit (1280 individuals).</li> </ul> <p>Of these 1280, it is anticipated that at least 450 will continue onto the Tailored Support Programme. Overall, the partnership aims to help 110 people to enter sustainable employment and another 60 to progress into voluntary work, work-based training or further education, etc.</p> <p>Outcomes will be measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reductions in the number of people receiving Incapacity Benefit</li> <li>• Referrals to mainstream provision</li> <li>• Number of people entering employment</li> <li>• Other positive outcomes</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Brief rationale</b>  Nationally, up to 1 million people with health conditions and disabilities who are without work would like to be in a job. Too often they remain inactive because of outdated assumptions and a welfare system that until recently ignored the special barriers to work that they face. There are currently National programmes to support this customer group. However these programmes will not reach the Highlands until 2007 at the earliest. As a partnership we wanted to do something jointly now that would meet the needs of our citizens.</p> <p><b>Implementing organisation</b>  This is a genuine partnership approach. However Jobcentre Plus has taken the lead in the ESF process and will be the contracting agent.</p> <p><b>Funders</b>  Jobcentre Plus (public employment Service)  National Employment Panel  Highlands and Islands Enterprise  European Social Fund  Highland Council  National Health Service</p> <p><b>When activity started / end date?</b>  September 2005: Initial discussions started.  February 2006: Application for ESF funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 2007: The current project will end but the partnership will live on!</li> </ul>
Description of activity	<p><b>Outline of programme / activities and approaches used</b>  The project will be multi-faceted but built around the following four key elements. The duration and attendance would be influenced by individual need and circumstance.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1) Awareness Raising and Engagement</b></p> <p>Development of marketing strategy and project brand including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners raising awareness with their own organisations and networks</li> <li>• Media campaign</li> <li>• Outreach workers raising awareness in the local community</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2) Tailored Support Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-to-1 Interviews with Outreach Workers</li> </ul>



- Development of personal support plan
- Access to health professionals
- Access to Jobcentre Plus Higher Work Psychologist
- Referral to existing provision if appropriate

### **3) Next Steps and Training**

- Continue developing tailored approach and individual support plan
- A 2.5 day Options event to motivate and improve confidence
- Employer led generic work preparation course and work placement
- Access to existing work based training, voluntary work or industry designed routeway
- A dedicated service matching customers and their skills to current vacancies and continued support with applications.

### **4) In-work support and Aftercare**

- Mentoring
- Work place “buddies”
- Transitional payment
- Develop in-work support plan utilising the experience of NHS health professionals and the Jobcentre Plus Work Psychologist

### **Origins – how it came about – bottom up / top down, grew from previous initiative (if so what)**

Following a meeting between NHS Highland, Jobcentre Plus and Highlands and Islands Enterprise it was recognised that there was a need for a strategic approach to supporting Incapacity Benefit customers into sustainable employment.

A strategic steering group was formed comprising Highland Council, Communities Scotland, Highland Employer Coalition, NHS Highland, HIE and Jobcentre Plus. This group organised an event for specialists from these organisations and other partners including Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), University of the Highlands & Islands (UHI), National Employment Panel, Scottish Executive, Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone and Employers.

The aim of the event was to identify the gaps in current provision and to identify how each organisation could contribute in terms of resource, funding and other practical support. The findings from the day were the basis for our approach.



	<p><b>Who was involved in the design, management and delivery of the programme</b></p> <p>The strategic partners designed the programme based on feedback from our conference and experience of the national Pathways Programme. The group will also oversee the project with Jobcentre Plus being responsible for the contract management and financial administration.</p> <p><b>Recognition – has the programme been recognised as good practice? If so, by whom?</b></p> <p>The strategic approach has been recognised by Highlands and Islands partnership programme as good practice. Within Jobcentre plus The Partnership is recognised as strong. National Employment panel singled out this project at a national Conference in London.</p>
<p>Policy context within which the programme operates</p>	<p><b>Describe the policy context in which the programme operates:</b></p> <p><b>Is there an explicit relationship between policy priorities / local activities?</b></p> <p>There are very clear links to all the partners' policy priorities. For example.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UK Welfare to Work agenda which aims to improve the productivity of British businesses and the prospects of clients of Jobcentre Plus as they move from welfare to workforce development</li> <li>• Employability Framework for Scotland, which acknowledges that employment and employability are a key part of preventing poverty</li> <li>• Smart Successful Scotland (the enterprise strategy for Scotland) which emphasises that narrowing the gap in employment, reducing economic inactivity and developing the skills of people who are in work are necessary to remove barriers to economic growth</li> <li>• Smart Successful Highlands and Islands which aims to enable people living in the Highlands and Islands to realise their full potential on a long-term sustainable basis. Unemployment data for the area hide a significant inactive potential workforce. Addressing economic inactivity will improve labour market conditions and help to address social exclusion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Is the policy context supportive / prohibitive?</b></p> <p>The fact that the partners have a shared commitment to employability supports the joint approach however we remain vulnerable to changes in national policy.</p>



	<p><b>Has the policy context changed during the life of the activity</b> No.</p> <p><b>Which came first – local activities or policy priorities (i.e. is activity leading or following policy priorities)?</b> Policy Priorities have required us to review local activities and examine best practice within them.</p>
Geographical focus of the case study	This is currently a Highland, Orkney and Shetland Programme. The Partnership covers a wider area.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outputs – scale and scope of people reached through the programme</b> The impact so far has been the strengthening of Partnership working in the Highlands. The anticipated outcomes are detailed within the background on page 1 of this document.</li> <li>• <b>Outcomes: at local level – what difference at local level and at regional and / or national level – what difference made?</b> The difference so far is within the flexibility afforded to the partnership with regard to National Budgets. Jobcentre Plus have committed funds for the partnership with few restrictions on how it can be spent and this flexibility will allow us to meet the specific needs of communities within the Highlands.</li> <li>• <b>Any impact at European level?</b> Not Yet!!</li> </ul>
Partners' details	<p><b>Name and briefly describe partner's contributions to programme</b></p> <p>The Strategic partnership has worked jointly to develop the project. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highland Employer Coalition will design demand-led provision with genuine work placements and jobs at the end of the programme.</li> <li>• NHS Highland has dedicated a member of staff one day per week for 3 months to raise awareness within the Health partnerships.</li> <li>• Highland Council is making interviewing facilities available throughout the Highlands.</li> </ul>

### Theme-Specific Questions

Who was targeted by the programme?	Incapacity Benefit Customers
Which levels of	Scottish and Highland. In addition, Jobcentre Plus received



government were involved, informed or consulted?	authority from a UK level to commit funds to support Incapacity Benefit initiatives.
What actions resulted in mainstreaming?	There is the potential to replicate this approach within mainstream policy, firstly at the Scottish level and secondly at the UK level.
Sustainability	The benefit of the timing of this project is that it will be in a strong position to influence the national programmes when they are extended to the Highlands & Islands regions – the partnership is already in place and employers are already committed.
Successes / lessons learned	<p>The success so far has been in recognising the strategic priorities of each of the partners and building in flexibility with regard to outcomes. Some individuals are not yet ready for employment, so other outcomes may equally important, e.g. voluntary work and training.</p> <p>What lessons have been learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness and honest relationships between partners are crucial</li> <li>• The impact that we can have if we work together and pool our resources is immense.</li> </ul> <p><b>What would they do differently next time?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult more with Incapacity Benefit customers</li> <li>• Adopt this partnership approach years ago!</li> </ul>

