

SHIRLIE PROJECT - SCOTLAND

General details

Organisation	SHIRLIE project
Name of Contact	Don Toonen, Director of Service
Address	40 Longman Drive, Inverness, IV1 1SU
Telephone no.	01463 716179
Fax	01463 714637
Email address	d.toonen@shirlie.co.uk
Website	www.shirlie.co.uk

Details of activity

<p>Background to the case study</p>	<p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>The main aim of the project is to represent clients who have support needs and are looking for paid employment.</p> <p>Since 1994 the SHIRLIE project has been finding people work in the Inverness and Nairn area. It is now developing the same high quality service across the Highlands & Islands region. SHIRLIE also works with schools to develop a comprehensive work experience package for pupils with support needs.</p> <p>Brief rationale</p> <p>Individuals are introduced to a job coach who spends as much time as necessary to get to know what type of job they are interested in and capable of doing. A job search would be made to contact the employers suitable to the persons needs. The job coach would then work one to one with the person, training them to the standards demanded by the employer. A gradual withdrawal from the workplace will leave the person to maintain their standard independently.</p> <p>After this we stay in regular contact to ensure progress. We mediate to resolve any concerns raised by the person or the employer as well as providing a full training and development service. We also recognise the needs, support and concerns of the employer and so a large part of our work is aimed at addressing these right from the start of any working relationship.</p>
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	<p>Implementing organisation The SHIRLIE Project is a voluntary organisation operating across the Highlands & Islands region.</p> <p>Funders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobcentre Plus (public employment service) programmes (mostly output-related funding) • European Social Fund Objective 1 • Highlands & Islands Enterprise (regional enterprise agency) through a ‘Get ready for work’ contract <p>When activity started? 1994</p>
Description of activity	<p>Outline of programme / activities and approaches used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Coaching Package • Advice and Advocacy • Positive About Disabled People • Equal Opportunities and Investors in People • School Work Experience • Work Preparation for people with acquired brain injury <p>Origins – how it came about – bottom up / top down, grew from previous initiative (if so what)</p> <p>The project began providing vocational training to 10 unemployed people in 1994. But this was not sufficient to help them into employment, so SHIRLIE began to provide a more flexible and generic service focussed on meeting the needs of <i>individuals</i> not just providing training for people with disabilities. So the project expanded in terms of the service it provides and the geographical area it covers.</p> <p>Who was involved in the design, management and delivery of the programme</p> <p>Policy and operational priorities determined by national and regional bodies, e.g. Jobcentre Plus, Scottish Executive. Activity delivered at the local level by SHIRLIE project.</p> <p>Recognition – has the programme been recognised as good practice? If so, by whom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Executive: wanting to apply the model of supported employment to different target groups (in addition to



	<p>unemployed people), e.g. young people in care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Scotland: informal collaboration led to a pilot project in schools. This has been now been formalised in a 3-year contract to provide services in schools.
Policy context within which the programme operates	<p>Is there an explicit relationship between policy priorities / local activities? SHIRLIE helps deliver the objectives of regional and national actors such as Jobcentre Plus, Highlands Council, Scottish Executive</p> <p>Is the policy context supportive / prohibitive? Initiatives have been too time-limited as they have to prove themselves within 3 years. But it takes time to build capacity and few results are achieved in the first year of any initiative.</p> <p>The Scottish level is not supportive of the supported employment model – new projects funded by Careers Scotland are under too much pressure to get results.</p> <p>Which came first – local activities or policy priorities (i.e. is activity leading or following policy priorities)? To a certain extent, the SHIRLIE project, as a contractor to the main regional and national bodies, has to follow regional and national policy priorities. However, by demonstrating the effectiveness of approaches to supported employment, the SHIRLIE project has influenced mainstream programmes.</p>
Geographical focus of the case study	<p>At what level does the programme operate? Across the Highlands & Islands region.</p>
Impact	<p>Outputs – scale and scope of people reached through the programme 200 individuals supported per year / 26 members of staff</p> <p>Outcomes: at local level – what difference at local level and at regional and / or national level – what difference made? Demonstrated to regional partners the importance of helping those furthest from the labour market. (Scottish Executive was focussed on helping those closest to the labour market). N SHIRLIE project influenced a debate at the regional level (with Highlands & Islands Enterprise) about approaches to employability. Regional partners adopted the employability</p>



	models of the SHIRLIE project.
Partners' details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding partners • Strategic partners: Highland Council, Inverness Enterprise, Ross and Cromarty Enterprise

Theme-Specific Questions

Who was targeted by the programme?	Initially people with disabilities. Now unemployed people and others not in work, as well as young people and school pupils.
Which levels of government were involved, informed or consulted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional level: Highlands Council • Scottish level: Scottish Executive
What actions resulted in mainstreaming?	Replicated across the region and into a wider set of mainstream programmes, e.g. those of Local Enterprise Companies, Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Sustainability	<p>From experience, the keys to sustainability are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to deliver contracts • Debate about full cost recovery • Flexibility to respond to new opportunities • Established reputation • Skill and expertise in accessing new funding
Successes / lessons learned	<p>What contributed to the programme's success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining the credibility of regional and national bodies • Local, audited contract management • Clear vision and direction • Strong management team • Confidence in the vision • Links between local and national strategic level • Being less prescriptive about format for reporting • Assess funding opportunities on their impact on service delivery <p>What lessons have been learned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of a flexible, client-centred approach – the individual unemployed person should be the focus. • The need for <i>sustained</i> employment outcomes, i.e. people still in employment after 3 or 6 months. • Giving organisations the chance to <i>build capacity</i> as well as and in order to deliver direct outputs (e.g. staff development).

